



#RomansWineDanube

E-NEWSLETTER

THE ROMAN
EMPERORS
and
DANUBE
WINE ROUTE
For You

ISSUE 4 • DECEMBER 2025



YEAR-END REFLECTIONS AND FESTIVE TRADITIONS

As we move toward the end of the year, the #RomansWineDanube partnership can proudly reflect on a period filled with remarkable progress, vibrant collaborations, and truly memorable moments. What began as a shared ambition to strengthen cultural tourism along the Danube has now taken shape through visible achievements: successful pilot festivals, active community involvement across all hubs, and strategic tools that are gradually forming the backbone of our long-term impact. From Ptuj to Sremska Mitrovica, from Alba Iulia to Pécs, our partners have breathed life into Roman heritage, local wine traditions, and authentic experiences that resonate with both residents and visitors.

Alongside these festivals, substantial professional work unfolded behind the scenes. We advanced the development of local action plans, deepened transnational cooperation within our working groups, strengthened our joint branding and communication framework, and continued building the tools that will support sustainable, community-driven tourism long after the project ends. It has been inspiring to witness how knowledge sharing, creativity, and enthusiasm continue to drive this partnership forward.

Now, as the holiday season approaches, this is the perfect moment to pause and appreciate not only what we have accomplished, but also the people who made it possible. We extend our warmest wishes to all partners, collaborators, supporters, and friends across the Danube region. May the upcoming festive period bring you peaceful preparations, joyful celebrations, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

#ROMANSWINEDANUBE
E-NEWSLETTER

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MEETING #4

The first day's morning session focused on Pilot Actions (Festivals), where partners presented their Festivals, shared insights, and exchanged ideas. The agenda also included a joint discussion on the Tourism Observatories Data Collection Results, helping us better understand trends and impacts across the Danube region. Collaboration in action, turning data and creativity into meaningful cultural experiences!

During one of the sessions, we got to discover the exciting concepts for joint physical and digital souvenirs by Alba Iulia Together, we brainstormed how these ideas could be implemented across the route – ensuring they reflect our shared storytelling concept and the unique spirit of each destination along the Danube

Adding to the creative atmosphere, our colleagues from Pécs brought along real-life souvenir examples they tested during their recent festival. It was a great opportunity to see how ideas turn into tangible expressions of the #RWD brand!

As the day came to an end, our partners set off on a walking city tour - joined by none other than Orpheus and Eurydice themselves!



The tour guided us through the ancient streets and heritage sites of Ptuj, uncovering the city's remarkable Roman past and timeless stories that still shape its identity today.

The second day of the 4th #RomansWineDanube partner meeting in Ptuj was all about strategy, reflection, and looking ahead!

The morning began with the Steering Committee Meeting, followed by focused discussions on Local Action Plans and a detailed Project Finances Overview with Q&A and wrap-up.

The 4th #RomansWineDanube partner meeting was filled with inspiring discussions, creative ideas, and unforgettable moments shared among friends and colleagues. A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful hosts in Ptuj, Slovenia, for their warm hospitality and perfect organization. Thank you ZRS Bistra Ptuj

We left with new motivation, stronger connections, and lasting memories. Until next time!

15-16 OCTOBER PTUJ

PARTNERS' NEWS

INTRODUCTION OF THE #ROMANSWINEBANUBE PARTNERSHIP

AIM - ALBA IULIA MUNICIPALITY (ROU)

Roman Festival Apulum - Bringing the Roman spirit to life in Alba Iulia

The 12th edition of the Roman Festival Apulum (15-17 August 2025) once again turned Alba Iulia into a living Roman city. Focused on the transition from Emperor Trajan to Hadrian and the Dacian revolts, the event brought history to life through reenactments, parades, rituals, and workshops.

With over 300 reenactors from Romania and other Danube countries and more than 21,000 visitors, the festival became one of the most impressive cultural events in the region. A highlight was the Annual Oath of Allegiance to the Emperor, introduced at the suggestion of a #RomansWineDanube expert - a moment symbolizing unity and authenticity.

