

Conservation of traditional building culture in the Romanian Danube Delta

Background |

The Romanian Danube Delta is mostly known for its beautiful untouched nature and its incredible wildlife, but also for its decreasing population and the hard life conditions people are exposed to. Daily life seems to be affected by melancholic lethargy, probably caused by unemployment in most cases and the lack of self-estimation as well as the lack of estimation concerning living environment. And of course this very obvious absence of estimation would not be helpful to gather for example tourist's attraction. But in a shrinking region usually people do not just lose this feeling of hope, but also the feeling towards their culture and habits. They might lose their culture, if they have even not yet lost it and know what their culture concerning special "normal" things since the last century is.

The municipality of C.A. Rosetti in the north-eastern part of the Romanian Danube Delta lost since 1990 40% of its population. But in spite of this figure the number of abandoned houses in this region is rare; urban framework nowadays just shows a lot of open space between inhabited buildings and electrical towers, due to whom an outsider could maybe realise this place as former occupied land. The ecological culture of construction is the reason why nothings left after having left a site. Traditional houses' construction materials consist usually of organic material like clay, reed, straw, sand and wood, all local materials. But in the last decades it seemed to be easier and even in some cases cheaper to build houses according to the "western", modern way of construction. Also because there are just a few people left who are aware of the traditional culture of construction buildings.

The Romanian Danube Delta is not the only famous state for its building constructions based on clay and reed. Countries all over Europe have discovered this ancient method and partly decided to conserve this culture of construction. Indeed a challenge, especially while bearing in mind that knowledge of traditional building dies of course with the lack of practice, or rather when artisan do not have the possibility to impart this knowledge, an actual issue in all European countries, particularly in the Romanian Danube Delta. Therefore persons in charge have established different networks all over Europe, in most cases within the framework of the European Union, in order to prevent this culture of building from dying. Objectives concern mostly to fight against the skill shortage (global demand is high), which further includes for examples measures dealing with the creation of cross-links between handicraftsmen to gather experience and interchange knowledge.

Subject |

The project is supposed to be led by the Sfistofca Art Association (Lead-partner), which already settled down in the region and is in general based on three pillars, or rather action areas:

- **Networking**

Formal integration in an existing European network which aims at conserving traditions clay building culture, via the Sfistofca Art Association as liaison agency

between the local population of the municipality of C.A. Rossetti and the network. Especially in order to gain attention concerning clay constructions, but also to represent interests of local population concerning access to local resources.

- **Profession in clay-building**

Possibility for the local population to learn the trade of traditional house construction (appropriate certification) within the framework of this international network, organised by the Sfistofca Art Association.

- **Preservation of this construction knowledge through generations**

On the one hand minors from the municipality of C.A. Rossetti are supposed to learn how to work with natural, local construction material in workshops at school and on the other hand a summer school for international students are supposed to be invited to get to know the method of working with such materials.

An essential aspect of these pillars is of course the Sfistofca Art Association, which is in that case due to create an appropriate framework for the project.

Target groups |

- Pillar 1: Members of the Sfistofca Art Association, international Networks
- Pillar 2: Local adults in employable age
- Pillar 3: Local minors as well as young adults, international students

Effected region |

The measures of this project concern the whole area of the municipality, not one village should be excluded.

Reference projects + Possible project partners |

<http://www.earthbuilding.eu/>

<http://www.netzwerkehm.de/>

http://lernpunktlehm.de/wp3/?page_id=5833

<http://www.baubiologie.at/wp/earthen-architecture-in-europe-lehmbau-europa/>

<http://pirate.greenbuildingtraining.eu/public/de/>

