

St. Pölten 2024



Europe at Home – Rescaling Distances





## Mid-sized cities are an encouraging blueprint for how Europeans will live together in future

In Europe 80 per cent of the population live in an urban context – roughly in equal parts in mid-sized cities and in major cities.

### Mid-sized cities ... \*

- ▶ usually have between 20,000 and 250,000 inhabitants.
- ▶ usually find it difficult to define their own identity, overshadowed as they are by a nearby metropolis
- ▶ are often closely linked to smaller or larger towns in their vicinity
- ▶ are found to have a good mixture of social milieus within their neighbourhoods – there is no such thing as “immigrant ghettos”
- ▶ encourage social networks to mingle more freely than is the case in metropolises
- ▶ display a self-image that is significantly better than the image projected on them from outside
- ▶ boast a surprisingly diversified cultural offer
- ▶ are especially child-friendly
- ▶ have a great deal of vacant spaces and underused sites

\* Mittelstadt – Urbanes Leben jenseits der Metropole, Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber, Campus Verlag, 2010



- Mid-sized city (20,000 to 250,000 inhabitants)
- Small city (less than 20,000 inhabitants)
- City (more than 250,000 inhabitants)



#### Introduction – General considerations

Has the concept of the programme described for the ECoC year changed between the pre-selection and the selection stage? If yes, please describe the new concept and explain the reasons for the change.

**There are many St. Pöltens in Europe.  
Mid-sized cities like us are home  
to almost half of Europe's population.  
We hold the keys for how Europeans  
will live together with their diversity  
of cultures in the future.  
We only need to change direction.  
Now.**

This is the result of our process, which has brought people together in our city and deepened cooperation with the Culture Region St. Pölten. Europe faces a multitude of challenges and no one can solve them alone.

The continent's mid-sized cities with a population between 20,000 and 250,000 are significant living environments. They are big enough to experience the urban challenges of the time at first hand, and small and agile enough to develop and test surprising and unusual solutions together. Our bid *Europe at Home – Rescaling Distances* is therefore a significant impulse to find sustainable solutions for the challenges that are waiting to overwhelm us:

- ▶ The issue of social inclusion, the need to find a constructive approach to migration and to adopt a sustainable attitude towards our environment all demand the reduction of *social distances*.
- ▶ The gap between urban and rural environments, the mobility issue and the interchangeability of places and mid-sized cities call for a redefinition and a reassessment of *spatial distances*.
- ▶ Coming to terms with the past – for example with National Socialism – and our responsibility for the future in light of climate crises demand a rescaling of *temporal distances*.

All these questions and issues urgently require solutions everywhere in Europe.

We are convinced that tackling these problems and developing approaches is likely to be especially promising when undertaken by a mid-sized city. Here the physical distances are short, many people know each other and developments are slower but more comprehensible. The limited self-confidence compared to a metropolis and the resulting high degree of self-criticism increase the desire and the possibility for change. This is precisely what we have seen happening in our city over the last year.

Like so many of Europe's mid-sized cities, St. Pölten is usually beaten far below its value. We can and will go on the offensive and show that fresh and innovative ideas, as well as art of high quality, can also come from a supposed provincial city. Indeed, they may even be more likely to come from such a place. ECoC year is an ideal challenge to bring together the necessary energies and efforts.

- ▶ Our city is located at the heart of Europe, midway between East and West and midway between North and South. That said, we still have a lot to do in the way of including Europe in our everyday lives, of learning from intra-European exchanges and of registering and returning all the inspiration that Europe can give.
- ▶ The people in the Culture Region St. Pölten do not feel connected to St. Pölten by heart. Our city has been the capital of Lower Austria for more than 30 years but it is yet to succeed in becoming an emotional heart for the region and the province as its living cultural centre.





The network we have established in Europe has made one thing quite clear to us: we are not alone. There are many mid-sized cities in Europe that are living in the shadow of a nearby metropolis. We have invited cities of roughly the same size as us to join us in forming a movement dedicated to:

### Rescaling Distances

In a time of societies drifting apart, the danger of the disintegration of Europe and the retreat behind national borders, St. Pölten 2024 consciously wants to focus on the supposedly foreign and distant by means of artistic and cultural formats. This hopefully will open the eyes, ears and hearts of local residents and of visitors alike to new and better perspectives.

To translate our preoccupation with social, spatial and temporal distances into an innovative programme likely to attract Europe's attention we have taken the following steps:

- ▶ Together with our artistic team we have recast our narrative as an artistic vision and a high-quality cultural and artistic programme of European relevance and have concretised this programme in collaboration with various partners.
- ▶ For the development of the programme we have realised four specific open calls to involve institutional and local players.
- ▶ We have conceived the <CulturalChangeCampus> for capacity building and for fine-tuning independent projects.
- ▶ We have already made allowance for different levels of participation in the conception phase of the programme, thereby creating the preconditions for addressing new groups and revitalising the public with a view to long-term audience development.
- ▶ We have completed the long-term cultural strategy "St. Pölten 2030" and anchored its focal points in the existing cultural strategy of the Province of Lower Austria by an addendum adopted recently by the Government. (▶ [www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/news/addendum](http://www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/news/addendum))
- ▶ We have started a process involving the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria to develop the Culture Region St. Pölten and its identity.
- ▶ We have taken a holistic approach to our cultural infrastructure projects: They were all selected in accordance with the programme and developed together with long term operational concepts.
- ▶ In addition to that, we created a compass (▶ p 7) that navigates us through complex tasks.