The festival reflected the #RWD brand by celebrating Roman heritage, wine culture, and community spirit. Organized by members of the Product Club Alba Iulia (Cultural Center "Palatul Principilor," National Museum of the Union, "Istorie Vie" Association, Garda Apulum, and the local HoReCa sector etc.), it showcased strong cooperation between cultural, touristic, and international partners.

Despite logistical challenges due to the large audience, coordination among partners ensured smooth organization. Visitors' feedback emphasized the event's educational and emotional impact, confirming its role as a model of cultural synergy along the Danube.

The story of the joint souvenirs is taking shape - with Alba Iulia in the lead role

The project team of Alba Iulia Municipality is leading the activity, which will result in graphics and a user manual for common physical and digital souvenirs. After defining the Joint Storytelling Concept and identifying symbolic elements for each sub-destination, we are now in a key phase - the development of the central graphic illustration and visual mock-ups that translate the Route's narrative into objects with their own visual identity.

Roman oil lamps, travel journals, digital filters, and "memory-infused" wines are just a few of the proposed ideas - all inspired by imperial heritage and wine culture. These proposals were presented and discussed with partners during a dedicated workshop held at the official partner meeting in Ptuj, Slovenia, where initial feedback and common directions were shaped.

The next step is validation and selection: three physical and three digital souvenirs will be chosen to accompany the visual story of the Route - becoming bridges between past and present, between the local and the transnational.



PARTNERS' NEWS

INTRODUCTION OF THE #ROMANSWINE DANUBE PARTNERSHIP

DCC - DANUBE COMPETENCE CENTRE (SRB)

In this fourth project period, our partners and their sub-destinations took center stage, delivering impressive results that highlight the core objectives of the #RomansWineDanube project.

A key milestone was the successful implementation of eight festivals—five Roman and three Wine festivals—which served as powerful promotional tools and laid the foundation for sustainable cultural events that can continue beyond the project's lifetime. Partners brought the ancient Roman way of life to their local environments in Rousse (Bulgaria), Alba Iulia (Romania), Ptuj (Slovenia), Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia), and Pécs (Hungary), creating engaging and authentic experiences for visitors.

At the same time, partners celebrated the rich wine heritage of Herzegovina, Slovakia, and Croatia, uniting them under the joint brand Vinalia and promoting local wines and wineries in a vibrant festival atmosphere. We were especially pleased to maintain a Ukrainian presence in the project by welcoming Villa Tinta, the oldest winery from Odessa, to the festival in Osijek, where its representatives received warm hospitality.

The festivals also served as a real-world testing ground for the project's Tourism Observatories, generating valuable data on attendees and visitors. This data repository will support the evaluation of tourist satisfaction and offer both quantitative and qualitative insights into cultural tourism across the participating sub-destinations.

During this period, partners also prepared the first drafts of their Local Action Plans, providing a clear roadmap for each sub-destination and ensuring alignment with the Common Transnational Strategy coordinated by media.k.

