



The Summer School "A Metropolis with a Green Heart"

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Abstract

In the period of July – September 2009 the project of the International Summer School "A Metropolis with a Green Heart" and follow-up activities were organised and managed under the leadership of two Slovak universities: the Comenius University in Bratislava (Faculty of Natural Sciences) and the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (Institute of Management) in close cooperation with partner universities from Visegrad countries.

The Summer School "A Metropolis with a Green Heart" was organized in Bratislava (July 6-11, 2009) as an accompanying event of the European IALE Conference 2009 (Salzburg, Austria, July 12-16, 2009) and was open to Master/PhD students and early stage scientists. The school was also supported by the International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE).

The Summer School represented the activity supporting exchange of information in the field of education and sciences (e.g. planning system, protection of the environment) and cross-border cooperation among participants and lecturers from Visegrad countries but also other countries.

Five follow-up activities were organised (in Salzburg, Austria; in Lednice and Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic and in Bratislava, Slovak Republic) with the aim to disseminate the information about results of the Summer School.

All participants of the Summer School and visitors of follow-up activities also received a lot of information about Visegrad cooperation and examples of common projects of the Visegrad countries with its neighbors from the Central European Region (e.g. Austria). Very important examples of the best practice were presented from transboundary cooperation between Bratislava and Vienna about new visions for cooperation in the central European region (e.g. project JORDES+ and CENTROPE).

Key words: summer school; landscape ecology; urban ecology; landscape planning; metropolis; sustainable cities; regional cooperation; Visegrad countries; central European region

1. Introduction

In Europe, around 80% of the population lives in cities. Their quality of life thus reflects the development of the European continent, which is mainly characterised by urban culture. The European Union approved several key documents supporting sustainable development of the cities e.g. "Cities and the Lisbon Agenda" (European Commission, 2005) and "EU Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy" (Council of European Union, 2006). The European Commission considers cities to be at the heart of European Union sustainable development efforts (EurActiv 13/06/07). In January 2006, it launched a "Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment" (Commission of the European Communities, 2006), stressing that "to monitor and up-date the effectiveness of the Strategy, accessible urban data is needed" and the EU Parliament demands "common core indicators to allow for comparisons and benchmarking between European cities..."

In 2007 the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion, approved the "Territorial Agenda of the European Union – towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions" (European Commission, 2007). Informal Ministerial Meeting adopted also the "Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities" in May 2007. The central message in the Leipzig Charter is the necessity of "integrated strategies and coordinated action". It means that, to achieve the objective of sustainable cities, different policy agendas must be implemented in a balanced way: social, economic and environmental objectives must be aimed at simultaneously". In 2008 the Commission of the European Communities approved the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength (EC, 2008).

There is also needed to identify several important examples of initiatives supporting the idea of sustainable cities. In June 2004 the Aalborg commitments were passed at the Aalborg+10 Conference taking place in the city of Aalborg. The conference commemorated the

10-year anniversary of the Aalborg Charter (1994) and renewed the commitment towards local sustainability. In the course of the last decade about 2300 of local authorities signed the Aalborg Charter. Aalborg commitments engage signatories "to cooperate with the European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign and its networks to monitor and evaluate progress towards meeting sustainability targets".

In a relation to these European activities and in a relation of our scientific projects Slovak landscape ecologists from the Comenius University in Bratislava, the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava and the Institute of Landscape Ecology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences submitted in 2007 a first proposal for organising the Summer School "A Metropolis with a Green Heart" as an accompanying event of the European IALE Conference 2009 in Salzburg to the Executive Committee of the International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE). This proposal was approved in 2008 and the Comenius University in Bratislava and the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava started to prepare detailed programme. In the end of 2008 these two Slovak universities in a close cooperation with partner universities from Visegrad countries (Czech Republic: Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry, Brno, Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice; Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem; Hungary: Central European University, Budapest; and Poland: Gdańsk University of Technology, Gdansk) elaborated a proposal of the small project: The Summer School "A Metropolis with a Green Heart", which was approved by the International Visegrad Fund in January 2009

The Summer School was organized in Bratislava (July 6-11, 2009) with the aim to educate young people, disseminate new scientific information and promote regional cooperation in the central European region. The School was organised as an accompanying event of the European IALE Conference 2009 (Salzburg, Austria, July 12-16, 2009) and was open to Master/PhD students and early stage

scientists. The School was open to all those interested in urban ecology, landscape ecology, landscape planning, urban planning and management, ecological sustainable cities, landscape in planning policies and governance and other related issues. The final programme was elaborated with respect to the main aims of the new approved project: "SPECTRA Centre of Excellence for the Settlement Infrastructure Development of the Knowledge Based Society" (No. 26240120002) supported by the Research & Development Operational Programme funded by the ERDF and established in the frame of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava in May 2009.

