

Danube

Rectors'

Conference



DRC
Danube Rectors' Conference

35th Anniversary
Publication



35 years of fostering higher education

15 countries of the Danube Region

15 Summer Schools with **28** participating nationalities

62 member universities with more than **1.000.000** students

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1 Welcome Address

” I commend the Danube Rectors’ Conference for its tireless efforts to further consolidate the European education and research chapter and thus building the solid foundation of a united European future.



The Danube region has always been a particularly important area to me at a personal level and keeps accompanying me throughout my whole life and career, so it does in my current position as European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement negotiations. The Danube Region in this regard is of vital importance as it is still the missing link for Europe's complete reunification.

The region is facing in particular two challenges. Firstly, the fact that this region is still divided in EU and non-EU countries makes common solutions to common challenges more difficult and cumbersome, in particular with regard to environmental, health and other standards and rules, including financing. Secondly, the Danube Region is still facing a considerable brain drain with thousands of young people leaving the region every year due to a lack of economic perspective.

Within the enlargement process framework we are working towards overcoming those challenges but a lot remains to be done. Universities and academies in this regard have a particular role and responsibility. I am deeply convinced that regions cannot prosper without influence of a well-performing university pushing its socio-economic and cultural activities and potential. In a more and more specialising world the specialisation of educational institutions is of particular importance. This influences not only the socio-economic development of a region but also spurs its attractiveness in general. Universities and academies bring out highly educated people who are able to deal with the challenges of modern societies and economies. In this regard it is important to ensure the necessary environment for these people to use these acquired capacities at the best.

The Danube Rectors' Conference with its vast network of almost 70 universities in the Danube Region is an educational and research powerhouse that fosters exchange of information on issues of common interest, contribute to the stability and the development of an open and democratic society in Europe, and is an important source of ideas for governments, national and international organisations and many others. Thus, it contributes since 35 years to continuous improvement of the excellence in the region and the living standard.

I very much hope that after 35 successful years the Danube Rectors' Conference can open a new chapter in working towards a common higher education curriculum for the Danube Region. This would be another milestone contributing to the creation of a true European Higher Education Area.

I commend the Danube Rectors' Conference for its tireless efforts to further consolidate the European education and research chapter and thus building the solid foundation of a united European future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Uealy', is positioned in the lower right area of the page.

2 Honorary and former Presidents

” The DRC, which, considering its geopolitical location, was soon recognized by the European University Association as an important network. **L. März**

” The DRC has been considered by its members as an effective forum for the identification of common regional and European values, and for the free exchange and mutual understanding of ideas and best practices. **F. Hudecz**

” It was, of course, a historic opportunity for the DRC to use its well-established academic network in the Danube region to support the EUSDR and to develop projects within the Strategy. **M. Gerzabek**

Allow me to briefly take you back to the “early days”: Pursuing the idea of facilitating communication and cooperation across political barriers, Rector Richard Plaschka of the University of Vienna launched the initiative to hold a meeting of the “Danube universities”, i.e. universities that are located along the Danube River. This small group meeting, which took place in April 1983 in Vienna, marked the beginning of what is now called the Danube Rectors’ Conference. It developed over the years to attain considerable size and visibility.

Hailing from cities from Ulm to Belgrade, the founders identified several relevant issues and themes that they wanted to be discussed, including common goals of university teaching and learning, research instruments, structures and financing, modern administration, budgeting and international cooperation and mobility.

In the context of political change throughout Europe in the years that followed, combined with the newly adopted Magna Charta Universitatum, the issue of university autonomy became an overriding theme that was on the agenda of not only the DRC, which, considering its geopolitical location, was soon recognized by the European University Association as an important network. As a consequence, cooperation with other networks began in due course. One example is the DRC’s cooperation with the ICA (Association for European Life Science Universities). The DRC is also involved in another initiative, put forward by the European Commission in 2010: the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). In this context, as in other significant activities, the DRC plays an important role to achieve what is rightfully expected of an academic association:

To establish and strengthen Europe’s leadership in the transition to a sustainable society, aims that are and will remain important in the years to come.

**Prof. Ferenc Hudecz, Ph.D., D.Sc. Eötvös L. University,
Member Hungarian Academy of Sciences, former DRC
President (2008 – 2009) and DRC Honorary President**

The Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC), established in Vienna in 1983, has become the largest university network in the Danube region, from the Black Forest to the Black Sea, over the past 35 years. The mission agreed upon by the rectors of the founding universities from the Eastern and Western parts of Europe (University of Vienna, University of Linz, University of Ulm and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest), to establish bridges for students and academics, has attracted broad attention from higher education institutions. From the very beginning, the DRC has been considered by its members as an effective forum for the identification of common regional and European values, and for the free exchange and mutual understanding of ideas and best practices. Today, the network encompasses 62 universities in 15 countries with around one million students.