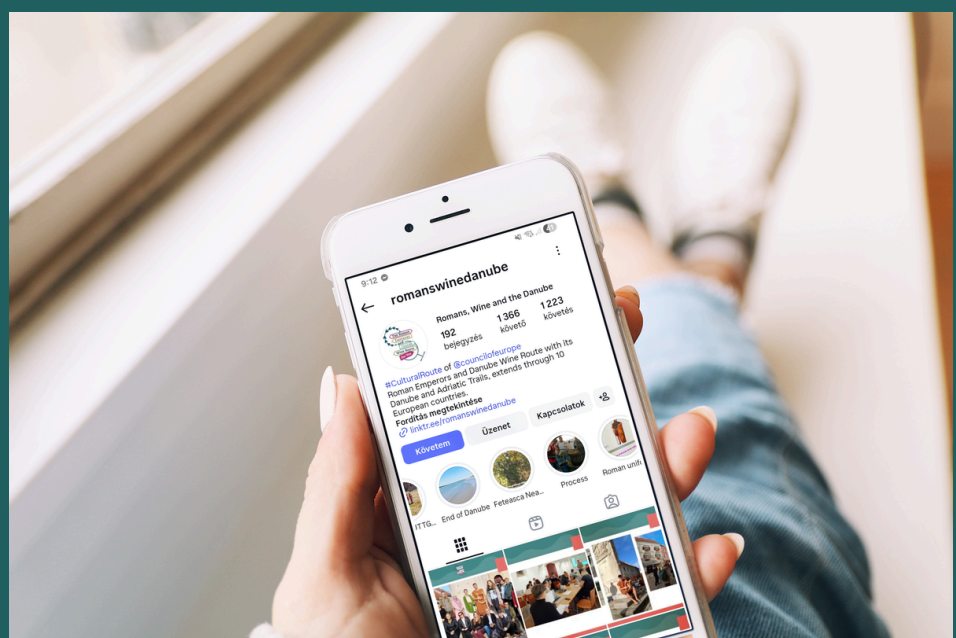
Beyond festivals, the project is advancing several new tourism products, including Joint Souvenirs and Green Travel Itineraries, both expected to be finalized by the end of 2025. These products will further promote destinations along the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route. Another innovative component in development is the digital VR Classroom, a shared platform that will store project achievements and enable the exchange of knowledge, information, and practical know-how among partners.



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HÁRFA - NETWORK FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (HUN)



During this period, HÁRFA's main focus was on actively bringing the #RomansWineDanube story closer to our audiences. Our main focus has been on coordinating project communication, making sure that our shared messages reach the right people, at the right time, in the most inspiring way.

Throughout the past months, our team has worked on keeping the project visible and vibrant across all communication channels. Regular updates on the project website and social media platforms have showcased the latest achievements, promoted local activities, and highlighted the rich cultural experiences that make our Route along the Danube so special.

This period was also the exciting pilot festival season, and we were delighted to support partners by helping promote their events through the project communication channels. These festivals have shown how the shared #RomansWineDanube brand can truly come alive through creativity, community, and collaboration, celebrating the heritage and flavours of our regions.

In addition to these communication efforts, HÁRFA has also been actively involved in Activity 3.3 – Collaborative Digital Awareness Raising Campaign, as part of the dedicated task force. Here, our work has centered around identifying target audiences, with a special focus on bloggers and digital storytellers who could help amplify the project's message. By researching potential content creators and exploring their audiences, we aim to bring on board inspiring voices who can explore the Route, share authentic experiences, and connect new audiences to our story through engaging digital content.

Looking ahead, HÁRFA will continue to support partners in spreading the word about #RomansWineDanube, encouraging creative content, and ensuring that our communication reflects the passion, culture, and shared heritage that unite us along the Danube.

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OEI WHC - OFFICE FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF WEST HERZEGOVINA CANTON (BIH)

Although this edition of the #RomansWineDanube Newsletter focuses on activities carried out during the current project period, the Trnjak Fest 2025 was held in the previous project period, from 26 to 28 June 2025 in Ljubuški and its surroundings. The festival was a three-day event dedicated to the indigenous Trnjak grape, combining the region's wine tradition with its Roman heritage and local cultural practices. The program included guided visits to Roman sites, expert talks on Roman wine-making traditions and ancient gastronomy, a specialized wine tour, an interactive tasting workshop, and evening sessions featuring Trnjak wine tastings paired with local cuisine. Trnjak Fest 2025 proved to be a significant event for community engagement and the promotion of the region's cultural and wine heritage. It provided an excellent opportunity for visitors not only to taste indigenous wines but also to explore Roman history through educational and interactive experiences. The festival encouraged dialogue among local producers, tourism stakeholders, and visitors, strengthening awareness of the importance of jointly promoting cultural and wine heritage. It highlighted the value of connecting culture and tourism, reinforcing shared brands, and using interactive and educational content to enhance the visibility of local heritage.