25 experts and lecturers were engaged to the Summer School: 17 from 4 Visegrad countries: Czech Republic (2), Hungary (1), Poland (3) and Slovak Republic (11) and 9 from other countries: Austria (4), Germany (3), the Netherlands (1) and China (1). Together 31 participants (students and early stage scientists) participated at the Summer School. 21 participants came from 3 Visegrad countries: Czech Republic (8), Poland (4), Slovak Republic (9), and 10 from other countries: Italy (1), Japan (1), Macedonia (1), Portugal (1), Sudan (1), Sweden (4) and Russia (1) (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Lecturers and participants of the Summer School “Metropolis with a Green Heart” (Bratislava, July 6-11, 2009)



2. The objectives of the Summer School

The Summer School gave participants background to understand multidimensional character of sustainable spatial development in metropolitan areas integrating social, ecological and economic aspects and the position of landscape ecology in the optimisation of development processes. The School provided an interdisciplinary learning space offering training and the possibility for mediation of know how / expertise among outstanding professionals, researchers,

practitioners and students. Very important was concrete example the metropolitan region of the Twin City Bratislava and Vienna, which provided a framework for the demonstration of cross-border cooperation in the central European region and confrontation of variety of different aspects, problems and their possible solutions in practice.

Two important events were organized in the frame of the Summer School:

- The meeting in the Vienna City Planning with the aim to present of visions and their confrontation with the reality of metropolitan development in Bratislava and Vienna

- The field trip (excursion) focused on present situation and best practice in the Vienna – Bratislava region.

The Summer School offered the participants a new quality of learning based on competencies represented by invited outstanding experts and teaching staff. Detailed information about transformation processes in

urban landscapes in the central Europe, with respect to Visegrad countries were discussed and examples of common projects and activities realized in the Visegrad countries together with their neighbors from the central European region (e.g. Austria) are presented. Examples from other part of the world (e.g. Asia) were also presented and it created a possibility to compare different aspects of ecologically oriented spatial development of metropolitan areas and to identify of different perspectives, approaches and issues concerned. Overview of key objectives of the Summer School is in box 1.

Box 1 Key objectives of the Summer School “A Metropolis with a Green Heart”

- To explore different aspects of ecologically oriented spatial development of metropolitan areas
- To identify threats and to compare different perspectives, approaches and issues concerned
- To demonstrate ways and means of how landscape ecology can be addressed by variety of problems of metropolitan development
- To allow participants to confront their knowledge and experience in an international interdisciplinary environment, to develop their ability to discuss different approaches, their own thinking critically in the context of other approaches and perspectives
- To give participants background to understand multidimensional character of sustainable spatial development in metropolitan areas integrating social, ecological and economic aspects
- To give participants opportunity to participate in the Panel Discussion of young landscape ecologists and the Workshop of the Landscape Ecology Education Network (LE_NET) in the frame of the European IALE Conference 2009 (Salzburg, Austria, July 12-16 2009)

3. Role of “Visegrad partners” and partners from other countries in the project of the Summer School

Partner’s cooperation had important role in the preparatory phase and in performance of the Summer School and follow-up activities. The Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Natural Sciences and the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, Institute of Management (Slovakia) had responsibility for coordination and managing of the Summer School activities (including managing of web page of the Summer School) and contact to the European IALE Conference 2009 (collaboration in the preparation of the LE-Net workshop). Both universities had great share in contribution of development of training activities, participation in teaching, preparation of meeting in Vienna and excursion,

presentation of the Summer School results at the European IALE conference 2009, coordination of the reviewing of lecturer and student papers for their publishing in the scientific journal GEOSCAPE and dissemination information about the whole project. Together 9 lecturers and managers (B. Lehotská, Z. Moravčíková, E. Papajová Majeská, D. Petříková, J. Ružičková, F. Žigrai, including three authors of this article – M. Finka, M. Kozová and K. Pavličková) and other co-workers from both universities helped in organizing and managing of the Summer School.