The Danube Rectors' Conference has not only grown considerably in recent years, but has also expanded its agenda. In the field of higher education and research, the DRC has been recognized as a strategic partner by other European higher education networks like the European University Association, the Coimbra Group, UNICA and the Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference, and – just as importantly – by European and global organisations (such as the European Parliament, the Magna Charta Observatory and UNESCO). This was demonstrated by the DRC's Novi Sad declaration of 2010 (www.drc.uns.ac.rs/docs/NS_Declaration.pdf) and its involvement in formulating as well as implementing relevant parts of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The present booklet will enable the reader to recognize the progress of the DRC network over the past 35 years, to appreciate its achievements and, perhaps more importantly, to discuss its weaknesses, to propose novel solutions, and to identify and analyse new challenges for higher education in general, and in Europe in particular.

On this celebratory occasion, I wish further success to the DRC in representing, with dedication and balance, the perspectives of individuals who are intent on pursuing the best education for their development, as well as the viewpoints of local, regional and European communities, which need highly educated individuals in order to enhance local, regional and European conditions, standards of living and intercultural environments.

Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Dr.h.c.mult.
Martin Gerzabek, Deputy, Institute of Soil Research (IBF),
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences,
Vienna, former DRC President (2012–2013)

It was my great honour to serve the DRC as vice-president and president during a time of great opportunities for the Danube region. On December 8th, 2010, the European Commission announced the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. This was, of course, a historic opportunity for the DRC to use its well-established academic network in the Danube region to support the EUSDR and to develop projects within the Strategy, specifically in priority area 7 (PA 7), “To develop the Knowledge Society through research, education and information technologies”. The two projects developed by the DRC, DREAM (Danube River Research and Management) and Danube Future, received considerable support by Commissioner Johannes Hahn, Erhard Busek (IDM) and Rector Miroslav Vesković (a former president of the DRC and coordinator of PA 7), and were designated flagship projects of the EUSDR. This has been a great achievement for the DRC, as to this day, these two projects are amongst the most successful projects of the Strategy.

For the DRC, these dynamic times implied the necessity to professionalize the association itself. During my presidency, we aimed to set the administrative framework of the DRC by registering the DRC as an international organisation in Brussels after rewriting the statutes. We succeeded. Two important changes in the statutes concerned the duration of the presidency functions. Now the vice-presidents and presidents remain in office for two years instead of one year, ensuring a more efficient management of the organisation by reducing transition periods. Another measure was setting up a permanent secretariat in Vienna, Austria, which the IDM has been running with great professionalism. This also includes the management of the bank account in Austria.

I congratulate the DRC on its anniversary and wish it a lot of success for the future, as well as continued mutual understanding amongst the DRC members as an important basis for further developing the academic network of the Danube region.

3 Foreword

” The DRC, which, considering its geopolitical location, was soon recognized by the European University Association as an important network.

Dear DRC members,
dear readers of this anniversary publication,
I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our partners and especially the former presidents and the honorary presidents for the hard work they have put into making this organisation what it is today: a strong network of more than 60 universities throughout the Danube region. At the same time, I would also like to use the opportunity to write a few words about the future challenges for the DRC.

As my presidency comes to an end, I am certain that my successors will continue the many different activities initiated and supported by this unique organisation. I am humbled to have been given the opportunity to contribute to them, and I am also proud that Danube University Krems – an institution younger than the DRC – has been able to shape these developments.

From the very beginning, universities have been a uniting factor in Europe, through their language (Latin) and the similarity of their departments (medicine, law, philosophy). Even during the Cold War era, universities and university networks – in particular the DRC – were among the driving forces in overcoming division.

Today, Erasmus+, another contribution of institutions of higher education and their networks, can be considered one of the biggest success stories of European integration. The DRC can contribute, especially through its networking capacity, to also fostering this success story in the Danube region, a region that still has a lot of potential for growth, and not only in this respect.

As an associated partner of EDU-LAB, which brings together partners from the higher education sector, business organisations, national public authorities and policymakers in the Danube Transnational Programme, the DRC also operates at the intersection of academia, politics and the private sector.

Nowadays, we benefit from a variety of university networks bringing together experts across many disciplines to share insights on the challenges of university management from an interdisciplinary perspective. Promoting interdisciplinarity is not only a matter for the rectors, it is also done by means of cross-border research and joint Master's programmes.

To name but one example, some of our member universities have successfully implemented the Danube AgriFood Master (DAFM).

Nevertheless, university networks face challenges as Europe integrates: more and more minilateralisms and macro-regional approaches like the EUSDR are coming into existence, with overlapping target countries (or, in the case of universities, member institutions), and covering similar topics and aspects. We should therefore focus on the added value of cooperation and the results university networks can achieve. This should not, of course, prevent us from expanding and growing together, and the DRC is doing so. As an observer in the EUSDR Priority Area 7 Steering Group, we are actively involved in the revision of the Action Plan of this macro-regional initiative. Additionally, the DRC is supporting the PA7 flagship project Danube:Future, on which you will find more information in chapter 7 of this publication.

As Commissioner Hahn has mentioned, we have contributed to achieving the goal of a true European Higher Education Area, and we will continue to do so. Universities from new EU Member States, candidate countries and Eastern Partnership countries are at our core. This is a unique opportunity and, at the same time, a challenge; the DRC has a responsibility to further engage, as it has done in the past 35 years, and I am optimistic that we will be able to take on this responsibility.

