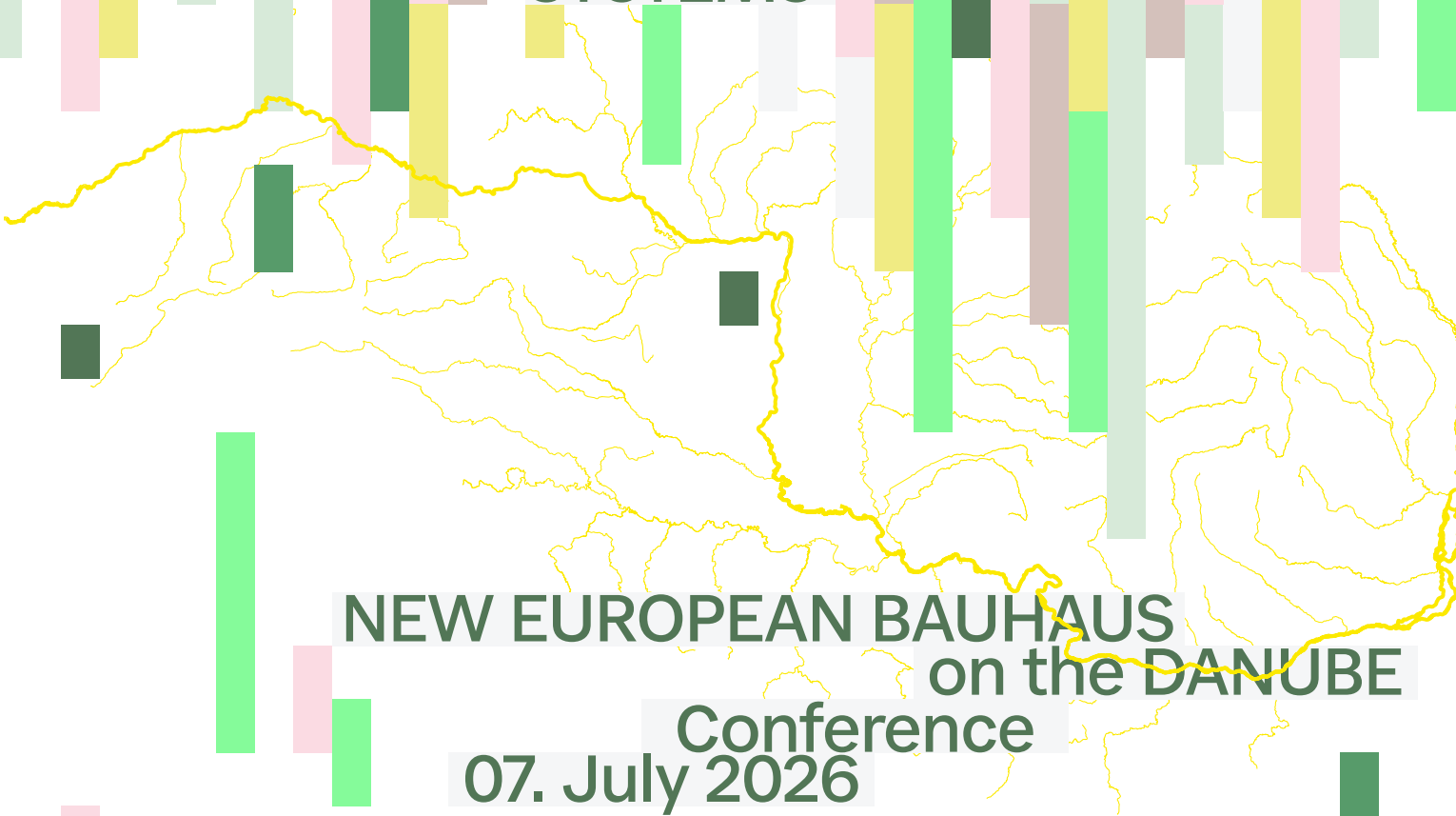
DANUBE FUTURE WORKS²

GOVERNING EMERGING SYSTEMS



NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS on the DANUBE Conference

07. July 2026

Edwin-Scharff-Haus

Internationales Donaufest Ulm / Neu-Ulm

EN The *DANUBE FUTURE WORKS²* conference investigates Emergent Governing Models.

European cities and territories are increasingly shaped by overlapping conditions of climate transition, housing pressure, ecological change, infrastructural fragility, migration, and economic volatility. These dynamics no longer appear as isolated crises, but rather as a continuous condition of uncertainty challenging conventional forms of governance and urban development.

The conference *Emergent Governing Models* approaches governance as a broader public practice involving cooperation, negotiation, spatial production, institutional transformation, trust-building, and shared responsibility across multiple actors and scales. Across Europe, new governance models are emerging through civic initiatives, cooperative structures, municipal experimentation, and hybrid public-common partnerships.

