

news REGION

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Save the date:

**15th Conference of
European Regions
and Cities**
„Europe & Peace:
1919 – 1989 – 2019“

06th – 08th of October 2019
Salzburg, AT



Postcard of the Arad Szabadság-Square 1915

Expert conference in Arad, Romania

Sustainable tourism and Habsburg's heritage in CEE

**3 Smart Regions
Expert Conference:**
Transborder regional
cooperation needed

**10 EU Summit
in Bucharest:**
Declaration on regional
future of the EU

**12 Regional and
Local Elections:**
Abruzzo, Sardinia, Trentino,
South Tyrol and Salzburg

IRE Expert Conference in Arad, Romania

On the trails of the Habsburg in Western Romania

On 27 March 2019, the Institute of the Regions of Europe and the regional government of Arad organized an international conference in Arad „On the trails of the Habsburg in Western Romania“ for exchanging views and experiences on how to intensify sustainable tourism and promoting the European Cultural Routes.

The House of Habsburg was one of the most influential dynasties in Europe. To a certain extent, the history of the Habsburgs is also the history of Europe. For almost a thousand years – from 996 to 1918 – this ruling family had a decisive impact on the history by contributing to the geographical design but most important the fate of Europe. Throughout the continent, castles, palaces, magnificent churches, monasteries, abbeys and outstanding museums show that this famous dynasty did not only shape and influence the common history and art but also our culture – binding the continent as one.

The Habsburg’s cultural heritage

The task to obtain our common history from Western to Central and Eastern Europe is not only to preserve the cultural sites, but also to make them available to the public, says **Franz Schausberger**, the Chairman of the IRE. A possibility for preservation and sustainable tourism for the regions are cultural routes – inviting to visit many of the places, which are reminiscent of the Habsburgs: Paths of more than a thousand kilometres of knowledge, commonalities and friendship and of relationships across borders and between the Nations. So

far, there is a route from France to Austria: the „Via Habsburg“.

A similar cultural route for the eastern and south-eastern European area, where the House of Habsburg decisively shaped the historical development, is yet missing. The region of Arad in Romania – presented at the conference by both the President of the Arad County Council **Iustin Cionca** and the Vice-mayor of Arad **Calin Bibart** – is now trying to connect to the rest of Europe by establishing its own cultural route of the Habsburg heritage and to strengthen the historical and cultural links. In the Habsburg’s empire, Arad was an important defence outpost in the east – the fortress is one of a kind.

Therefore the region of Arad is funding the renovation of the fortress and encourages the private sector to renovate the 122 historic buildings in the City of Arad – most of them are private property and four are of national interest. In a former communist country, public funding to preserve private property is quite problematic and seen as an illegitimate intervention. The region’s government tries to motivate the owners to renovate and preserve the historic building through tax perks. So in the next three



Iustin Cionca,
President of the
Arad County Council

Conference partners:



Arad County



City of Arad



to five years Arad's central City could be fully redeveloped. Arad's Universities is also involved and as **Ramona Lile**, Rector of the Aurel Vlaicu University and **Cristian Bente**, Pro-rector of the Vasile Goldis Western University reassure: They grant and oversee the precise historically preservation. The museum joins in as well, since it has more than 70.000 pieces with a connection to the House of Habsburg, states **Constantin Inel**, Head of Arad's Museum.

Sustainable tourism to increase regional development

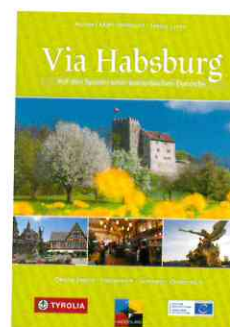
The regional and the city's government are encouraging the private citizens to embrace their cultural heritage and further on contribute in preserving it. Sustainable tourism could mean better and more development, financial stability, a higher living standard and better life quality – cross-border and above all for less developed regions, **Andrei Ando**, the co-organizer of the IRE-conference and Director of the Arad County Council and **Konstantinos Nifas**, Programme Manager at the European Commission agree. A challenge is the less developed local and regional mobility, since Romania has the lowest density in the European Union regarding highways, train and shipping routes. But with the experience of the European Structural Fund and more private and public funding, Arad has a high potential and could then even be a pull-factor for the development in neighbouring regions.

At the conference, the IRE-partner Cities Brasov, Romania, represented by City Counsellor **Cristian Macedonschi** as well as Novi Sad, Serbia, represented by **Mina Radmilovic Pjevac**, already stated they would like to contribute and support Arad establishing the new cultural route „On the trails of the Habsburg“ – aiming at a win-win-situation for all regions in the area. **Andreas Bardeau**, a co-founder of a cross-border Castle Route in Austria and Slovenia, emphasizes the importance of a supraregional and cross-nation marketing – pushed by the region's government. Just as important is to integrate the locals and the tradesmen – the Castle Route for example has integrated local workshops and manufactories.

Ramona Lambing, Managing Director of Passage Travel Concepts – a travel agency specialized in tours in Romania – says Eastern Europe is not yet discovered. To achieve that, the tour operators and travel agencies in the target states need to be involved, since they have to promote and eventually sell the tourism in Romania.

It is, as **Andrei Ando** says, the right time to invest in sustainable tourism for the region of Arad. As the tourism can increase regional and supraregional development – and cross-border travelling has always lead to a better understanding and cooperation.

Postcard of the
Arad Cultural
Palace 1916



Presented at the
conference by the author
Hubert Matt-Willmatt:

**Via Habsburg –
Auf den Spuren einer
europäischen Dynastie**

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