During this period, we organized a Product Club Meeting - the Sustainable Tourism Forum under the title Culture as Inspiration for Tourism. The main goal of the event was to present the Local Action Plan - Sustainable Tourism Action Plan for West Herzegovina Canton 2025-2027 and to stimulate discussion on the role of culture in tourism development. The program included an overview of the canton's key tourism potentials and a panel discussion on applying cultural heritage in tourism projects. The event concluded with a cultural program and showcase of indigenous wines and local gastronomy.

During this period, we also started developing an application related to Activity 3.4. Final Knowledge Transfer Pack, while continuing to provide support and contribute to all ongoing project activities.



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RRMH - ROUSSE REGIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY (BUL)

During the Fourth Period, the Rouse Regional Museum of History was an active participant in the ancient festivals held by the #RomansWineDanube project. The festival "Roman Market of Sexaginta Prista", which the Rouse Museum organizes, took place in May, during the Third Project Period. Therefore, the project workers had the opportunity to travel and follow how similar events are held in other regions, to what extent local communities become part of the event, how visitors experience history and how local cultural heritage is interpreted. At the same time, the museum team and the Associated Partner contributed to increasing the attractiveness of the reenactments in several partner cities.

"Legionnaires" from the First Italian Legion at Nove became part of the spectacular festival "Apulum" in Alba Iulia, Romania. 20 Roman soldiers, armed and in armour, joined the processions, demonstrated combat techniques, were part of the combat camp, took pictures with visitors and entertained them. They participated in a performance of Romans swearing by the emperor. Some of the reenactors also joined the ancient festival in Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia. They walked through the street of crafts and demonstrated techniques typical of Roman legionaries.

The Rouse Museum also became part of the Ancient Festival in Ptuj, Slovenia. The team from Rouse joined the large-scale procession that passed through the central streets of the city. To attract the interest of those attending the festival, the Rouse Museum prepared various games that provoked the creative and intellectual potential of visitors. Children and adults participated in tournaments of old Roman checkers games, teenagers lined up mosaics. Those present had the opportunity to make their own masks of gods, which are an important part of the culture of Ancient Rome. Many of the guests of the various workshops stayed to have fun even after the official closing of the festival, which is proof of the interest aroused by the Bulgarian workshops.

A team from the museum in Rouse also became part of the Roman Festival in Pécs, Hungary. Games and fun challenges were presented to visitors. Workshops with games and adapted sets of helmets, armour, mail, shields helped children feel the spirit of the era, learn more about the Roman way of life and have fun.

The fourth project period was a time of active cooperation for the museum in Rouse. As organizers of the Roman Festival "Roman Market of Sexaginta Prista" in Bulgaria, the team was able to exchange experiences from their stay at the various festivals, to gain ideas and to be loaded with new surprises and challenges for the next edition.

We will be waiting for you at the Roman Market of Sexaginta Prista in Rouse, Bulgaria on May 30, 2026.



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TZ OBŽ - TOURIST BOARD OF OSIJEK-BARANJA COUNTY (CRO)

The 2025 edition of HeadOnEast once again confirmed its role as one of the flagship cultural and wine-tourism events of Osijek-Baranja County, and as a meaningful platform for presenting the goals and values of the #RomansWineDanube project. **The event was awarded the title of best tourist event of the year at the Days of Croatian Tourism**

Over four days, the festival brought together partners, wineries, cultural organisations, performers and visitors in the historic setting of Osijek's old town, creating an atmosphere that blended Roman heritage storytelling with contemporary urban culture. Our general impression is that the festival has matured into a coherent and recognisable brand, and this year's integration of the #RWD narrative through joint visual identity and thematic programming significantly elevated the cross-border character of the event. Participation of representatives and wineries from Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Ukraine and Hungary contributed to a sense of shared Danube heritage, strengthening the visibility of the transnational wine route and highlighting the cultural dimension of wine as a Roman-rooted tradition. Among the many program highlights, the Vinalia wine square stood out as the central point of interaction, with curated tastings coordinated by the Product Club and local stakeholders, and with exceptionally high public engagement.