For the conference, we have invited international speakers and young activists to frame their contributions around these issues.

DE Die *DANUBE FUTURE WORKS²* Konferenz thematisiert neue Governance Modelle als Antwort auf Unsicherheiten.

Zunehmend stehen Städte und Regionen in Europa vor komplexen Herausforderungen: Klimawandel, Wohnungsdruck, ökologische Veränderungen, fragile Infrastrukturen, Migration und wirtschaftliche Volatilität. Sie erscheinen nicht mehr als einzelne Krisen, sondern Dauerzustand der Unsicherheit, der bisherige Formen von Governance und Stadtentwicklung aushebelt.

Die Konferenz versteht Governance als öffentliche Praxis, die Vieles umfasst: neue Kooperationsformen, Verhandlungsweisen, Stadtplanung, die Weiterentwicklung von Institutionen und Vertrauensbildung, um gemeinsames Handeln zu ermöglichen. In ganz Europa entstehen so neue Governance Modelle durch zivilgesellschaftliche Initiativen, kooperative Strukturen, kommunale Experimente und gemeinwohlorientierte Partnerschaften.

Eingeladen sind internationale Referent*innen und junge Aktivist*innen, um die neuen Modelle zu diskutieren.

A conference held by
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DANUBE FUTURE WORKS²

GOVERNING EMERGING SYSTEMS

Conference

&

YOUNG VOICES

Exhibition

EN The New European Bauhaus on the Danube (NEBoD) initiative calls for a fundamental re-reading of urban and landscape design, architecture and products as a mission be better harness its powers to work with and for society. Living conditions in the Danube Region are extremely diverse, but new methods of urban planning, stakeholder dialogue and creative fair finance are needed everywhere. Tangible projects and systemic thinking are both indispensable to negotiate climate change or economic disruption on small and large scales. Sixty years ago, the Ulm School of Design (HfG) set out to contribute to the emergence and persistence of a peaceful, democratic and free society through design. The NEBoD initiative acts in this spirit.

THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS ON THE DANUBE

DE Die Initiative New European Bauhaus on the Danube (NEBoD) versteht die Gestaltung von Stadt und Architektur, Landschaft und Produkten als politischen Auftrag, um so mit der und für die Gesellschaft wirksam zu werden. Die Lebensbedingungen im Donauraum sind vielfältig, doch überall sind neue Methoden der Stadtplanung, des Dialogs mit Interessengruppen und kreativ-faire Finanzierungsideen gefragt. Konkrete Projekte und systemisches Denken sind unverzichtbar, um den Klimawandel oder wirtschaftliche Umbrüche im Kleinen wie auch im Großen zu bewältigen. Vor sechzig Jahren hat die Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm (HfG) Design genutzt, um zum Entstehen und Fortbestand einer dem Frieden und der Demokratie verpflichteten freien Gesellschaft beizutragen. Die NEBoD-Initiative handelt in diesem Geist.

09³⁰	Arrival and informal welcome
10⁰⁰	World Café working session
14⁰⁰	Lunch Break
15⁰⁰	Keynote Speeches (20 minutes each)
17³⁰	Break
18⁰⁰	Moderated discussion with speakers and audience
19³⁰	Concluding remarks

PROGRAM

EN The morning starts with a public workshop where the protagonists of the *Young Voices* exhibition will present aspects of their "citymaking" practices from the Danube region, then discuss and further develop them in a World Café format. In the afternoon, the conference features short keynote interventions followed by a moderated discussion. The moderator will frame the conceptual field and connect theory and practice, steering discussion across scales and disciplines.

DE Der Vormittag beginnt mit einem öffentlichen Workshop, in dem die Protagonistinnen der *Young Voices*-Ausstellung ihre „Stadtmachen"-Praxis aus dem Donauraum vorstellen und anschließend im World-Café-Format diskutieren und weiterentwickeln. Nachmittags stehen kurze Keynotes auf dem Programm, an die sich eine moderierte Diskussion anschließt. Der Moderator steckt den konzeptionellen Rahmen ab, verknüpft Theorie und Praxis, lenkt die Diskussion über verschiedene Ebenen und Disziplinen hinweg.

EN The exhibition *Young Voices* showcases innovative approaches to "citymaking" and new models of governance from the Danube region. Eight young experts from diverse backgrounds have been invited to the exhibition. They are artists or architects, cultural managers or urbanists, social entrepreneurs or activists. What unites them is a passionate interest in getting creatively involved on the ground and making a meaningful difference to processes of change. The exhibition offers an insight through brief portraits of the women themselves and presents their projects, working methods and networks more extensively on a project website. *Young Voices* takes place on the banks of the Danube during the International Danube Festival and invites visitors to stay and enter the world of the protagonists.

