

# Cultural Heritage - A Tool for the Development of Local Opportunities and Exposure of the Danube Culture

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## ABSTRACT

A methodology is proposed for the study of shrinking cities, peripheral areas, and the corresponding “shrunk” functional areas of riparian spaces. The methodology covers: a) research such as determining the points of intervention for sustainable use of cultural heritage, archetypes of the Danube settlements: research on morphology and local values; study of shrinking cities and shrinking functions with growing potentials along the Danube; mapping a network of local stakeholders and completing the DANUrB platform; local documentation for cultural and natural heritage for development; b) Planning tools - creation of planning tools and development documents for maximum impact; centers - peripheries, border situations: defining different possibilities for action; planning an optimal medium-term equilibrium for shrinking cities and functions; creation of new cooperatives of stakeholders using the DANUrB platform; local heritage development plans; c) education - raising awareness of the sustainable use of cultural heritage at local, regional and international level; education for intercultural and cross-border values; promoting the values of the periphery and the slow life in a local and interregional context; promotion of local values and products based on a regional quality assurance system; promoting local heritage in international tourism; d) actions - implementation of the Danube heritage in action: local, regional and international projects; network of peripheral and border cities of the Danube for the formation of competitive regions; regional building of a brand of initiatives of the local communities along the Danube; cooperation projects involving cultural heritage; heritage valorisation projects for sustainable tourism.

**Keywords:** *Shrinking cities, Methodology, Planning tools, Education, Actions.*

## INTRODUCTION

Within DANURB+ project cultural heritage will be considered as a tool for the development of local potential opportunities, exposure and socialization of the Danube culture. The project, supported by the Danube Transnational Program (DTP) strives for a better Danube region, to form transnational partnerships for cooperation in four thematic priorities and specific objectives:

- Priority 1. Creating an innovative and socially responsible Danube region;
- Priority 2. Preservation of the environment and culture in a responsible Danube region;
- Priority 3. Maintaining a better connected and energy responsible Danube region;
- Priority 4 Institutional cooperation and capacity.

“Analysis of territorial challenges, needs and potentials of the Danube Region and strategic options in view of the transnational cooperation for the period 2021-2027” is a document developed by CESCO to secure starting the process of programming the next Danube Transnational Program 2021-2027. The final of the territorial analysis offers a complete analytical toolkit. Its content consists of:

- Statement of the mission;
- Recommendations (arising from the findings of the analysis);
- Territorial analysis;
- SWOT analysis and the main challenges in cohesion in the Danube region.

This analysis determines the current state and challenges of the convergence of the Danube region. The document gives a focus on the tools for transnational cooperation. This concerns the area of the Danube Program and the area covered by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) [5]<sup>1</sup>. A table with recommendations defining the most appropriate goals and priorities for transnational cooperation is also included in order to build a unified and compact Danube region.

The whole methodology presented in this way implies improvement of the environment and cultural and historical heritage, which will lead to the creation of conditions for revitalization of the area of shrinking cities and their transformation into healthy cities for its inhabitants and guests. It is also used in implementation of Danurb+ project.

The economy in a globalized world is an arena for competing cities and regions. Today, cities are drivers of social and cultural development, and as such they have the power to stimulate themselves, regions and states to grow and develop. To achieve a better position in a system determined by a network of global cities, they must be capable to strongly attract the best organizations, professionals. Each of the mentioned components of the city as a product represents individual levels of the overall experience and perception of a city. The social space of the city is the frame.

## 1. METHODOLOGY OF THE DANURB+ PROJECT

The main objective of the DANURB Program is to carry out a comprehensive territorial analysis of the Danube region to serve as a strategic preparation for the ETC Danube Transnational Program 2021 to 2027 [2]<sup>2</sup>. The program aims to conduct a territorial and socio-economic analysis, identifying the main challenges, needs and potentials that characterize the area of cooperation in the Danube region, as well as the participants who have such needs and/or are able to develop such potentials. It also aims at transnational projects, in line with the proposed legislative package for the new cohesion policy 2021-2027 and further developments (available as early as the first half of 2019), in line with the revision of the European Union Strategy Action Plan for the Danube Region (EUSDR)<sup>3</sup> [5] the aim is to achieve sustainability for the region.