I would like to conclude with a quote attributed to the Austrian writer Karl-Markus Gauß: “The Danube is our continent’s river of destiny; what succeeds on the Danube will be successful in all of Europe!”

4 Recent Developments

” Since the DRC started with three universities in 1983, more than 60 institutions in 15 countries have become members of the network, including the first university from Moldova in 2014.

It is quite challenging to take on the tasks of an institution that is almost as old as oneself. When I began to work for the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) in November 2014, one of my very first official duties was to attend the Annual Meeting of the DRC at the University of Belgrade. Between finding a flat and organising my move to Vienna, there was little time left to be nervous; at least that is what my memory tells me now. The fact that I felt very welcome among all the people involved in the various projects of the DRC definitely played a huge role. The general enthusiasm among the participants of the Annual Meeting and the genuine joy of meeting others with the same passion for the Danube region was exciting and enriching. I wanted to become a part of it, and so I tried to bring myself up to speed as quickly as possible. Others will have to judge if I have been successful in doing so, but I can definitely say that I have arrived – in Vienna, in the Danube region, and at the DRC.

Besides the people involved in the DRC presidency in particular – first and foremost the rectors, of course, but also the vice-rectors and IRO staff – what helped was that I had got to know the DRC even before 2014. I was a speaker at the DRC Summer School in 2012 and have returned ever since, as a workshop leader, then as a co-organiser, and now as coordinator. I also feel humbled to have been able to contribute to the development of this project that is truly one of the core projects of the DRC. Moreover, it celebrated an anniversary this year with its 15th edition.

Before I provide a brief overview of what has happened in the past five years since the last anniversary publication, I want to say thank you to everyone involved. It has been an amazing experience, and I am looking forward to future developments.

Permanent Secretariat established

One decisive step was certainly the further development of the newly established Permanent Secretariat of the DRC at the IDM. Since January 2013, a permanent seat of the secretariat was institutionalised, ending its rotation from country to country with the presidency. This ensures institutional continuity and also shares the responsibility for the additional workload that ensues for rectors after taking over the presidency.

The secretariat is responsible for editing and mailing DRC newsletters and other relevant mailings, for memberships, invoicing of membership fees, the bank account, contact and address management, as well as website and intranet management.

With the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat, a DRC bank account was opened to keep all financial matters in one place and not have to transfer funds from one presidency to the next. Together with the accounting and controlling staff at the IDM, my predecessor Bernd Janning did a tremendous job implementing this endeavour. By mastering this challenge, they significantly improved the organisational aspect of the DRC. Now the administration of membership fees, payment of expenses and also funding of activities of the DRC are handled by the Secretary General after approval by the presidency and together with the controlling department at the IDM.

Fostering communications

A total of ten newsletters are sent out to our members and other subscribers every year (monthly, with combined two-month versions during summer and winter breaks). Since April 2015, a new design has been implemented to improve readability. Instead of only plain text, we can now include pictures, links and share buttons, which has also contributed to a higher number of visitors and page views on the DRC website. Although the newsletter's reach could still be increased (especially after losing subscriptions due to GDPR legislation), the open rate is around 10% higher than that of comparable non-profit organisations' newsletters, and the click rate is four times higher than the average.

The new design of our website went live after the General Assembly in 2015. The website now has a new, clearer layout more in line with the CI of the DRC. Improved user-friendliness makes relevant information about the DRC more accessible. A sub-page featuring our former presidents illustrates the rich history of our organisation even better. The website offers

a good balance between static information (about the DRC's history, members, presidency, secretariat, statutes etc.) and dynamic content such as the newsletter archive and the news section. In 2018, we added the new "Presidency news" section, which informs our members about the activities of the presidency throughout the year. This makes our efforts even more visible and also documents the various fields in which the DRC presidency is active. Contributions coming from a variety of sources ensure that the website functions as the basis of our network, in conjunction with the newsletter. A new Facebook page for the DRC has also been established. The secretariat is working on further improving communication channels with all partners and is open to any contributions in this regard.

Extending the network in the Danube region

The DRC has further grown over the past five years. Since the DRC started with three universities in 1983, more than 60 institutions in 15 countries have become members of the network, including the first university from Moldova in 2014. Although some members have decided to leave our network, our continuing expansion along the Danube is something to be proud of. Connections to other university networks have been expanded and strengthened as well. At the Annual Meeting in Maribor in 2015, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the Alps-Adriatic Rectors' Conference (AARC). In the same year, the DRC became an affiliate member of the European University Association (EUA).

The membership fees enable not only administration through a permanent secretariat, but also foster cooperation between the universities in our network. Therefore, a fund for incentives has been established and awarded to the joint DRC and AARC project Danube:Future (see chapter 7). In the past two years, the DRC furthermore provided eight scholarships in total for students of our member institutions to participate in the summer schools "Alternative Economic And Monetary Systems" and "Green.Building.Solutions". The DRC Summer School, which will be presented in the next chapter, is also supported financially.