YOUNG VOICES

DE Die Ausstellung *Young Voices* präsentiert junge Praktiken zu „Stadtmachen" und neuen Governance-Modellen aus dem Donauraum. Zur Ausstellung eingeladen sind acht Expertinnen mit unterschiedlichem Hintergrund. Sie sind Künstlerin oder Architektin, Kulturmanagerin oder Urbanistin, Social Entrepreneur oder Aktivistin. Was sie eint, ist ein leidenschaftliches Interesse, sich vor Ort kreativ zu engagieren und tatsächlich wirksam für Veränderungsprozesse zu werden. Die Ausstellung öffnet den Blick durch kurze Porträts der Frauen selbst und stellt auf einer Projektwebsite ihre Projekte, Arbeitsweisen und Netzwerke ausführlicher vor. *Young Voices* findet während des Internationalen Donaufests am Donauufer statt und lädt ein, Platz zu nehmen und in die Welt der acht Protagonistinnen einzutreten.

SPEAKERS

SOPHIE BÖSKER

Director, screenwriter and artist

Sophie Bösker is a director, screenwriter, and artist living and working in Vienna. Through her films, she explores hybrid spaces between documentary, fiction, and experimental cinema, always with a focus on a subtle and humorous engagement with socially relevant issues. She is a founding member of the association *Weibsbild Filmproduktion* and works at the University of Applied Arts Vienna in the department "Social Design – Arts as Urban Innovation".

LAURA CALBET

Professor for Theory and Methods in Urban Planning

Laura Calbet Elias is head of the Department of Urban Planning Theories and Methods at the University of Stuttgart. Her research focuses on negotiation processes in urban development, the financialisation of land and the legitimisation of planning. She currently leads the BMBF-funded collaborative project *Urban Co-production of Participation and the Common Good: Negotiation Processes between Civil Society Actors and Urban Administrations*. She is a member of the editorial collective of *sub\urban*. journal for critical urban research.

FRUZSINA DÉZSI

Cultural manager and writer

Fruzsina Dézsi is a writer, sustainability advocate, cultural manager and social dreamer, leading the *Green Pillar* at Pro Progressione in Budapest. Her mission is to foster active citizenship through radical imagination, using culture to make new realities felt. Therefore, her projects foster interspecies, interdisciplinary and intergenerational co-creation, bringing together artists, scientists, communities and other-than-human voices to imagine, rehearse and enact possible futures together.

CHRISTIAN IAIONE

Professor of Public and Administrative Law

Christian Iaione is Professor of Public and Administrative Law at LUISS University, where he teaches courses on public law, policy and governance of innovation and climate change, as well as courses on climate neutral smart cities and sustainable investments. He acts as Luiss principal investigator for several EU-funded R&I projects and national grants on the creation of energy communities and emerging technologies hubs, planetary health-based urban regeneration processes and served as lead expert in several URBACT and UIA projects.

GERGANA ILIEVA

Architect

Gergana Ilieva is an architect and a member of the Collective Foundation in Sofia. A focus of her projects is the preservation of cultural heritage – both architectural and social. Collective Foundation brings together experts, institutions and citizens through tactical interventions. Neglected spaces are carefully analysed, changes co-productively planned and implemented. Their temporary or permanent interventions re-interpret and improve the shared environment and have won numerous awards.

PATRICK KENIS

Professor for Public Governance

Patrick Kenis is a full professor at Tilburg University (Tilburg School of Economics and Management) and Head of the Department of Public Governance. He holds a PhD from the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, and has worked in Vienna, Konstanz, Amsterdam, Antwerp, and Tilburg. His work spans several policy domains, including health, education, safety, housing, and local development. His core expertise lies in the governance of multi-actor organizational networks.

DRAGANA KOSTICA

Multidisciplinary researcher, writer and blogger

Dragana Kostica is a multidisciplinary researcher and holds a PhD in Urban Planning from HafenCity University Hamburg and a Master's degree in Cultural Policy and Management. Her research focus is in urban regeneration, urban governance, tangible cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries, city branding, and sustainable tourism. She is a validated URBACT Ad Hoc Expert for Strategic Urban Planning and Culture and co-founder of NGO AESOP (Belgrade) and the digital platform Still in Belgrade.

IVAN KUCINA

Architect and academic

Ivan Kucina is an urban architect and academic, who has been teaching at numerous faculties of architecture, among others at Dessau International School of Architecture, Anhalt University, the University of Belgrade, Parsons: The New School for Design, New York or Polis University, Tirana. His academic research focuses on sustainable architecture and urban development with concepts based on informal building strategies and participatory practices or relationships between people, material things, and immaterial stimuli.