Important position in developing of training activities for the Summer School had other Slovak collaborative organizations: e.g. Institute of Landscape Ecology the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Z. Izakovičová, J.

Oszlányi), Bratislava Self-Governance Region (J. Hudcovská, L. Olekšák) and Bratislava City Local Self-Governance (M. Babiar).

Other universities from Visegrad countries (from Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland) also contributed significantly in development of training activities and participation in teaching (together 6 lecturers: P. Lorens, L. Nyka and J. Szczepański, Poland; T. Oršulák and A. Salašová, Czech Republic; A. Skharuba, Hungary/Belarus) and dissemination information about the project in the frame of their universities. Colleagues from the Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem collaborated in the preparation and publishing of the scientific journal GeoScape

(issue with papers of participants and lecturers). Colleagues from the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry participated in the preparation of the excursion and together with colleagues from Gdańsk University of Technology and Central European University offered us their long term experience with organizing of summer schools. All universities from the Visegrad countries participated very actively in elaboration of the proposal of the small project: The Summer School "A Metropolis with a Green Heart", which was approved in January 2009 for financing from the source of the International Visegrad Fund.

Box 2 Overview of the thematic sections, interactive and practical parts of the Summer School

Thematic sections:

- Landscape ecology in urban planning and management (lecturers: B. Bunce, J. Breuste, F. Žigrai)
- Transformation processes in urban landscapes (lecturers: F. Žigrai, J. Li)
- Introduction to the twin city Vienna - Bratislava landscape and drivers of landscape change (lecturers: M. Finka, Z. Izakovičová, J. Oszlányi, W. Kvarda, M. Babiar)
- Theories and methods how to assess urban areas; urban growth (risk and reduction of landscape functions); governance as a challenge (lecturers: B. Müller, P. Schiappacasse, L. Nyka, A. Skharuba, J. Szczepański)
- Analysis for green space structure; ecosystem services of green spaces; forests function in the metropolis (lecturers: A. Salašová, J. Ružičková, Z. Moravčíková, A. Skharuba)
- Transdisciplinary approaches in strategies for sustainable development in cities and criteria for sustainable cities (lecturers: M. Kozová, M. Finka)

Interactive and practical parts:

- Round Table discussions with lecturers. Opening discussion/Introductory lecture of P. Lorens: General development strategies of the metropolitan cities in relation to the concept of sustainable development – compact cities vs sprawling cities, global vs local orientation, development – redevelopment- intensification
- Presentations of all participants (they presented e.g. final reports on their Master / PhD thesis / related topics projects / course outputs, discussion and poster presentations) – see fig. 2. Participants had possibilities to discuss their posters and papers before presentation with tutors / lecturers of the Summer School. Participants also be encouraged to use all their skills in theoretical seminars, lectures, workshops, exercises, group discussions and even in a field trip.
- The meeting in Vienna City Planning (lecturers: K. Puchinger, W. Kvarda, J. Hudcovská, L. Olekšák) and the excursion focused on present situation and best practice in the Vienna – Bratislava region (guides: J. Ružičková, Z. Moravčíková, B. Lehotská, W. Kvarda, J. Hudcovská, A. Salašová)
- Practical approaches, best practice examples, progressive methods, and problem solutions in landscape and urban planning: case studies (lecturers: P. Lorens, D. Petriková, T. Oršulák, K. Pavličková)

Great role had the partners from Austria especially in the preparatory phase. They helped us with elaboration of the first proposal of the Summer School (which was submitted to

the Executive Committee of IALE), with contact to the European IALE Conference 2009 organisers (J. Breuste, University of Salzburg) and preparation of the LE-Net

workshop (H. Klug, University of Salzburg). They were key partners in the preparation and managing the meeting in Vienna City Planning (K. Puchinger, the chief of the Vienna City Planning Department and W. Kvarda, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna). But important role had all foreign lecturers, because each of them brought in the lectures new ideas and experience e.g. about critical points of

monitoring system for identifying Annex I Habitats in Europe (B. Bunce, Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands), urban resilience and urban environmental governance (B. Müller and P. Schiappacasse, Institute of Ecological and Regional Development, Dresden, Germany) or urban forest planning in the specific condition of Shanghai (J. Li, East China Normal University in Shanghai, China).