The cohesion-based transnational CESCO<sup>4</sup> planning model is followed for the territorial analysis of the Danube region. The complexity of the challenges of transnational development and cooperation requires a complex combination of tools. One of them is designing a transnational strategy. This means a different approach than the usual “interior” planning, as the understanding of the space in question is quite different.

These territories are complex, with unique problems and interests in development and cannot be considered as a combination of several different “containers” with clear development goals and state competencies. This requires the application of a special planning approach. The planning methodology developed by CESCO (fig. 1) is not purely theoretical, as it was used in the SKHU INTERREG VA program 2014-2020, in the Analysis of the territorial background of INTERREG Danube for the transnational program 2014-2020 and in some strategies prepared for the operating EGTCs. together the Hungarian borders such as EGTC Rába-Duna-Vág (HU-SK), EGTC Banat-Triplex Confinium (HU-RO-SRB), EGTC Gate to Europe (HU-RO), EGTC Tisza (HU-UA), Region Mura EGTC (HU-HR) and others.

In terms of transnational planning, a transnational region is a territory shared by several national, local or regional authorities located jointly in different national states. The transnational region is both a physical and a soft space, where ecological, social and economic processes take place across borders, where the social and economic relations of societies cross administrative barriers. The transnational region is also defined by border regimes. This means full integration, cooperation and coexistence on all sides.

Cohesion analysis is an approach developed by CESCO that provides a basis for transnational (and/or cross-border) planning and strategy development. It does not interpret the border region according to the traditional “container-based” approach. It views the region as a coherent unity and independent planning body. In this type of status analysis, the aim is to answer the basic question of how to strengthen convergence between neighbouring areas and what are the obstacles to this process of more dynamic internal spatial organization.

<sup>1</sup> EU Strategy for the Danube region

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of territorial challenges, needs and potentials of the Danube Region and strategic options in view of the Transnational cooperation for the period 2021-2027, CESCO

<sup>3</sup> EU Strategy for the Danube region

<sup>4</sup> Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives

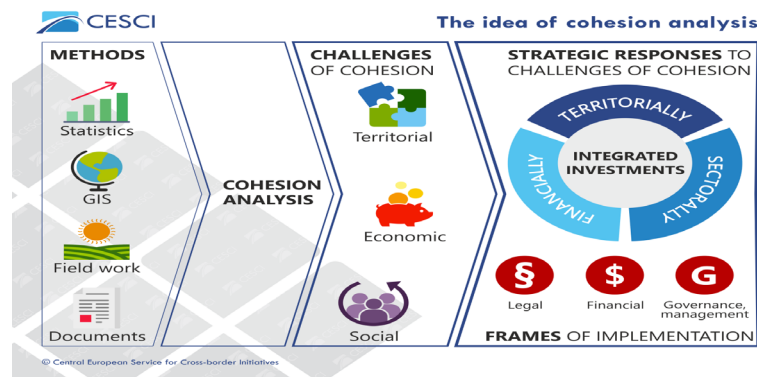


Figure 1: The idea of cohesion analysis; Source CESC [2].

The main goal of the method is for a transnational region to be able to strengthen its internal, cross-border and international relations (based on its endogenous resources). Cohesion can be improved territorially, economically and socially. Moreover, in the transnational region, administrative barriers have a much weaker role. In this way, situations can be developed that are equally useful for people living on all sides of the border. The analysis of the situation is not based on the traditional sectoral analysis, but the logic of cohesion: institutional cooperation), economic (infrastructure, shared and complementary economic conditions) and social cohesion (social situation, demographic conditions, inter-ethnic relations, civic and institutional networks)<sup>5</sup>[2]. This shows that many factors that are usually analysed in other methodologies are not taken into account.

