



## Danube Conference

# Post-Corona in the Danube Region

Utopia or Dystopia – The Common European Future

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# Danube Conference

## Post-Corona in the Danube Region

### Utopia or Dystopia – The Common European Future

The global Coronavirus pandemic put the world into a previously not imaginable vulnerable situation and might have given a first impression of further global crises to come. After its outbreak in China in 2019, the rapid spread of Covid-19 forced the World Health Organization (WHO) to state the global health emergency in January 2020, and to declare the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020.

As a result, in Europe, 25 years after the implementation of the Schengen zone, national borders were closed, public institutions as well as the private economy shut down, and people urged to stay at home. In the Danube region the Corona crisis has not only revealed insufficiencies in national social, economic and health care systems, but also intensified deep asymmetries among EU and non-EU member states. Moreover, the call for a common approach to crisis management contradicted national interests, in particular the unilateralism of the Visegrád countries, while the EU integration of the Western Balkans again appeared to take a back seat, concretely the start of EU membership negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania.

The conference therefore aims to reflect on utopian visions of a common European future on the one hand and dystopian ones on the other. While the first, positively connoted scenario draws sustainable reforms in economic and social life, together with a new climate-oriented consciousness; the other, negatively connoted scenario criticises problematic long-lasting effects on human and civil rights, socio-economy and ecology, and finally on liberal democracy. The main question is which lessons learnt and recommendations can be taken out of the Corona crisis to develop realistic future prospects and strategies to improve the situation in the Danube region as part of a common Europe.

## Programme

### 10:00 Welcome addresses

- > Mag. Friedrich FAULHAMMER, Rector of the Danube University Krems
- > Dr. Martin EICHTINGER, Minister of Housing, Labour and International Relations in the Government of Lower Austria, in representation of Johanna Mikl-Leitner, Governor of Lower Austria
- > Dr. Erhard BUSEK, Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), Vienna

### 10:15 Keynote

- > Prof. Dr. Dragan PROLE, Full Professor of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Paul Celan Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna (April – June 2010)

### 10:40 Panel 1

#### (Un)Expected Paradigm Changes in the Fields of Politics, Economy, Education, Health Care and Ecology

- > Univ.-Prof. DI Dr. Hubert HASENAUER, Rector of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna
- > Prof. Dr. Zdravko KAČIČ, Rector of the University of Maribor
- > Prof. Dr. Martin SELMAYR, Representative of the European Commission in Austria, Vienna
- > Julia WINKLER, MA, Staff secretary EU agenda Healthacross, Public Health Agency of the country of Lower Austria, Department for Healthcare

#### Moderation

Dr. Erhard BUSEK, Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), Vienna

### 11:50 Break

### 12:00 Panel 2

#### Possible Challenges and Chances for Youth, Culture, Media and Civil Society

- > Adrian GUȚĂ, Ph.D., Art Critic, Art Historian, and Curator, Associate Professor at the National University of Arts, Bucharest
- > Dr. Daniela INGRUBER, Research assistant – Research Lab Democracy and Society in Transition, Danube University Krems
- > Hedvig MORVAI, Director, Strategy and Europe, Erste Foundation, Vienna
- > Fatos MUSTAFA, Deputy Secretary General of the Regional Youth Organisation Office (RYCO), Tirana

#### Moderation

Nenad ŠEBEK, International Consultant for Media and Civil Society at Freelance, Belgrade/Dubrovnik/Mostar

### 13:10 Closing remarks

- > Mag. Friedrich FAULHAMMER, Rector of the Danube University Krems