New members of the Permanent Committee

Besides the Presidency and the General Assembly, the DRC also has a Permanent Committee in which every country is represented by one member institution. During the last election of the presidency at the Annual Meeting at Danube University Krems in 2016, the following universities were approved on a preliminary basis to represent their countries in the Permanent Committee:

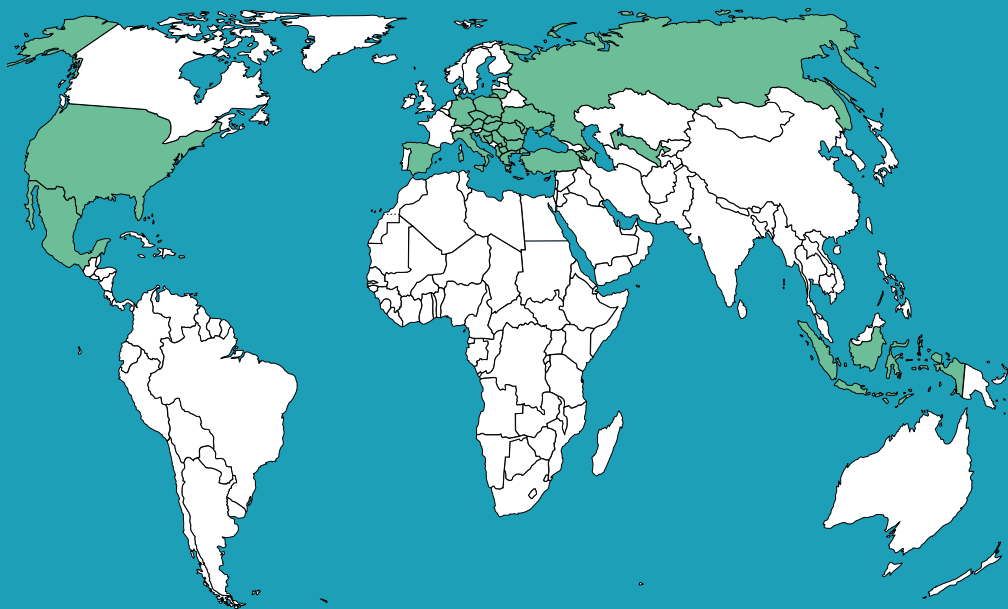
Austria	Danube University Krems
Bulgaria	University of Ruse
Croatia	University of Zagreb
Czech Republic	Czech University for Life Sciences
Hungary	Eötvös Loránd University
Italy	University of Trieste
Moldova	State Agrarian University Moldova
Romania	USAMV Cluj Napoca
Serbia	University of Belgrade
Kosovo	University of Prishtina
Slovakia	Comenius University of Bratislava
Slovenia	University of Maribor
Ukraine	Uzhhorod National University

The DRC aims to enhance this cooperation and is looking forward to appointing representatives for all countries during this years' election.

This brief overview of recent developments has shown that the DRC looks back on five years marked by a tremendous amount of activities in the Danube region. Allow me to use this occasion for another personal note at the end of this retrospective: It has been an honour to work with all these brilliant people within the DRC. To name all of them would exceed the scope of this publication, so I will simply say thank you very much to all those I had the privilege to encounter during four years of working for the DRC, and I look forward to continuing to do so.

5 DRC Summer Schools

” More than 300 students, post-graduates, experts and lecturers have participated over the past 15 years in the DRC Summer Schools.



Nationalities of the participants (28 countries):

Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Kosovo, Lithuania, Macedonia, Mexico, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, USA, Uzbekistan

The Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC) Summer School on Regional Co-operation is one of the core activities of our network. More than 300 students, post-graduates, experts and lecturers have participated over the past 15 years. It truly is an exceptional format of scientific cooperation in the Danube region. Initiated by the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) and International House Pécs in 2003, it aims to promote regional co-operation among young social scientists seeking to establish a network dealing with the issue of regional co-operation from a Central European perspective. After every summer school, participants are given the opportunity to publish their research, preserving the results of discussions on a broad range of topics. Nine DRC member universities have served as hosts over the past 15 years. The DRC has not only been a financial supporter from the very start; the topics are also proposed and selected under its intellectual sponsorship.

Without our partners, none of this would have been possible. We are grateful for the support of the Central European Initiative, the Province of Upper Austria, the Province of Lower Austria, ERSTE Bank Group, ERSTE Foundation, the Hanns Seidel Foundation, ARGE Donauländer, the Visegrad Fund, the City of Vienna, Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, the Province of Styria, the City of Graz, the Europe for Citizens Programme, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe and Via Donau.

A summer school's success also depends on the dedication of its participants. In the workshops, young academics from various countries in the Danube region and beyond have had the opportunity to present their research related to the workshop topics. Over time, different formats have been implemented, including American-style debate, cartoon drawings, policy recommendations and, most recently, future scenarios for the Danube region that could be discussed with actual policymakers.

Various visits related to the general topics in the vicinity of the host universities enabled the participants to experience the rich culture of our region. In the next chapter, four of our former participants will tell us more about their experience at the DRC Summer School. We are also looking forward to the panel discussion to be held during our Annual Meeting at

the Comenius University in Bratislava, where we will further report on our activities.