The recommendations for the development of transnational cooperation are based on the analysis of the situation and summarize the extremely difficult or strengthening factors of each of the three aspects of cohesion and identify the challenges of enhanced cohesion of the transnational region as a whole. In order to gain access to the necessary information, available statistics at European and national level are used, but (taking into account the shortage of transnationally measurable data available in the Danube region). It should also be borne in mind that transnational regional statistics are being developed with the help of local stakeholders. The available scientific and policy research is analysed, as well as the pre-prepared strategies and plans. To compile a clearer picture, the applied methods are proposed, describing the state of the territorial, economic and social cohesion of the transnational zone.

With the analysis of convergence in planning, the aim is to understand the nature of the region and to interpret the territory in a broader context. Internal spatial relations are studied, references are made to the main trends and directions for development of the last decades. The analysis covers “typical landscape and environmental factors (such as landscape structures, climatic conditions, water regime, soil conditions, land cover, etc.); characteristics of the urban network (based on gravity models and function analysis: where are the main infrastructure assets and institutions [eg. schools, ports, transport hubs, etc.] located in the region; state and permeability of borders (type of border regime; density and capacity of border crossings); existing cooperation structures and their management frameworks”<sup>6</sup>[2].

<sup>5</sup> Analysis of territorial challenges, needs and potentials of the Danube Region and strategic options in view of the Transnational cooperation for the period 2021-2027, CESC

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem

For the real state of economic cohesion in a given region, an economic analysis is made, focusing on cohesion rather than on sectoral taxonomy. “All economic sectors are analyzed (primary, secondary, tertiary) by applying traditional methods, but the induction is shaped differently, emphasizing the factors for economic cohesion of the Danube region. The focus of the study is on the general and complementary economic characteristics (existence of parallel or complementary economic sectors; potential for development of vertical integration; set of economic infrastructure, etc.) of the macro-region”<sup>7</sup>[2].

An analysis is also made of the third direction of cohesion - social. The success of transnational cooperation is mainly determined by the way in which local actors participate in its implementation. The level of social cohesion in the transnational area is measured by analyzing its demographic characteristics, the peculiarities of migration, social differences, labor supply and its mobility, the level of education and employment, interethnic and cultural relations.

All analyzes are set out in planning documents (national, macro-regional strategies, plans, sectoral analyzes and related EU policy documents) of the target area. These are the documents that provide possible development guidelines for funding. All these materials and regulations at EU and national level must be assessed in an interconnected way. The analysis ends with a summary (SWOT - analysis), listing the factors that strengthen and weaken the territorial, economic and social cohesion in the considered transnational region. These summaries are the basis for identifying territorial, economic and social challenges to cohesion.

On the basis of the typical and the specific, as a characteristic of the shrinking cities, a methodology for their study is developed, peripheral and the respective “shrunk” from functionality to the riparian spaces. The methodology includes:

1. **Research** such as determining the points of intervention for sustainable use of cultural heritage, archetypes of the Danube settlements: research on morphology and local values; study of shrinking cities and shrinking functions with growing potentials along the Danube; mapping a network of local stakeholders and completing the DANURB platform; local documentation for cultural and natural heritage for development, analysis, preservation, exhibition and socialization.
2. **Planning tools** - creation of planning tools and development documents for maximum impact; centers - peripheries, border situations: defining different possibilities for action; planning an optimal medium-term equilibrium for shrinking cities and functions; creation of new cooperatives of stakeholders using the DANURB platform; local heritage development plans.
3. **Education** - raising awareness for sustainable use of cultural heritage at local, regional and international level; education for intercultural and cross-border values; promoting the values of the periphery and the slow life in a local and interregional context; promotion of local values and products based on a regional quality assurance system; promoting local heritage in international tourism.
4. **Actions** - implementation of the Danube heritage in action: local, regional and international projects; network of peripheral and border cities of the Danube for the formation of competitive regions; regional building of a brand of initiatives of the local communities along the Danube; cooperation

<sup>7</sup> Analysis of territorial challenges, needs and potentials of the Danube Region and strategic options in view of the Transnational cooperation for the period 2021-2027, CESC [https://www.cesci-net.eu/docs/DTP\\_3a\\_Final-Territorial-Analysis.pdf](https://www.cesci-net.eu/docs/DTP_3a_Final-Territorial-Analysis.pdf)



projects involving cultural heritage; heritage valorisation projects for sustainable tourism.

