

DANUBE

FUTURE
WORKS²

GOVERNING
EMERGING
SYSTEMS

NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS
on the DANUBE

Conference

07. July 2026

Edwin-Scharff-Haus
Internationales Donaufest
Ulm/Neu-Ulm



EM The DANUBE FUTURE WORKS #2 Conference investigates Emergent Governing Models.

European cities are undergoing a profound transformation. Urban and territorial systems today evolve through unforeseen activities, unexpected threats, and sudden opportunities, challenging the capacity of conventional planning, regulation, and public administration to respond effectively. Along the Danube region, economic volatility, climate stress, political polarization, social fragmentation, migration, and infrastructural fragility intersect across borders, jurisdictions, and ecosystems. Flood risk and drought, energy transition, mobility corridors, and uneven urban development have produced a condition that resembles a permanent state of emergency, not as an exception, but as a governing reality.

This one-day conference, organized within the framework of the *New European Bauhaus on Danube Lab*, addresses the urgent question of how to govern emergent urban and territorial systems, whose behavior cannot be fully predicted, stabilized, or controlled, yet which demand collective responsibility and long-term care. In these complex systems, conventional institutions prove insufficient. Governing must instead operate across scales and uncertainties, continuously interpreting and steering change rather than stabilizing it.

Governing is here understood as a multifaceted public activity encompassing regulation, coordination, planning, decision-making, and the ongoing maintenance, regeneration, and transformation of shared urban and territorial resources. These activities increasingly unfold within multi-organizational networks, where public authorities, civic initiatives, private

actors, and informal practices operate in relations of inter-dependence. Decisions are made through negotiation rather than hierarchy, and compliance is sustained less by control than by trust, reciprocity, and shared obligations across diverse legal and political contexts.

Against this backdrop, the conference foregrounds emergent governing models as a critical field of inquiry and practice. Drawing on both transdisciplinary researches and lived urban experience of self-organized agencies, emergent governing models reveal how collective action can stabilize urban and territorial systems without reverting to rigid control.

These agencies often operate in underused infrastructures, post-industrial landscapes, and transitional public spaces, investing long-term social, cultural, and economic capital into public resources and developing resilient governing strategies. They give rise to new types of public space, open, adaptive, and participatory environments where institutions, experts, and citizens jointly engage in planning, development, and care. Networks of such spaces may strengthen social ties, raise awareness of ecological and social interdependence, and enhance collective capacity to live with uncertainty.

The central ambition of this conference is not to define a single model of governance, but to ask a more fundamental question: How can emerging urban and territorial systems be governed without undermining the very processes of emergence on which their resilience depends? What institutional transformations, policy experiments, and spatial frameworks are required to support adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable urban life?

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DANUBE FUTURE WORKS²

ENGLISH

GOVERNING EMERGING SYSTEMS

Conference

&

YOUNG VOICES

Exhibition

THE NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS ON THE DANUBE

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 to 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.

PROGRAM

YOUNG VOICES

09 ³⁰	Arrival and informal welcome
10 ⁰⁰	<u>World Café</u> working session
14 ⁰⁰	Lunch Break
15 ⁰⁰	<u>Keynote Speeches</u> (20 minutes each)
17 ³⁰	Break
18 ⁰⁰	<u>Moderated discussion</u> with speakers and audience
19 ³⁰	Concluding remarks

EN Hosted by *New European Bauhaus on Danube Lab* in Ulm as part of the International Danube Festival 2026, the conference brings together academic and practitioners in urban and territorial governance, commons-based policy, network organization, and spatial practice. Through key-note speeches and a moderated discussion, it aims to contribute to the Danube region as a living governance laboratory, articulating new imaginaries for Europe's emerging urban and territorial futures. 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.

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 focuses on the women themselves. Their portraits provide a door into their work, which is presented on a project website alongside details of their working methods and networks. *Young Voices* takes place on the banks of the Danube throughout the entire period of the International Danube Festival and invites visitors to stay and enter the world of the protagonists. On the conference day the experts of the exhibition host the *World Café*.

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".

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.

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.

UTE MEYER



Urbanist and urban researcher

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.

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.

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-found 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.

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.

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 *Contrapactice: Action Against Defuturing* (with Tony Fry). She is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Limerick, Ireland.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.