As of this year, we have also made all information on the DRC Summer School available on our website: www.drc-danube.org/drc-summer-school

Our next DRC Summer School will take place at the University of Zagreb. From 2020 on, we will work on a new format, streamlining activities together with the Danube:Future project. We are excited to see our network grow, and look forward to fostering even more regional cooperation in the future.

DRC Summer Schools

- 1st DRC Summer School *The Europe of Regions for the Regions of Europe*, 8–14 August 2004 in **Pécs, Hungary**
- 2nd DRC Summer School *Social, Economic and Political Cohesion in the Danube Region in Light of EU Enlargement*, 4–12 July 2005 in **Eisenstadt, Austria**
- 3rd DRC Summer School *The Future of Europe – A View from the Danube Region*, 6–13 August 2006 in **Dubrovnik, Croatia**
- 4th Summer School *European Higher Education in a Changing World*, 22–29 July 2007 in **Pécs, Hungary**
- 5th DRC Summer School *Changing Dynamics of the Danubian Region – New Neighbourhood Policy in the EU*, 29 June – 6 July 2008 in **Krems, Austria**
- 6th DRC Summer School *Regime Change and Transition across the Danubian Region*, 5–12 July 2009 in **Budapest, Hungary**
- 7th DRC Summer School *The Western Balkans: Lessons from the Past and Future Prospects – A View from the Danube Region*, 25 July – 1 August 2010 in **Pécs, Hungary**
- 8th DRC Summer School *EU Strategy for the Danube Region – Perspectives for the Future*, 3–10 July 2011 in **Vienna, Austria**
- 9th DRC Summer School *Challenges for the European Union in the Next Decade – A View from the Danube Region*, 1–8 July 2012 in **Maribor, Slovenia**

- 10th DRC Summer School *Old Neighbours – New Policies in the Countries along the Danube and the Black Sea Region*, 7–14 July 2013 in **Budapest, Hungary**
- 11th DRC Summer School 1914–2014: *100 years after World War I – Chances and Challenges for the Danube Region*, 6–13 July 2014 in **Novi Sad, Serbia**
- 12th DRC Summer School *Recent Political Changes and their Implications in the Danube Region*, 5–12 July 2015 in **Vienna, Austria**
- 13th DRC Summer School *Post-Socialist Transformations in the Danube Region – 25 Years After the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, 3–10 July 2016 in **Prague, Czech Republic**
- 14th DRC Summer School *New Borders Between Old Neighbours – Return of History in the Danube Region?*, 2–9 July 2017 in **Pécs, Hungary**
- 15th DRC Summer School *Modernizing Europe: Generating Accountability*, 1–8 July 2018 in **Krems, Austria** (Photo)



6 Testimonials

” I have become part of an inciting academic environment that encourages an interdisciplinary and trans-national perspective, where the participants can develop critical, reflexive and comparative views on the discussed topics. **G. Cretu**



I am truly grateful for the amazing DRC Summer Schools. I had the chance to participate several times and they were really the experience of a lifetime. They have not only deepened my understanding of cooperation and development in the Danube Region, by stimulating the fruitful exchange of professional / academic experiences and ideas between experts in the area of regional cooperation, but, most important, I

have become part of the DRC Summer School family. Each year the DRC Summer School has been similar to a family reunion thanks to the great organization team that made everybody feel at home wherever the events were held. It offered me the opportunity to make good friends and to meet each other again.

I have become part of an inciting academic environment that encourages an inter-disciplinary and trans-national perspective, where the participants can develop critical, reflexive and comparative views on the discussed topics.

The intellectual interactions together with the leisure activities of the DRC summer schools have stimulated both my professional and personal development. The summer school offered the further benefit of opening up publication opportunities in Proceedings volumes. I could use the information and skills acquired during DRC the summer schools in my professional activities as teaching and research assistant and as independent researcher. Many thanks for everything, my dear friends! I would love to meet again sometime!

Dr. Sergii Glebov, Associate Professor, Ph.D. in Political Science and International Relations, Department of International Relations; Deputy Dean, School of International Relations, Political Science and Sociology; Senior Research Fellow, Center for International Studies.



The field of International Relations, which includes European, Regional, Security Studies, Trans-border cooperation, Foreign Policy and much more, has been a subject of a deep analysis in the countries of Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) for many years. Special attention has been concentrated on that part of CEE which is also known as a Borderland Europe. This part of the post-Soviet space which borders the fron-

tiers of the EU and NATO used to be and still remains a part of a big geo-political puzzle for the perspective cohesion of different social and security spaces in Europe and Eurasia. Problems of interaction between countries of the Danube Region and around the Black Sea were always in the focus of the DRC activity, including annual Summer Schools which I had a luck to participate several times in both in a capacity of a participant and a lecturer. DRC network made a huge impact on the international community in the region, expanding expertise academically and practically around the countries of the growing democracy. DRC Summer Schools, including volume proceedings I had a chance to publish in, played their great role in networking young experts from different countries with variety of backgrounds to ensure sustainable development of one of the most explosive post-bipolar Borderlands. Being at the Odessa Mechnikov National University for many years now, I have gained an innovative experience of doing common work for better understanding a capacity of the democratic choice and possibilities of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration here in Ukraine. Some of the skills and ideas obtained during different events in the frame of DRC were successfully implemented into the courses I teach for the students of the School of International Relations and Foreign Policy Systemology of the Black Sea region appeared to be one of them. No need to point out, that strong and friendly professional ties with my colleagues from the DRC network serve as a good platform for continuing work of the expert's community in favour of all interested and motivated partners.