The methodology includes research and development of the territory in the following four priority areas:

### Priority 1. Creating an innovative and socially responsible Danube region

According to the Innovation Union flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy, in the countries of the Danube region, the program covers a number of innovative topics in the field of cooperation - eco-innovation, knowledge transfer, cluster policy, social innovation and skilled entrepreneurship, including technological and non-technological aspects of innovation. The social dimension such as social innovation, educational aspects and entrepreneurial skills are given great importance. Research and innovation are also interlinked with other thematic objectives of the program (6). The objectives covered by Priority 1 are:

- Improving the framework conditions for innovation;
- Increasing the competencies for business and social innovations;
- Implementation of DTP achievements in innovation and competencies.

### Priority 2. Protection of the environment and culture in a responsible Danube region

The Danube Transnational Program strengthens joint and integrated approaches to the conservation and management of the diversity of natural and cultural values in the Danube Region as a basis for sustainable development and growth strategies. The program also envisages investing in the creation and / or maintenance of ecological corridors of transnational importance in the region. Such intervention is directly related to water management and control of risk factors affecting the environment (flood risks). Disaster prevention and management is considered in relation to the risks posed by dysfunctional ecosystems and man-made climate change. The objectives covered by Priority 2 are:

- Strengthening transnational water management and flood risk prevention;
- Promoting the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources;
- Promoting the restoration and management of ecological corridors;
- Improving preparedness for environmental risk management.

### Priority 3. Maintaining a better connected and energy responsible Danube region

The cooperation program also addresses common challenges related to environmental issues - noise levels, low-carbon and safe transport systems, including inland waterways and ports, and multimodal connections, to contribute to sustainable regional and local mobility, modal integration and intelligent transport. It aims to support regional connectivity and balanced accessibility of urban and rural areas. Better management of regional mobility and border permeability at regional level ensures that urban and rural areas take advantage of the opportunities created by the main transport networks developed at European level. Energy is a typical issue for a transnational approach. It is essential for market integration and more effective regional planning, and to jointly identify the most critical infrastructure problems. Intelligent distribution systems are

another aspect of the region's development. The program aims to contribute to the development of smart energy distribution systems, to the construction of renewable energy sources, to increase energy efficiency and to more efficient smart grids. The objectives covered by Priority 3 are:

- Support for ecological and safe transport systems and balanced accessibility of urban and rural areas;
- Improving energy security and energy efficiency;
- Application of DTP achievements in sustainable transport and energy;
- Better governance of the Danube region.