Music performances, art exhibitions, workshops, guided tours and children's content ensured that the festival attracted a broad and diverse audience, which this year exceeded 30,000 visitors. The atmosphere during peak hours, especially on Saturday night, showed both the growing popularity of the event and the need for improved visitor-flow management in the future. Media visibility was one of the strongest so far, with extensive regional and national coverage, live broadcasts and an impressive online reach of over two million impressions across social networks, accompanied by a high level of interaction through contests, live tastings and influencer storytelling. Operationally, the festival ran smoothly thanks to the coordinated work of over one hundred staff members and volunteers, although weather-related logistical adjustments challenged the team at certain moments. Data collected through glass rentals and digital analytics confirmed high visitor satisfaction, a notable share of returning guests and increased interest in side-program content, which suggests strong potential for further development of experiential and educational elements. The involvement of wineries, restaurants, small producers and cultural associations contributed greatly to the authenticity of the event and to the visibility of local products, while Product Club members reported positive sales outcomes, new contacts and opportunities for year-round promotion.



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ZRS BISTRA PTUJ - SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH CENTR BISTRA PTUJ (SLO)

From 22 to 24 August 2025, Ptuj once again transformed into ancient Poetovia, as gladiators, legionaries, senators, vestal virgins, and other Romans filled the city streets and squares. More than 800 participants from eight countries brought to life the customs, rituals, and daily rhythms of ancient Rome, reaffirming Ptuj's position as one of the most vibrant centres of Roman heritage in the region.

Two thousand years ago, Poetovio was a powerful Roman city—first a military base and later a thriving commercial and craft hub. For nearly two decades, the Poetovio LXIX Association has worked to revive this history through one of the largest Roman-period reenactment events in this part of Europe. Their dedication ensures that stories from more than two millennia ago are once again part of the living heritage of Slovenia's oldest town.

The 2025 edition of the Roman Games opened on Friday, 22 August, with a ceremonial programme in the Roman Camp Poetovio, the festival's main event space. Earlier that day, the annual symposium—this year dedicated to The Archives Service in the Roman Empire—took place at the Grand Hotel Primus, bringing together scholars, heritage professionals, and enthusiasts.

On Saturday, 23 August, the festival's signature procession animated Ptuj's historic centre, drawing crowds who followed the Romans back to the camp, where the main programme continued from the afternoon onwards. Sunday, 24 August, was dedicated especially to families, featuring a full day of activities, performances, and children's workshops. Young visitors experienced ancient life through hands-on learning, games, and creative activities designed to inspire curiosity about Roman culture.

The event was enriched by the long-standing cooperation between Poetovio LXIX and international reenactment groups, whose participation once again strengthened the festival's authenticity and cultural depth.

This year's Roman Games successfully elevated Ptuj's Roman heritage within the context of The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route, enhancing the city's visibility as a key cultural tourism destination. By blending reenactment, heritage education, gastronomy, and wine experiences, the festival showcased how ancient history can engage contemporary audiences and support the cultural and creative industries (CCIs).



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ZSÖK - ZSOLNAY HERITAGE MANAGEMENT NONPROFIT LTD (HUN)

Pécs celebrated its Roman heritage with the Sopianae Revived Roman Festival (August 29-30, 2025), bringing together local communities, visitors, and international partners to explore the city's rich history and vibrant culture. This two-day event was showcasing the Roman heritage of Pécs through a dynamic blend of performances, reenactments, workshops and successfully transported visitors back in time, bringing the ancient city of Sopianae to life through immersive experiences.