Basia Maliszewska,

university lecturer, translator and interpreter and business trainer



As an academic teacher, when I think of summer, I think of free time and travelling. School is not part of the picture. However, back in 2014 the two spheres overlapped, and I travelled during my holidays to participate in a summer school organized by DRC in Novi Sad, Serbia. The location was significant, as the theme of the event was “1914-2014: 100 Years after World War I – Chances and Challenges for the

Danube Region.”

I definitely felt how the historical and political tensions played out, through the parallels between the start of World War I, present in the theme of the summer school, and the crisis in Crimea and eastern Ukraine that was happening at that time. The threat of war seemed very real. That made me even more grateful for the opportunity to participate in this superb project, which enhanced understanding and cooperation among people from different regions.

The summer school turned out to be both educational and entertaining: wonderful people - both the leaders, teachers and lecturers, as well as the participants themselves - a program full of interesting lectures and workshops; many opportunities to exchange ideas and opinions, not only during formal meetings, but also in our free time (for example, during delicious meals at Plava Frajla, a local restaurant); and sightseeing around some of Serbia’s best-known tourist sites.

Today, I continue to use the knowledge and experience from my time in Novi Sad in my work as a teacher, trying to spread positive curiosity about other people, encourage my students to participate in international projects, and foster collaboration.

Galya Vladova, research associate at HafenCity University Hamburg and former DRC Summer School participant.



Being at the DRC Summer School was a great experience and opportunity for me to learn from one of today's leaders, scientists and practitioners in the Danube Region. I came to the DRC Summer School in Budapest (2013) and Prague (2016) seeking exchange of ideas and a floor to present my research. What I really like about the DRC Summer School is that it brings together a good mixture of participants from all countries

in the Danube Region and is specifically oriented to discussions and exchange on the common challenges we are facing in our region. I found the School highly stimulating for my current research on territorial cooperation in Bulgaria. Some of the things I have really learned how diverse the research approaches in the different countries and fields are and need to be in order to push the development of the region forward. Another very big win from the attendance of the DRC Summer School was the possibility to make close friendships and establish professional networks for potential future collaboration. The Summer School offers excellent support behind and people that help you to keep in contact and work together. I am happy to see continued improvement and new topics in the School's agenda and I strongly believe in the importance and benefits of this cooperation format.



I still remember my first DRC Summer School, it was a decade ago in 2008. At that time, I was an MA student at the University of Pécs and a project manager at one of the co-organizers. I remember that not just because of the great atmosphere and friends I met there, but because I was not just a participant: my colleague delivered a baby and I had to jump in as a member of the organizing team in the last weeks of preparations. Besides the obvious stress, I enjoyed it – and stayed there as an organizer for the upcoming years as well. I have been to Krems, Vienna, Budapest, Pécs, Maribor, Prague and Novi Sad, the venues and universities were different, the whole opportunity was unique. Discussing the position of the region, hoping for a brighter future, working on a network, that was always essential with these Summer Schools.

During these years, I finished the MA and the PhD studies as well, and the DRC Summer School helped me how I should look at the world. Different identities define us, identities which – in some cases – were 'created' against each other. But that one week every year showed me, and to all participants, that we are not different at all. That truth we always should keep in mind, that truth none of the governments and political parties can take away. That's why I am happy to prepare for my eleventh DRC Summer School.

7 Danube Future

” Danube:Future is a flagship project of EUSDR PA 7 and a networking activity of the Danube Rectors’ Conference.

Mag. Dr. phil. **Gertrud Haidvogel**, Institute of
Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management,
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

Univ.-Prof. Ing. Dr. phil. **Verena Winiwarter**,
Institute of Social Ecology, University of Natural
Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

A sustainable future for the Danube River Basin as a challenge for the interdisciplinary humanities

Sustainable development entails a principal departure from the current development pathways and will require a transition embracing society at large. Higher education will play a crucial role for the transition, but it remains unclear how this role will be designed. European research and higher education have not focused on interdisciplinary cooperation. In particular, the humanities have not been stimulated to bring their expertise into an interdisciplinary portfolio of knowledge necessary for a sustainability transition. Planning such a sustainable future is impossible without sound knowledge about the past.

The Danube River Basin (DRB) has been changed by humankind for millennia. It consists of highly dynamic ecological and political systems. The river basin is shared by 19 countries with approx. 81 million people, and covers ca. 800.000 km². Humans have lived in it from at least the Mesolithic period onwards. Many environmental problems threaten a sustainable, prosperous future, environmental legacies abound and current conflicts of use are particularly intense in its riverine landscapes. The long-term and recent history of conflict and nationalism has to be taken into account when developing policies, as the Danube, like most rivers in the world is neither a cultural nor a natural space but a hybrid, socio-natural site, where the interplay of humans with the environment has taken place over long periods. Communities have had and still have to deal with cultural and natural legacies of past interventions, so the current situation of the DRB cannot be understood, and hence a sustainable future not be planned, unless their common past is accounted for.