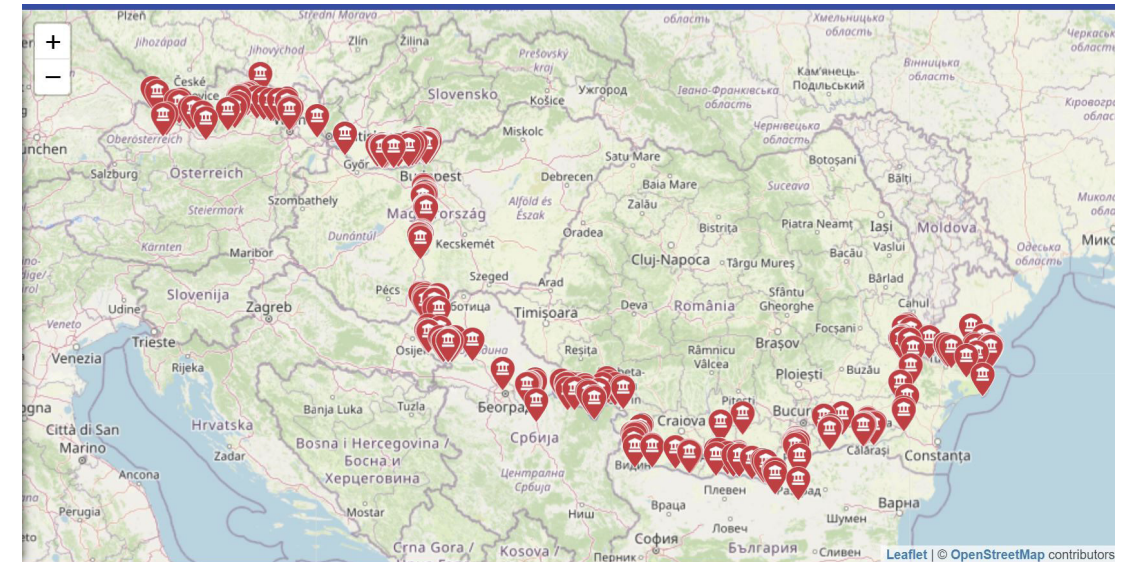


Figure 2: A map of 'Danurb+ cultural heritage sites' Source: www.danurb.eu.

### Priority 4. Institutional cooperation and capacity

Establishing institutional cooperation under the program, together with good governance for confidence-building and social capital, must contribute to improving the legal and policy framework, developing strategies and action plans, developing joint capacity and coordinating the provision of services in large areas. societal challenges such as labor market policies, education systems and policies, demographic change and migration challenges, inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups, civil society participation and participation planning process, cooperation and partnership between cities and rural areas, cooperation on issues of safety, justice and security. The objectives covered by Priority 4 are:

- Improving the institutional capacity to address major societal challenges;
- Support for the management and implementation of the EUSDR;
- Achievements of DTP in management;
- Improving institutional capacity.

## 2. DANURB + PROJECT

### 2.1 Nature of the DANUrB + project

The DANUrB + project was launched in July 2020 to activate the underused cultural heritage and resources in the peripheral and border regions along the Danube. It is co-financed by the Interreg Transnational Danube Program 2014-2020. The project concerns the implementation of priority 2. The expected result is to increase local development and international tourist attractiveness [4].

DANUrB + means creating a DANube urban brand, building regional and local sustainability through the valorisation of the Danube cultural heritage.

DANUrB + aims to activate the underutilized cultural heritage and resources in the shrinking settlements in the peripheral and border regions of the Danube River in order to create new opportunities for cities and regions to become attractive again.

The stage DTP 1-249-2.2 DANUrB is being upgraded, in which the foundations of the Cultural Alley have been laid - a promenade with a strategy, a functional platform based on a wide cultural network and thematic areas. At DANUrB, the tools are most useful for peripheral and border regions, where there is a serious breakdown and contraction of socio-economic status and can only rely on the development of the Danube's special resources.

DANURB + creates a dense network of stakeholders and projects along the Danube. The aim is to build capacity for local stakeholders to enable them to work together at local and interregional level to valorise their Danube heritage with local actions under a single brand, strong enough to increase local prosperity and international tourism attractiveness. .

DANUrB + contributes to promoting the sustainable use of cultural heritage and resources in dwindling communities along the Danube.

The project consists of 4 horizontal thematic areas. They are:

- Interregional network as an opportunity;
- Shrinking cities as a challenge;
- Local residents and their cooperation as an asset for development;
- Heritage as a tool.

In this work matrix, the goals of DANUrB + become clear and easy to follow. The novelty of DANUrB + is that it builds on these strategic goals and involves real stakeholders with their action plans, applicable in all sections of the Danube, and the initiatives are marked by inclusive and effective approaches.

### 2.2 Objectives and priority of the DANUrB + project

Specific objective - Promoting the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources.

The main goal of the project is to create a complete unified spatial and cultural network, "Danube Cultural Alley-Promenade", connecting all communities along the river, in one brand tourist destination, offering thematic routes and developing opportunities that can increase the number of visitors. and to extend their stay in the region.

Priority - Danube region, responsible for the environment and culture.