The festival featured historical reenactments, such as Roman funeral rituals, theatre and a torch-lit parade through the city's UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The event introduced a new interactive adventure for children, "Aelia és a Nap Ládája," where kids participated in a Roman-themed challenge across multiple World Heritage sites. Roman-themed food and wine tastings featuring local producers from the region, offering an authentic taste of the past. Local artisans and Product Club members facilitated workshops on Roman crafts, from pottery to Roman clothing, offering visitors hands-on experiences with ancient traditions.

Despite some weather-related challenges, the festival attracted a strong turnout, especially from families and local residents, reinforcing Pécs as a cultural and tourism hub on the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route.

To mark the 25th anniversary of Pécs's UNESCO World Heritage status, the World Heritage Day event on the 2nd and 6th of December invites everyone to discover the rich Roman history and wine culture. A new exhibition opening with presence of the local reenactment team and one of our stakeholder Ipacs Szabó István, a renowned winemaker from the Villány region, will guide a wine tasting journey inside the late roman buildings, paired with a lecture on the history of wine throughout the ages. The event promises a unique fusion of history, culture, and flavors from the ancient world to the present.

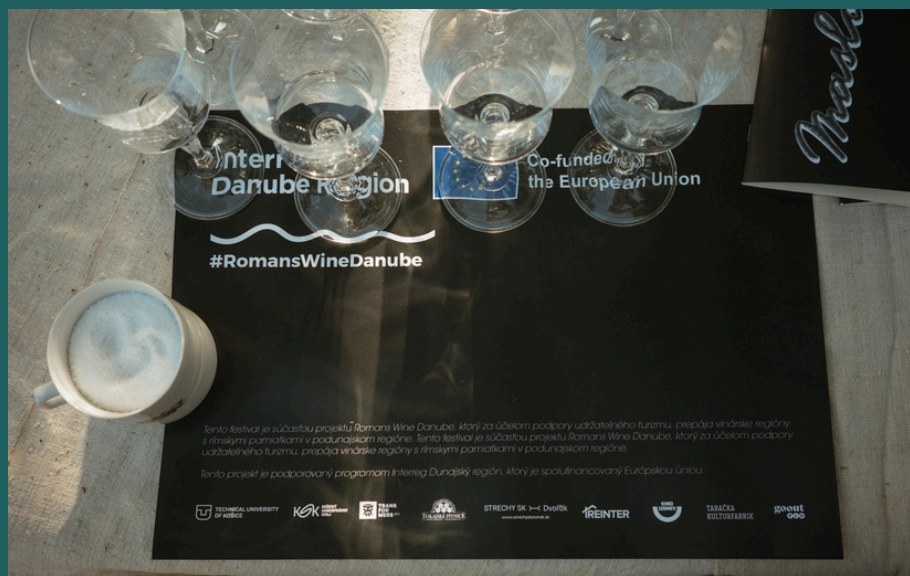
Our Product Club series in December will continue creating sustainable tourism models that integrate heritage and community engagement across the Danube region. Stay tuned for more updates, and don't forget to check out the website for the latest news on our ongoing projects!



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TUKE - TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KOSICE (SVK)



Even though winter and snow currently dominate the European landscape, we would still like to take a moment to look back and share a more detailed reflection on our Maslo Festival, which took place in Tokaj during the warm and vibrant month of August. Despite the seasonal contrast, the memories of the festival remain vivid, full of sunshine, energy, and creativity. The event turned out to be a remarkable success, especially considering it was the very first edition of the festival and served as the pilot activity for our #RomansWineDanube project.

This inaugural year exceeded our expectations: more than three hundred visitors joined us, creating a lively atmosphere and bringing together a diverse mix of cultural enthusiasts, locals, and tourists. With a carefully curated programme, we were able to introduce a fresh wave of modern art, contemporary performance, and innovative interpretations to the historic region of Tokaj. The presence of top-tier performers added an exceptional artistic quality that resonated strongly with the audience and helped set a high standard for future editions.