VERENA KRAPPITZ

Urban researcher and designer

Verena works on just and resilient urban narratives and translating them into socio-spatial processes. With a Master's in Urban Design from Columbia GSAPP and a Master of Architecture from the State Academy of Fine Arts Stuttgart, she specializes in GIS-based counter-cartography, digital imaging and research design for inclusive and livable habitats. Her research interests focus care practices and equitable approaches to urban climate mitigation and governance models.

CHRISTOF MAYER

Architect

Christof Mayer is an architect from Berlin. He is one of the co-founders of raumlabor, a group built in 1999 from a shared interest in an expanded understanding of architecture. His work focuses on land politics, particularly the intersections of land governance, urban development, and processes of socio-spatial transformation. He was Artist in Residence at Monash University, Artistic Director of the *Making Futures School*, Visiting Professor at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) and Professor at the Bergen School of Architecture.

UTE MEYER

Urbanist and urban reseacher

Ute Meyer is Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Energy Engineering and Professor of Urban Design at Biberach University of Applied Sciences. A particular focus of her work is interdisciplinary research on sustainable urban and landscape development. In over fifteen years of professional experience, she has initiated and led numerous urban projects at different scales and for different clients.

ALEXANDRA MOCIOIU

Architect, co-founder Front la Dunăre NGO

Alexandra Mocioiu graduated from the Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest. Her interest in preserving cultural heritage as well as in the collective memory and natural environment of the Danube led her to co-founded the Front la Dunăre NGO in Drobeta-Turnu Severin. Through collaborative initiatives, she fosters bottom-up interventions to reactivate latent heritage sites along the river, bringing together specialists, local communities, and public authorities. She practices architecture and restoration at Modul 28 in Sibiu.

DULMINI PERERA

Architectural theorist and systems designer

Dulmini Perera works at the intersection of design, systems/cybernetic research, and the critical humanities, with a focus on systems change and the imagination of futures. Her recent projects include a DFG–AHRC co-funded project linking Gregory Bateson's ideas to design (Bauhaus University Weimar) and *Contrapractice: Action Against Defuturing* (with Tony Fry). She is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Limerick, Ireland.

TIJANA PETROVIC

Social Entrepreneur

Tijana Jovanović Petrović is a Program Manager at KidHub, the Serbian partner of the Designathon Works programme, and co-founder of the Platform for Innovations in Environmental Education. She develops co-creative educational initiatives that empower children to participate in society and design sustainable solutions. She is the conceptual creator and co-author of the *Science Playground* programme, which includes a seminar, handbook and activity collection for use in kindergartens, schools and at home – always through nature.

MATEJA SOFTIĆ

Participatory Regional Development Specialists

Mateja Softić is the co-founder and co-creator at Iskriva, Institute for Development of Local Potentials which focuses on balanced regional development based on sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage for the benefit of local communities. Mateja specializes in developing and leading bottom-up multi-stakeholder regional development processes. She studied at University of Ljubljana and University of Bayreuth, is an alumna of the Robert Bosch Foundation and has over 20 years of experience in international cooperation.

MIRJANA UTVIĆ

Architect and spatial practitioner

Mirjana Utvić is an architect and spatial practitioner based in Belgrade. Her work engages communities, with a focus on children and youth shaping spaces for play, learning, collective creation and action, rooted in critical pedagogy and the pedagogy of space. Her practice includes redesign and -naturalization of public spaces and temporary placemaking interventions. She has been a member of City Guerilla, School of Urban Practices, Škograd and the RE:play network. At the Center for the Promotion of Science she is leading the creative direction.

JAKOB WALTER

Researcher and architect

Jakob Walter is a researcher and lecturer at ETH Zurich, where he teaches in the studio Architecture of Territory. He is founding member of the Zürcher Arbeitsgruppe für Städtebau (ZAS*). He studied architecture in Leipzig, Weimar, and Zurich, and previously worked as an editor at *ARCH+* in Berlin. His current research explores the potential of municipal in-house architecture offices as agents of repair. Currently he is co-editor of the book *Agency: Architecture in the Civil Service*, forthcoming with Hatje Cantz.

ALEXANDER WETZIG

Urban consultant and planner

Alexander Wetzig is an urban planner with long experience in responsible positions in state and municipal administration. Among other functions, he headed the Department of Urban Development, Construction and Environment in Ulm as vice mayor for 24 years. Since 2015, he has worked as a freelance consultant for urban planning and project development and on municipal design advisory boards. Alexander is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation Hochschule für Gestaltung HfG Ulm.