Sustainability problems transcend disciplinary boundaries and need inter- and transdisciplinary approaches. Rivers are fragile ecosystems, therefore their sustainable development is particularly challenging.

Danube:Future contributes to the sustainable development of the DRB by bringing the humanities into an interdisciplinary dialogue. Societal and natural legacies limit the possibilities for future developments, so it is necessary to identify and tackle hybrid legacies.

Among the urgent environmental problems of the DRB are hydromorphological change, pollution, flooding, loss of biodiversity and the demise of fisheries. A humanities' perspective on the effects and adaptability of societies to global change is urgently needed. Interdisciplinary research involving the humanities and sciences will link long-term changes in governance, values, society's structures, developments in the social, economic or legal situation with changes of biodiversity, sediment mobility, soils, climate, precipitation, discharge patterns and water quality. This will enable to develop policies for sustainable development of the Danube River Basin. Sustainable development of a multi-lingual, multi-national and multi-cultural region presents a major challenge calling for novel solutions.

Danube:Future is a flagship project of EUSDR PA 7, and will remain a networking activity of the Danube Rectors' Conference after its pilot phase ends. "International Schools" (held in 2013–15, 2017 and 2018 so far) offer young scholars of DRB universities and research institutions training in interdisciplinary sustainability research as well as in proposal writing. A database of literature and projects can be used by students and help them with their International School projects.



Danube:Future International School 2014, Gorizia, Italy

8 Annual Meeting

” The main aims of the Annual Meetings are exchange, knowledge transfer, and networking.

Fostering a shared knowledge, as well as the certainty of achieving more together is what lies behind the Annual Meetings of the Central-East Europe Universities. The preservation of such an historical institution as the European Universities became necessary when the globalization process seemed to gain inches in every field, bringing new, fast and constant changes into the universities methods. For such reason – together with a perspective of a coordinated growth – served as the background of the development of these Annual Meetings. Thus, the main aims are exchange, knowledge transfer, and networking.

The conference host, always a DRC member university, changes yearly and is linked to the current DRC presidency.

The very precursor idea came from the Universities of Vienna and Ulm, which have actually been the driving forces of the whole process. First of all, some preliminary meetings with only two rectors, Professor Richard Plaschka from the University of Vienna and Professor Mathias Brückmann, from the University of Ulm took place in 1982.

Afterwards, the representatives of Universities of Ulm, Vienna, Linz and Budapest met in Vienna for the first time in April 1983. Nevertheless, it was not until September of the same year that the DRC was officially created in Ulm by the initial Universities of Ulm, Vienna, Linz, Budapest, Passau, Novi Sad and Belgrade.



Our partners and speakers during the Annual Meetings receive the bronze medals designed by artist Adam Kovalčík.

Annual Conferences held since the year 2000

- **“Universities as the Centers of Regional Development”**, 7th–9th November 2018, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia.
- **“Responsibilities of Danube Universities as Promoters of EUSDR”** 8th–10th November 2017, University of Zagreb, Croatia.
- **“Vision, Knowledge, Prosperity: The Universities Contribution to EUSDR. Good Practices and Challenges”** 9th–11th November 2016, Danube University Krems, Austria.
- **“Harmonization of the Danube Higher Education Area”** 4th–7th November 2015, University of Maribor, Slovenia.
- **“Digital Culture – The Synergy between Higher Education and ICT”** 6th–7th November 2014, University of Belgrade in Belgrade, Serbia.
- **“Innovation and research in the Danube Region”** 7th–8th November 2013, University for Agriculture and Life Sciences (USAMV) in Cluj-Napoca, Romania.
- **“Building bridges across turbulent waters”** 21st–23rd November 2012, Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic.
- **Annual Meeting and Conference**, 17th–18th November 2011, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Austria.
- **“Integration, International Cooperation, Quality and Sustainable Development”** 26th–27th November 2010, University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, Bulgaria.
- **Annual Meeting and Conference**, 4th–6th February 2010, University of Novi Sad, Serbia.
- **Annual Meeting and Conference**, 25th–27th September 2008, Eötvös Lóránd University in Budapest, Hungary.
- **“Strategic Management and New Challenges of Competitive Universities in the Danube Region”** 23rd–25th September 2007, Danube University Krems, Austria.



- **“Lisbon Strategy: the role of universities and competitiveness of the Danube region”** 21st–23rd September 2006, University of Maribor, Slovenia.
- **“University governance and finance”** 29th–1st October 2005, University of Zagreb, Croatia.
- **Annual Meeting and Conference**, 25th September 2004 at the Babes-Bolyai University, Romania.
- **“Regional Cooperation in Higher Education”** 26th–27th September 2003, Charles University, Prague.
- **“Quality Assurance in Open European Environment – the DRC Experience”** 19th– 21st September 2002 in Bratislava, Slovakia.
- **Annual Meeting and Conference**, 2001, Pécs, Hungary.
- **Annual Meeting and Conference**, 14th–15th September 2000 in Maribor, Slovenia.

