



## REPORT

### 1st DANUBE LIMES BRAND Strategy Conference Bratislava 16 – 18 September 2013

The 1st conference on „Danube Limes Strategy“ on September 16 – 18th 2013 took place in frames of the joint partnership project of Austria – Hungary – Slovakia. The key organizer was the Municipal Monument Preservation Institute of Bratislava in cooperation with Károly Róbert College in Gyöngyös/ Hungary and with the support of the Lead partner the Institute for History, University of Vienna. The program was supported and implemented by the associated partners from Austria – the ARGE Donauländer and Slovakia – National Monument Board and the Slovak National Museum. The conference was realized in premises and on the sites of all those three involved countries (see the detailed program of the conference), with the participation of a total of 105 delegates during the three days program from 8 countries along the Danube river – Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and from more participants from Italy, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. Beside the main conference parts organized each day with key-lectures about the project activities, progress and intermediate results, participants visited and discussed the most significant Roman sites and monuments nominated for the UNESCO World Heritage in this area – Petronell Carnuntum(A), Rusovce-Gerulata(SK), Brigetio-Komárom(HU) and Iža-Kelemantia(SK). The Danube river experience was a constant element – with a boat ride from Devín/SK to Hainburg/A on the 1st day, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day the dinner was held on a boat called Rivers club in Bratislava and the conference sessions on the third day were held on the boat Žilina, on a 5 hours ride from Bratislava/SK to Komárom/HU.

The conference proved to be a significant contribution for the achievement of the joint project's objectives:

#### **1/ Long-term and sustainable preservation of Limes monuments through nominating new frontier sections for World Heritage status in the Lower Danube countries.**

At the conference, the thorough going evaluation was made of the proposal for the extension of the multinational UNESCO World Heritage Site “Frontiers of the Roman Empire” into the Danube countries, initiated by Hungary and Slovakia in the Central Europe project “Danube Limes — UNESCO World Heritage” (2008–2011). The countries involved in this proposal, Austria, Hungary and Slovakia, presented a concrete picture of the present state of the respective nomination status and sites. They also outlined a realistic estimation of their readiness for the definite nomination submission. This

evaluation was of key importance for the mutual coordination of the three involved countries. It also provided results and lessons learnt on to the next level in establishing collaboration with partners linked to cultural heritage protection and marketing into the Lower Danube countries. And it provided, as well, the floor for the Lower Danube countries to present the full variety of their Danube Limes sections and sites and the way they protect or intend to protect them.

## **2/ Development of a Joint Action Strategy for the Danube Limes from the Black Forest to the Black Sea.**

The above mentioned information and knowledge exchange contributed in a crucial way to the development of cross-border and transnational cooperation. The event involved also delegates from other than Danubian countries, where important Roman sites are situated – Italy at the first place. This was of particular importance for the information and know-how exchange for the identification, preservation and promotion of Roman sites. It will foster a the creation of a network of Limes sites and institutions to create a wide body of study, analysis and dissemination of the cultural and economic values of this distinctive heritage, as well as a common place for sharing a high quality knowledge and experience, with the added value of exchanging expertise and different approaches and stimulating cooperation within the Danube countries.

## **3/ Creation of brand modules for Danube Limes destinations.**

The conference offered also a new opportunity for a fruitful information and know-how exchange for the creation of brand modules for Danube Limes touristic destinations. Very instrumental were presentations not only by countries along the Danube Limes, or countries not on the Limes having Roman sites, but also from other European countries with outstanding cultural or natural sites. Those presentations underlined once more that a modern and efficient branding needs to have a holistic approach, including the whole environment of cultural sites. Top digital information transmission means have to be used, such as through smart mobile phones or Facebook, which are substantially more accessible especially to the young generation, and, last but not least, less expensive. Although all sites involved in the joint action strategy have in common their Roman origin, they may vary considerably in their character and importance. That is why an analysis of the regional impacts is necessary in order to define the desired improvements and to find the best partners. This allows to develop the most accurate conceptual strategies for individual Limes destinations. It prepares the basis for making the historic environment more intellectually accessible and enjoyable for being visited by both tourists and local residents. If we preserve and present our historical sites, we have to transmit this message not only to the foreign visitors, but, first of all, to our national and local competent institutions and to our citizens, especially the youth, by means of a knowledgeable society.

## **4/ Interregional cooperation in developing, improving and presenting individual Danube Limes sites.**

The conference and the project on which it was based aimed also at the synergy of all interested Danubian countries. Each of them is interested in being not only a transition, but also a touristic destination country. So there is a mutual interest that a visit in any of those concerned countries

stimulates visits of related sites in neighboring or other countries on the Danube Limes. That is why, in frames of this interregional cooperation responsible authorities and stakeholders will be provided with concrete results for their policies and the management of the Danube Limes heritage. National and cross-border follow-up initiatives were discussed and will be facilitated.