Fig. 2 The Summer School in Bratislava - presentations of the participants



4. Thematic sections and practical parts of the Summer School and their benefits for participants

The programme of the Summer School consisted of several thematic theoretical sections, meeting with practitioners from city planning departments, round table discussions, presentations of all participants, poster session and excursion (field trip).

Overview of the thematic sections (with name of lecturers), interactive and practical part of the Summer School with short description is in box 2. For further details about the programme of the Summer School, please visit the webpage at <http://summerschool.iale.sk>.

In the frame of the meeting in Vienna City Planning K. Puchinger (the chief of the Vienna City Planning Department) together with W. Kvarda (from the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna) explained a vision about the joint regional development strategy for the Vienna – Bratislava – Győr Region (JORDES+) – see fig. 3. Participants discussed also about CENTROPE joint initiative and strategic vision for the “Central European Region” representing region surrounding Vienna. This comprises, in addition to Greater Vienna, two further Austrian federal provinces, namely Lower Austria and Burgenland, as well as Győr in western Hungary, south-west Slovakia around Bratislava and southern Moravia

around Brno. CENTROPE is the lead project, which aims to create a multilateral, binding and long-lasting co-operation framework for district authorities, enterprises and social bodies in the whole “Central Europe Region”.

In the frame of the excursion the participants visited Bratislava green points –

Devínska Kobyla, Moravia River (see fig. 4), and Danube River (e.g. part of the Donau-Auen National Park situated between the European capitals Vienna and Bratislava preserves the last remaining major wetlands environment in Central Europe), and highway ecoducts and ecotunels between Vienna and Bratislava.

Fig. 3 Meeting in Vienna City Planning. From the left: K. Puchinger and W. Kvarda during presentation about the project JORDES+



Fig. 4 Explanation in Devínska Nová Ves about flood plain forests along Moravia River. In the left J. Ružičková, one of the excursion guide



The Summer School brought for participants - except of participation at the lectures and excursion - a few additional benefits. Participants got an additional financial support for registration to the European IALE Conference 2009 (10 participants of the Summer School used this opportunity). During the workshops of the European IALE Summer School the participants had opportunity to participate in the Panel Discussion of young landscape ecologists (on July 12, 2009) and the Workshop of the Landscape Ecology Education Network (LE-Net) with special emphasis on the recent Summer School education activities (on July 15, 2009) (see below more details in 6. chapter). At the end of the Summer School participants received a certificate, which is useful for future careers. Participants from the Visegrad 4 countries were provided with special financial aid from the Visegrad Fund (Small Project No. 10840145, category: Education), which concluded reduced registration fee, accommodation grant and travel expenses.

5. Key topics of discussion in the frame of the Summer School

Great part of the Summer school was open for formal or informal discussion. There is a summary of key open questions which obtained the best attention and were intensively discussed during the Summer School:

- What are the mechanisms to achieve sustainability in urban development? What are specifics for metropolitan regions?
- How to find a comprehensive understanding of the term sustainability?
- How can transdisciplinary research contribute to more sustainable spatial development?
- How to understand the term „region“ for the future?
- How to increase transboundary cooperation in the Central European region? What is the role of Visegrad countries?

- How to assess development quality / living standards / quality of urban governance?
- How to assess governmental effectiveness?
- How to achieve the implementation of new planning methodology and strategic planning principles with strong participation of the local communities?
- How to motivate people to participate? How to increase awareness of the local communities? How to create atmosphere for active participation?
- How to increase power of local authorities and where is the right balance between participatory and direct democracy?
- How to monitor the way towards sustainable development? What kind of tools and indicators are the most appropriate? What should be necessary to measure?
- How to monitor quality of planning and decision-making processes; quality of life, quality of governance?

A lot of questions were focused on “ideal planning and decision-making processes”. The participants agreed, that these processes should be open, transparent, long-term oriented, with respect sustainable principles, including environmental, social, economic and cultural aspects, respecting principles of good governance and transdisciplinary approaches.

