

Press release

Heritage as Opportunity - the EU-Project HerO presented its new approach to the management of historic cities during the Final Conference

On the 13th and 14th of April Regensburg hosted a large-scale international conference. Numerous participants from the partner cities Graz, Naples, Vilnius, Sighișoara, Liverpool, Lublin, Portiers and Valletta came to the city on Danube for the completion of the EU-Project HerO (Heritage as Opportunity).

Under the leadership of the City of Regensburg, the cities worked closely together within the framework of the HerO cooperation since April 2008. The goal of the cooperation was the common elaboration of strategies for the sustainable development of historic cityscapes. The central idea of the HerO Project is to see cultural heritage not as a barrier, but as an opportunity for development through social and economic activities. The project was funded with ca. 650.000 Euro through the European Program for Sustainable Urban Development (URBACT).

During the three year project, a new approach for the management of historic cities was developed together with the EU-Commission and tested on the ground in the nine partner cities.

The central instrument of the new approach is the development of integrated management plans for the protection and valorisation of urban cultural heritage.

The new method has a number of advantages: due to the integrated approach the objectives of the protection and further development of historic cities can be defined in a broad context. However, the discussion does not just stay on the abstract level of objectives and definitions; it goes further into the development of concrete actions. Through the early involvement of the relevant funding authorities it was possible to achieve clarity regarding the funding of many actions, thus achieving the balance between the preservation of the cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Within the three year HerO network cooperation, there were projects with a total volume of more than 100 Mio Euro implemented in nine partner cities. These actions were co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and partially also from national funding schemes.

As the main result of the project work a guidebook (HerO Guidebook: “The Road to Success” – Integrated Management of Historic Towns) for technical experts was produced, where the methodology is described in an easy to understand and comprehensive way. Specifically for political decision makers and mayors a document with recommendations (HerO Policy Recommendations: “The Road to Success” – a New Approach to the Management of Historic Towns) was developed, where simple first steps for the sustainable valorisation of urban cultural heritage were set forth.

Within the HerO Final Conference the political representatives from the nine cities signed the HerO Policy Recommendations paper in a celebratory atmosphere, thus aiming to inspire the colleagues from other historic cities to follow their example.

The representative of the EU-Commission Dr. Alexander Ferstl praised the innovative work of the work: "For us the HerO Project is an excellent example of the fruitful cooperation among European cities. I hope that as many other historic cities as possible will now follow this approach and thus create the basis for good projects that could be implemented on the ground."

All the information about the EU-Project HerO as well as all the documents can be found on www.urbact.eu/hero

Captions:

Photo 1: from left to right: Hans Schaidinger (Lord Mayor of Regensburg), Gaetano Mollura (City Council of Naples), Arturas Blotnys (Vilnius City Municipality), Malcolm Kennedy (Councillor of the City of Liverpool), Jean-Marie Compte (Deputy Mayor of Poitiers), Sorin Virgil Savu (Vice Mayor of Sighișoara), Gerhard Ablasser (City of Graz), Ewa Kipta (City of Lublin)

Picture credits: city of Regensburg

Photo 2: all attendants of the „HerO – Heritage as Opportunity“ Final Conference in Regensburg

Picture credits: city of Regensburg

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