### 2.3 DANUrB + project platform

The DANUrB + platform combines good practices for cultural and historical heritage. The DANUrB + platform has been activated and is ready to enrich its content with good new practices of cultural and historical heritage in the Danube regions. This is done through partnership meetings. They bring together online partner organizations from 6 Danube countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia). As a result of the previously implemented DANUrB project, the platform already contains 450 traditional local customs, attractions and other valuable culture and historical heritage. The DANUrB + project aims to increase the number of cultural and historical heritage collected, raise awareness and increase the visibility of the platform [4].

Three brand new PocketGuide strands are launched as a continuation of the previous DANUrB project. Work continues on DANUrB + films, school curricula, university projects, stakeholder cooperation and the creation of a "DANUrB + Quality Label". Good practices and partnerships are monitored, such as between Hungary and Slovakia - theme parks and EGTCs.<sup>8</sup>

Demonstrations of the DANUrB platform are held during the online meetings - a short training on its interface and its functionalities.

DANube Urban Brand - works to build a regional network through tourism and education to strengthen the "Danube" cultural identity and solidarity.

### 2.4 Compilation of DANUrB + atlas

We are also working on a version of the DANUrB + atlas, which will contain demographic, economic and spatial and morphological maps of the shrinking settlements on the Danube. The collection of international, cross-border and regional projects continues in addition to the so-called "Danube Cultural Promenade" [1].

### 2.5 DANUrB +

With the establishment of the DANUrB cultural network, the regional cultural identity of the Danube region must be strengthened and a common brand created by promoting transnational cultural links between the settlements along the river. The study of unused or hidden resources of cultural and social capital is expected to improve economic and cultural potential and contribute to a synergistic effect [3].

The project partners - relevant universities, research and development centers, regional municipalities, cultural NGOs, tourism councils and market-based professional agencies - will create a network and a common platform to work on a sustainable cultural and tourism strategy, proving that a a common Danube city brand can have a synergistic effect - social and economic benefits [3]. It is very important in this process that international knowledge and practices will be applied in local conditions. The closest cooperation with the communities and regional stakeholders of the 7 Danube countries is the creation of a common strategy based on an individual approach and site-specific. The aim of all this is to ensure the sustainability of the results of the project, expressed in the sustainable maintenance of the Danube Cultural Alley - a promenade of local neighboring communities with economic independence, ie. stimulating the development of tourism and the cultural industry.

<sup>8</sup> EGTCs European Territorial Cooperation Groups (EGTCs) have been set up to facilitate cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation between Member States or their regional and local authorities. EGTCs allow these partners to implement joint projects, share experiences and improve the coordination of spatial planning.



