THE DANUBE LIMES BRAND PROJECT — MAIN OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

The Roman Limes is the single largest cultural heritage monument in Europe approved as a multi-national, “Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site” by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 2005. The Roman Empire, its provinces and outer boundaries are at the heart of Europe’s identity and history. The frontier zone along the river Danube, connecting 10 countries from the Black Forest to the Black Sea forms an impressive archaeological landscape with hundreds of military installations – fortresses, forts, watchtowers and civil settlements. Those monuments tell the vibrant story of the Roman frontiers centuries-long evolution and culture. The remains of the fortified frontier, both above and below ground, are often in a remarkably good condition. They have been well integrated into the landscape and certainly deserve more attention and care. The World Heritage designation on the Danube Limes heritage would guarantee a long-term and sustainable protection and development and also ensure a proper and adequate utilization of the cultural heritage resources and a great increase in awareness raising. More and better collaboration between the Danube countries and their relevant institutions will foster the establishment of a common cultural route, a joint action plan and a common marketing strategy.

DANUBE LIMES MONUMENTS FOR WORLD HERITAGE STATUS — THE BEGINNING

After the first Danube Limes Brand project presentation and an informal get-together at the XXII International Limes Congress in Ruse, Bulgaria from 6–11 September 2012 the project partnership was started at the Kick-off Meeting in Vienna on 12–13 October 2013 with activities in the core groups on UNESCO nomination dossiers and Danube Limes.
Branding proceeded with the identification of and contact with the main stakeholders, the start of the archaeological assessment on the individual Limes sections and Limes market surveys. In January 2013 the Danube Limes Brand project website www.danubelimesbrand.org went online. At the 2nd Project Meeting, held at the Archaeological Park and Research Center Viminacium in Serbia on 19–20 April 2013, dedicated to the central premises and conditions of the UNESCO inscriptions the partners benefitted from concrete experiences in defining and mapping core and buffer zones on monument preservation expertise from Great Britain (Hadrianswall World Heritage Site WHS), (Antonine Wall WHS), Germany (Upper German Raetian Limes WHS) and Slovakia (Danube Limes in Slovakia, prospective WHS). Beside our own meetings representatives of the project participated in several major international events, the DanubeHIKE and the 3rd International Danube Tourism conferences in Linz in autumn 2012, the Cultural Routes Workshop in Vienna March 8 2013 and the 1st Danube Culture Conference in Ulm, Germany 15–16 April 2013.

Starting from the Archaeological Park and Research Center in Viminacium the project partners explored the Iron Gate Gorge and its rich archaeological landscape, although some important Limes sites are not visible any more due to the flooding of the Djerdap region and can only be studied by archive material. The Serbian team colleagues guided and introduced us to the most important Limes fort sites of Diana and Pontes and the remains of Traian’s famous stone bridge, close to Kladovo. The study visit provided an ideal occasion to talk about and exchange individual knowledge how to secure the future of Limes key-sites including physical interventions, effective reconsolidation including further risk prevention and sustainable tourism and visitor management.
SPECTACULAR OPENING OF THE RECONSTRUCTED AMPHITHEATRE
in VIMINACIUM, SERBIA

On May 18 2013 the new exhibition “Constantine and the Edict of Milan in AD 313 — the Birth of Christianity in the Roman Provinces in Serbia” was opened during a reception at the Archaeological Park and Research Center Viminacium by the President of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić. The event was attended by several ministers from the Serbian government, members of the diplomatic corps including Prince Alexander Karadordević and Princess Catherine and ambassadors of other Danube countries and Italy. The event was celebrated by an opera performance of Giuseppe Verdi’s AIDA in the impressive, well preserved and partly reconstructed Roman amphitheatre in front of 2200 spectators.

CLOSING GAPS AND JOINING FORCES — DANUBE LIMES BRAND NETWORKING ACTIVITIES

During the Kick-off Meeting in Vienna the Leadpartner invited a representative of the Dutch Limes Bureau in charge of the Lower Rhine Limes for UNESCO inscription to closely collaborate with the Danube Limes partners.

Our Italian partner, the province of Rimini provided a link to the major cultural heritage “Route of the Phoenicians” which is closely related to the Roman heritage and offers a chance to enlarge our network further into the Mediterranean. For the first time representatives from all European Limes countries including the Danube area met at the 11th Bratislava Group Meeting organised by our Serbian partner in the Academy of Sciences in Belgrade on 18 April 2013. Here project partners took the opportunity to present their Danube Limes sections, exchange and capitalize on existing knowledge and link up with many other Limes WH managers. During the Forum Building Sciences 2013, organised by our colleagues from the Danube University in Krems on 8 May 2013, a closer relationship with the International Association of the Blue Shield and its president Mr. Karl Habsburg-Lothringen was agreed on.
UPCOMING EVENTS

The 3rd Project Meeting will be held at the Danube University in Krems on 8–9 July 2013 concentrating on the harmonization of national Limes Brand visions among partners. The Branding workshop will explore and exchange best practise examples in presenting and managing archaeological (Limes) sites in- and outside the partnership. From 16 to 18 September 2013 the 1st Danube Limes Brand Strategy Conference will take place in Bratislava, organised by the Monument Preservation Authority Bratislava (ERDF PP2) and the Károly Róbert College Gyöngyös (ERDF PP3) in close cooperation with the ARGE Donauländer Working Groups on Culture and Tourism in the Danube region. The conference will include a visit to the Archaeological Park Carnuntum in Lower Austria and a river cruise from Bratislava to Komárom in Hungary touching on several Limes forts and museums in the area. Among international, national and local stakeholders also representatives from two other SEE projects, “Danube Parks step 2.0“ and “TransDanube“ are invited to participate in the event.

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