9 Danubius Awards

- 2011 **Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Klaus Roth**
Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich
- 2012 **Univ.-Prof. Dr. Miroslav J. Vesko*vić***
University of Novi Sad
- 2014 **Univ.-Prof. Dr. András Inotai**
Hungarian Academy of Sciences
- 2015 **Em. Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. DDr. h.c. Leopold März**
University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna
- 2016 **Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ingeborg Fialová**
Palacky-University Olomouc
- 2017 **Univ.-Prof. Dr. Maro*š* Finka**
Technical University Bratislava

The Danubius Award was created in 2011 by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research (today Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Research) and the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) with the intention to honour people with extraordinary achievements in their scientific activity and output in relation to the Danube Region. Within a rotation system in one year achievements in the fields of humanities, social and cultural studies are awarded, in the following year achievements in the fields of life sciences.

Since 2014 this award is complemented with a specific prize for young scientists – the so-called “Danubius Young Scientists Award”. The award seeks to encourage young scientists to engage themselves in the scientific examination of problems and questions specifically related to the Danube and to stimulate the scientific community in the Danube Region. Universities, Academies of Sciences and Research Institutions in all 14 countries of the Danube Region (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Romania and Ukraine) are encouraged to nominate suitable and promising candidates that then are assessed by an international expert jury. The highest ranked candidate of each of the countries that submitted eligible nominations will be awarded with the prize.



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Danubius Award Ceremony 2017, Zagreb

Previous Meetings





10 Membership and further DRC's Info

” Being a part of our network means fostering and supporting the regional cooperation within de Danube region, as well as improving higher education and research.



AUSTRIA

- 1 Danube University Krems
- 2 Graz University of Technology
- 3 Johannes Kepler University Linz
- 4 Montanuniversität Leoben
- 5 University of Graz
- 6 University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna
- 7 University of Vienna

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

- 8 University of East Sarajevo
- 9 University of Mostar
- 10 University of Sarajevo
- 11 University of Tuzla

BULGARIA

- 12 “Angel Kanchev” University of Ruse

CROATIA

- 13 Josip Juraj Strossmayer University
- 14 Juraj Dobrila University of Pula
- 15 University of Zadar
- 16 University of Zagreb

CZECHIA

- 17 Czech University of Life Sciences Prague
- 18 Czech Technical University
- 19 Masaryk University
- 20 Tomas Bata University Zlin

GERMANY

- 21 Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt
- 22 Ulm University
- 23 University Regensburg

HUNGARY

- 24 Andrassy University Budapest
- 25 Corvinus University Budapest
- 26 Eötvös Loránd University Budapest
- 27 Semmelweis University of Medicine
- 28 University of Pécs

ITALY

- 29 Free University of Bozen-Bolzano
- 30 University of Trieste

MOLDOVA

- 31 State Agrarian University of Moldova

ROMANIA

- 32 “Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad
- 33 Babes-Bolyai University
- 34 Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine King Michael I. of Romania Timisoara
- 35 National School of Political Science and Public Administration Bucharest
- 36 Ovidius University of Constanta
- 37 Spiru Haret University
- 38 Transilvania University of Brasov
- 39 University Politehnica of Bucharest
- 40 University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca
- 41 University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Bucharest
- 42 University of Craiova
- 43 University of Oradea
- 44 University of Pitesti
- 45 University Stefan cel Mare Suceava
- 46 Vasile Goldis Western University of Arad
- 47 West University of Timisoara

SERBIA

- 48 Megatrend University
- 49 University of Belgrade
- 50 University of Defense
- 51 University of Novi Sad

KOSOVO

- 52 University of Prishtina

SLOVAKIA

- 53 Alexander Dubček University of Trenčín
- 54 Comenius University Bratislava
- 55 Constantine the Philosopher University Nitra
- 56 Slovak Agricultural University Nitra
- 57 Trnava University

SLOVENIA

- 58 University of Maribor
- 59 University of Nova Gorica
- 60 University of Primorska

UKRAINE

- 61 Odessa National I. I. Mechnikov University
- 62 Uzhhorod National University

We kindly invite eligible members – recognized universities and institutes within the region – to join our team by submitting a membership request. Some of the benefits of becoming part of DRC include professional updating during conferences and workshops, promoting the creation of communities of practice by attending DRC events, and active integration in the relevant action groups for the Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR).

Further information about the membership application, along with ongoing activities is available on our website (www.drc-danube.org). To keep track of our daily work check our Facebook Pages (@DRCSummerSchool and @DanubeRectorsConference).

If you have general requests and questions concerning newsletter, website, intranet, membership management, and membership fees don't hesitate to contact the DRC Secretariat operated by IDM at Hahngasse 6/24 (1090, Wien, Austria).

Contact details:

DRC Secretary General
Mag. Sebastian Schäffer, M.A.
info@drc-danube.org
+43 (1) 319 72 58-32

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