## ATLAS OF DANUBIAN SHRINKING CITIES / METHODOLOGY

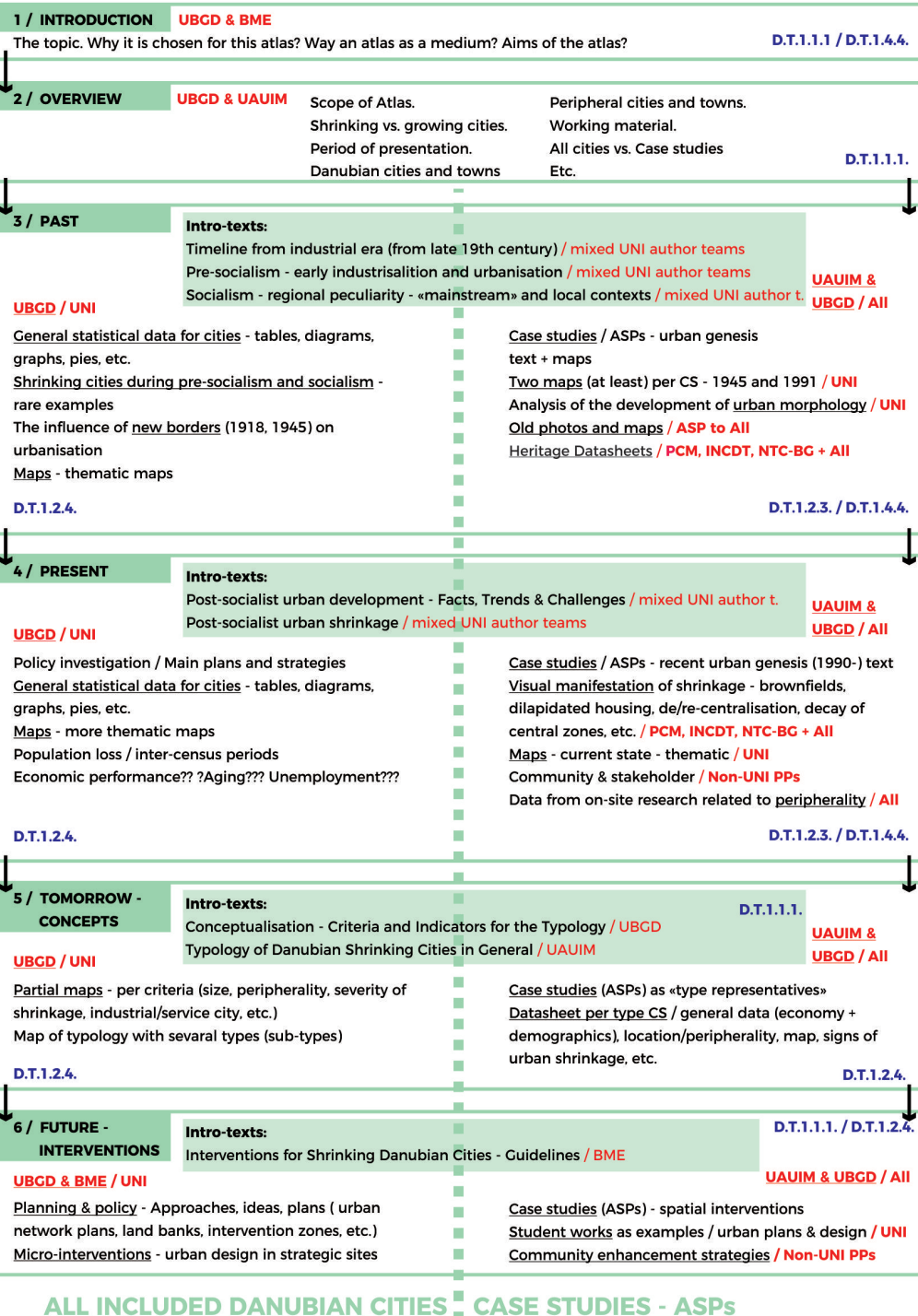


Figure 3: Atlas of Danubian shrinking cities (Metodology) Source: Antonić Br., Djukić Al., Atlas – Metodology: Profiling peripheral shrinking cities in the middle and lower Danube region, University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture, Belgrade, Serbia [1].

## CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the DANUrB + project it is expected to achieve:

- Increasing the intensity of the cooperation of the key participants in the program area, in order to strengthen the sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage and resources;
- Creation of a new network of “DANUrB” communities to cooperate in the common valorization of their cultural heritage and resources;
- Building a common platform for research and reconstruction of common heritage and identity, themed around the similarities and differences of the local cultures of the settlements on the Danube;
- The project partners to work on the joint development of cultural and spatial resources, and the creation of economic value from new tourism products, as well as social cohesion through a common interpretation of their cultures;
- Establishment of institutional cooperation and networks for cooperation - cultural heritage - arts and tourism;
- The main result of the program is to build a new model for cooperation in the use of common resources of cultural heritage on the Danube, synchronizing research institutions, politicians, cultural institutions and members of civil society from the 7 countries working on a common strategy based on of cultural sustainability;
- Promoting the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources;
- Strengthening joint and integrated approaches to preserving and managing the diversity of natural and cultural heritage and resources in the Danube region as a basis for sustainable development and growth strategies;
- Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency by preserving, protecting, promoting and developing the natural and cultural heritage.

Such organization of work and implementation of the project should lead to the construction of peripheral, border areas and, respectively, settlements<sup>1u</sup>, which should bear the marks of healthy territories and settlements.

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