An important and enriching aspect of the festival was the active involvement of young winemakers and local stakeholders who partnered with emerging organizers from cultural centres in Košice. The synergy between long-standing regional heritage and the innovative ideas of the younger generation created a unique atmosphere that many visitors described as inspiring and refreshing. It was therefore no surprise that a large portion of attendees immediately expressed interest in participating again next year...

During the festival, we also had the opportunity to thoroughly test our newly developed data-collection tool. Thanks to the positive engagement of visitors, we managed to gather a substantial amount of relevant information. These insights will help us better understand audience behaviour, expectations, and needs, and they will serve as a valuable foundation for evaluating upcoming challenges and planning improvements for the next event of our Product Club.

To conclude, we visualized all the collected data using our internal tool. These visualizations can now be directly compared with datasets provided by our partners within the framework of our project, enabling more robust evaluation, deeper insights, and more effective cooperation moving forward

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NTOMNE - NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION OF MONTENEGRO (MNE)



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Local Action Plan for Doclea (Duklja) Sub-Destination, Montenegro

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During the last period, the National Tourism Organisation of Montenegro finalized the Local Action Plan (LAP) for Doclea (Duklja), developed within the #RomansWineDanube project. The plan was created through an inclusive and collaborative process involving cultural institutions, tourism bodies, local authorities, experts, and community representatives, ensuring full alignment with the RWD Common Transnational Strategy and with the specific needs of the local context.

The LAP outlines a comprehensive vision for transforming Doclea-Montenegro's most significant Roman archaeological site, into a sustainably managed cultural tourism sub-destination. It identifies key challenges related to infrastructure, accessibility, interpretation, and governance, and proposes integrated

actions aimed at improving visitor experience, enhancing site protection, strengthening community involvement, and increasing visibility through heritage-based storytelling and educational initiatives.

A strong focus is placed on sustainable management, inclusive participation, and the use of innovative interpretation tools that can bring the site's rich history and legends closer to diverse visitor groups. The plan also establishes a clear governance and implementation framework, led by the local Product Club, which will continue coordinating stakeholders and guiding the phased execution of proposed measures.

PARTNERS' NEWS

INTRODUCTION OF THE #ROMANSWINEDANUBE PARTNERSHIP

MEDIA K - MEDIA K GMBH (GER)