One of the aims of sustainable urban planning is to develop new concepts for achieving resilient land use and adaptable social and economic structure in cooperation of scientists, local practitioners, local community and other key groups of stakeholders. Transdisciplinarity is expressly the core/heart of the proposed comprehensive approach to sustainability.

All participants agreed, that both approaches the top-down and bottom-down are needed and none of them can replace the other. Concerning good governance it is still “open term”. Participants agreed that governance consists of the traditions and institutions by

which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them (see Evans et al., 2005).

6. Follow-up activities

The aim of the follow-up activities was to disseminate information about the small project of the Summer School co-financed by the International Visegrad Fund (IVF) and about regional cooperation among students, planners, researcher and planners (e.g. in the frame of partner's universities from the Visegrad countries and in the frame of the European IALE Conference 2009). We expect that total number of visitors of the students' panel sessions was about 230 visitors. The follow-up activities were organised in Salzburg (Austria), in Lednice and Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic), and in Bratislava (Slovak Republic).

6.1 1st follow-up activity - Venue: University of Salzburg (Salzburg, Austria)

Students' panel session (poster session) for disseminating results of the IVF project, development aspects of Visegrad countries and presentation of the IVF project was organized in University Salzburg in the frame of European IALE Conference 2009 (Salzburg, Austria, July 12-16, 2009). The first day of the conference (July 12, 2009) a special Panel Discussion of young landscape ecologists with distinguished researchers in the domain of GIS, Landscape Ecology and Remote Sensing was organized (see fig. 5). In the frame of the Workshop: LE-Net (Landscape Ecology Network, July 15, 2009) results from the Summer School in Bratislava, experience with financing of summer schools and information about the Visegrad cooperation were presented. Organizers: University of Salzburg together with the Comenius University in Bratislava and the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava.

Fig. 5 Participants of the Summer School in Bratislava during the Panel Discussion of young landscape ecologists in the frame of the European IALE Conference 2009 (Salzburg, Austria, July 12-16, 2009)

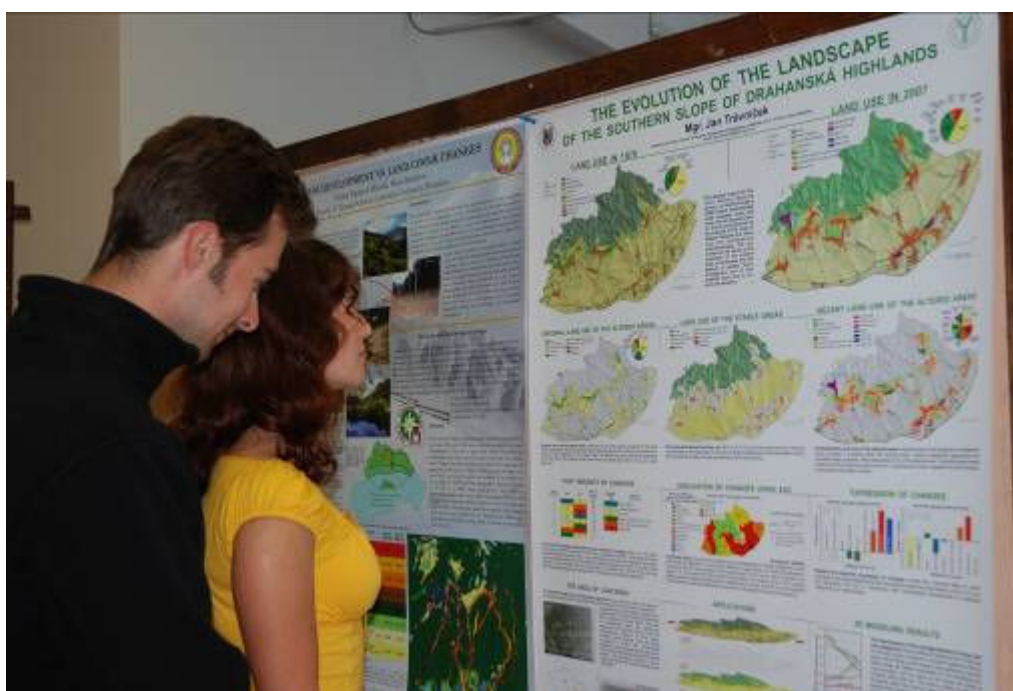


6.2 2nd follow-up activity - Venue: Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry, Faculty of Horticulture (Lednice, Czech Republic)

Students' panel session for disseminating results of the IVF project and development aspects of Visegrad countries was organized in the frame of the Scientific Conference: "Trends and Tradition 2009". Opening of the panel

session was on 10 September 2009, but the exhibition was available for persons interested in since September 10 until 25, 2009 (see fig. 6). Organizers: Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry, Faculty of Horticulture, Lednice, Czech Republic and Comenius University in Bratislava.

Fig. 6 Students' panel session for disseminating results of the Summer School in Lednice (Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry, Faculty of Horticulture)



6.3 3rd follow-up activity - Venue: the University of J. E. Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Dept of Geography (Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic)

Students' panel session for disseminating results of the IVF project and development aspects of Visegrad countries was organized since September 23 until 30, 2009. The exhibition continued on 11-20 November 2009 in the frame of the Week of the Geography. Organizer: the University of J. E. Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Geography.

6.4 4th follow-up activity - Venue: Institute of Management, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava (Bratislava, Slovak Republic)

Students' panel session for disseminating results of the IVF project and development aspects of Visegrad countries was organized since October 2 until 9, 2009 (see fig. 7). Organizers: Institute of Management, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava.

Fig. 7 Students' panel session for disseminating results of the Summer School in Bratislava (Institute of Management, Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava)



Venue: Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Natural Sciences (Bratislava, Slovak Republic).

Students' panel session for disseminating results of the IVF project and development aspects of Visegrad countries was organized on November 6, 2009 in the frame of the "Week of the Science and Technology" as a part of the seminar of doctoral students "New trends in the ecological and environmental research". Organizers: Comenius University in Bratislava, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Landscape Ecology.

7. Conclusions

The Summer School provided an interdisciplinary learning space and offered training and the possibility for mediation of know how / expertise among outstanding professionals, researchers, practitioners and students and young researchers. Very important was concrete example the metropolitan region of the Twin City Bratislava and Vienna, which provided a framework for the demonstration of cross-border cooperation in the central European region and confrontation of variety of different aspects, problems and their possible solutions in practice.

Participants had the opportunity to understand the multi-dimensional character of sustainable spatial development integrating social, ecological and economic aspects and critical linkages between planning and practices. Examples of the best practice realised in Visegrad countries and from other part of Europe and Asia were presented. There was also possibility to confront these examples with practice in Germany, Austria, Netherlands and other countries (e.g China).

There is a list of "hot issues" which were recommended for further research and for discussion with all responsible stakeholders:

- New perception of the city – city as a living organism,
- Urban planning and management as control interventions into the urban development processes,
- Shift to new urban development paradigms: from quantity to quality, from development to sustainable development, from urban sprawl to compact cities, from government to governance,
- Slower life in the cities: „slow“ city with high quality,

- Bratislava and Vienna growing together between imbalances and similarities: new visions for cooperation,

- Sustainability indicators and criteria for urban landscape / urban management / environmental governance etc.,

- Transdisciplinarity as a core of the proposed comprehensive approach to sustainability,

- Governance indicators (for processes, capacity, rules etc.),

- New planning methodology: public involvement, processual management,

- A landscape's value is created by its identity, importance of a feeling of identity to landscape, that we belong somewhere, and an awareness of landscape values.

The Summer School and partner's cooperation established a very good background for the summer schools with similar topics and to support multiply effect. All partners agreed to organise a next Summer School in 2011 with similar issue (e.g. at University in Gdansk). For further details about the Summer School, e-learning materials for participants and posters of the participants please visit the webpage at <http://summerschool.iale.sk>

On behalf of organizing committee we would like to thank all partners, lecturers, participants and sponsors of the Summer School and follow-up activities for their valuable input to the programme of the Summer School and their support to improving quality of all events. We believe, that papers of the lecturers and participants of the Summer School published in this issue of the journal GEOSCAPE bring new ideas and visions to the "hot topic" how to achieve sustainability of big cities (metropolitan cities).

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All photographs are from the archive of the Summer School "A Metropolis with a Green Heart".

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