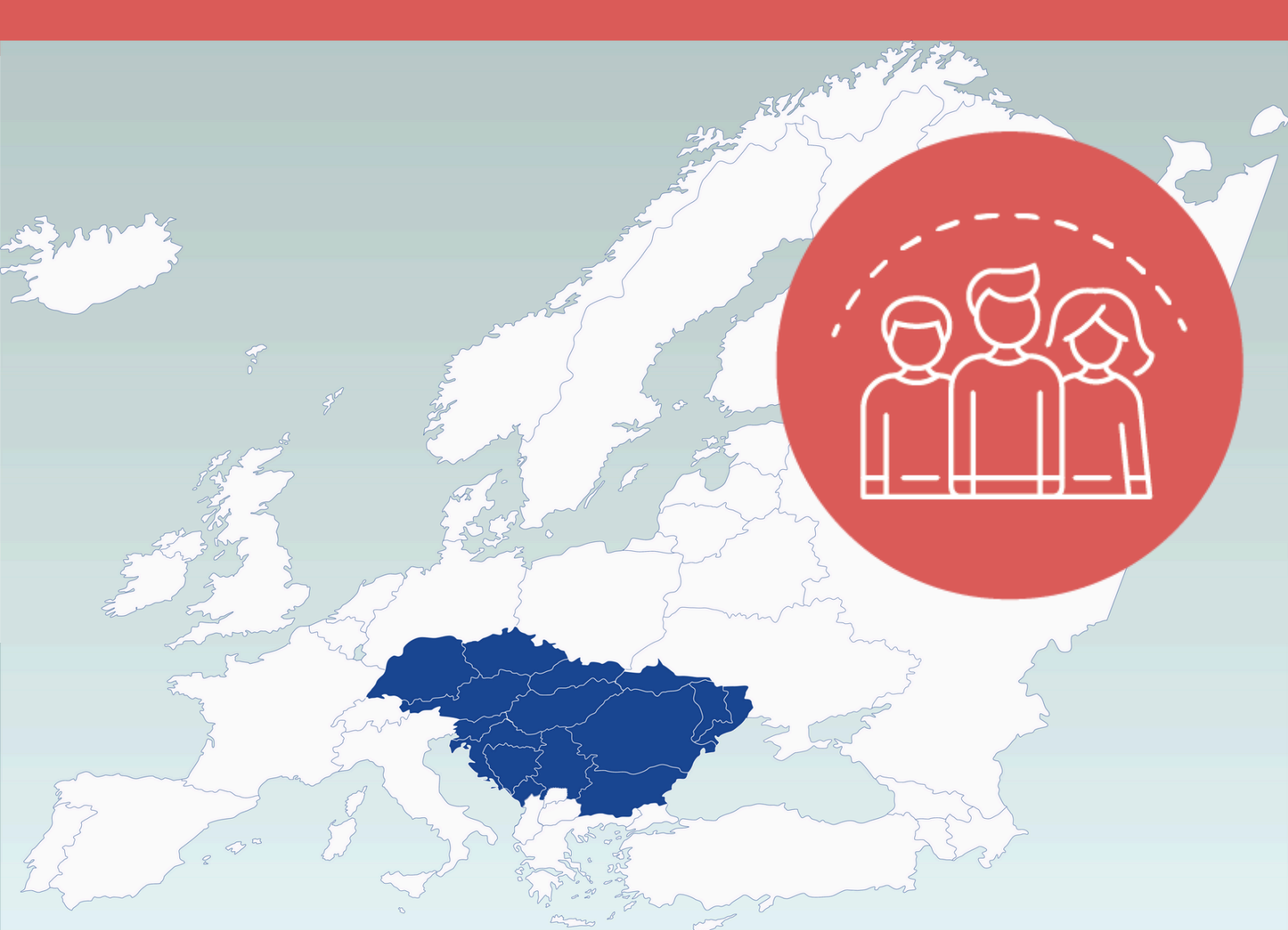
Did you know? The Danube holds the world record for the number of countries it flows through! The river covers a distance of 2,857 km and passes not only 10 countries (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Ukraine) but also around 20 wine-growing regions and a further 40 wine-growing areas in the Danube catchment area along the Danube's tributaries. This makes the Danube a perfect transnational role model linking geographically similar as well as diverse sites and communities with a shared Roman heritage and wine growing regions.

Transnational cooperation and intercultural dialogue are also the most important topics in our #RomansWineDanube project. To this end, we combine sustainable cultural tourism, focusing on our shared European identity through activities such as the development of stakeholder communities, the implementation of Roman heritage and wine festivals, and the establishment of common brands. Through these activities, the project is currently developing a network that fosters understanding of common European heritage and values, while also promoting regional development. The transnational concept of #RWD is based on

- Networking and cooperation of communities and organisations across national borders,
- Shared themes such as Roman heritage, wine history, cultural and natural landscapes, historical periods and
- Cooperation in practice, e.g. through an intensive exchange of experiences with Roman festivals and wine festivals.

These activities have kept us very busy over the last few months, and we are now facing the next important step: the sustainable consolidation of capacity building for all stakeholders through a modular, joint training programme that draws on regional experiences in various Danube countries to create a transnational whole. Our picture shows a particularly beautiful part of the Danube valley in the German region Baden-Württemberg at Beuron (picture credit: Pixabay CC).





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