Our vision for rescaling distances counts on the force of movement and the power of transformation. The artistic programme brings us closer to the European questions during the journey along three tracks:

- ▶ **COME CLOSER – Social Distances**  
At a time when our societies are drifting apart and when there is a real danger of disintegration of Europe and a withdrawal behind national borders, St. Pölten 2024 wants to advance the rescaling of social distances as a counter strategy.
- ▶ **CHANGING ROOMS – Spatial Distances**  
It is time to create a new connectivity in the city, the region and in Europe and to assign new functions to spatial resources.
- ▶ **THE LONG NOW – Temporal Distances**  
Distances between the past and the future need to be shortened as do those between remembrance and our responsibility for the future – if we are to reach the promised land of sustainability.

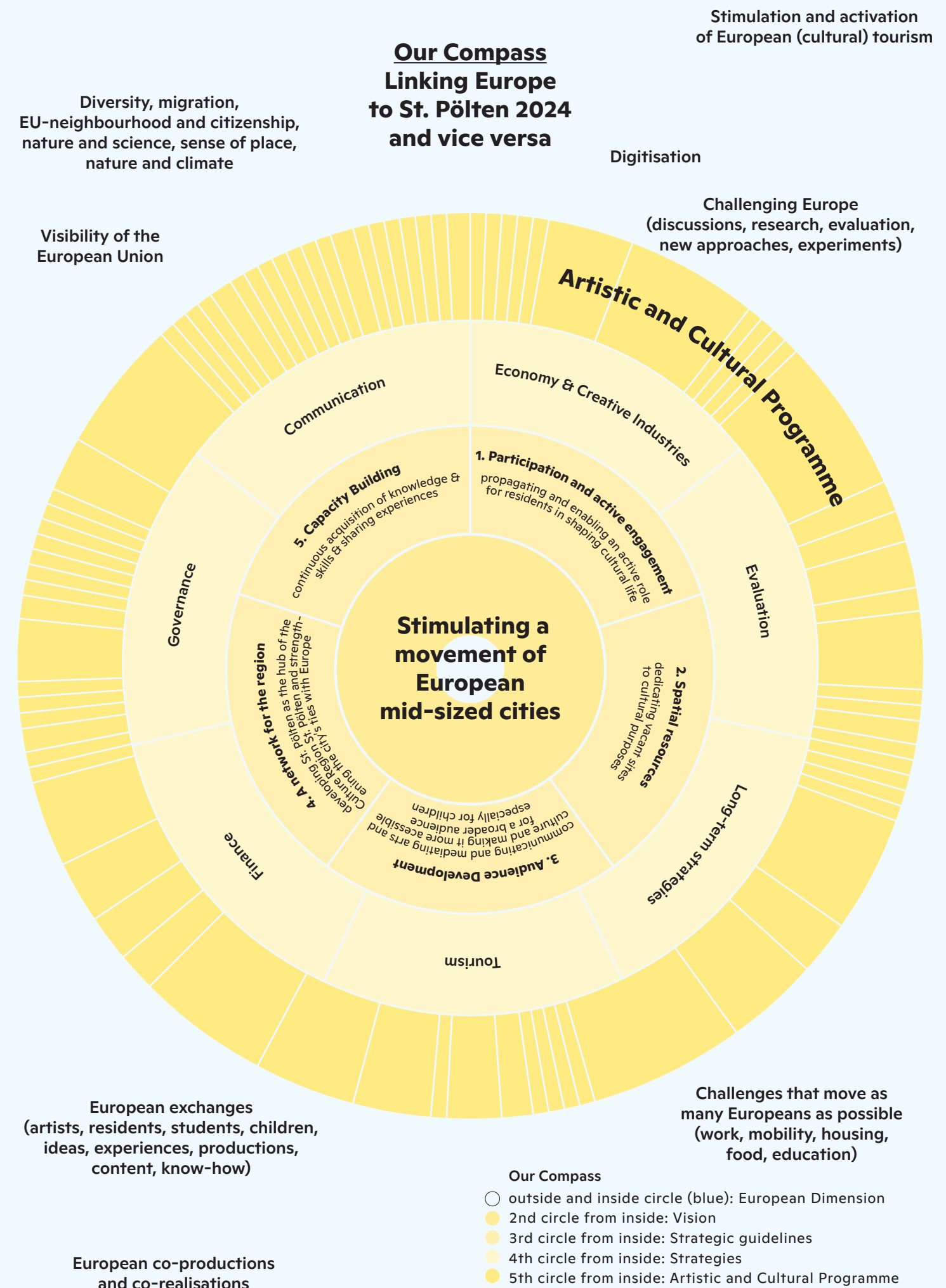
What attitudes, what methods are most likely to help us meet the challenges all of Europe is faced with? How can we truly rescale distances – or, in other words – how can we really get closer to each other? What we need is a change of perspective or even a complete change of direction:

<You only need to change direction>

What we are hoping to achieve with our bid, our cultural and artistic projects and the reminder that all of us urgently need to change direction is to encourage people here and elsewhere to take the risk of adopting a new perspective, to break out of well-trodden paths and to seriously consider new approaches.

With our application, we therefore aim to overcome distances and create a vibrant sense of solidarity among and proximity between people in Europe.

And give change a chance.





#### Contribution to the long-term-strategy

- Describe any changes to the cultural strategy since the preselection stage, and the role of the ECoC pre-selection in these changes, if relevant. Indicate specifically which priorities of this strategy the ECoC action intends to contribute to, and how.
- Have your intentions in terms of long-term impact of the ECoC action on the city changed since pre-selection? If yes, please describe the changes or further impact foreseen.

## Amazing how many St. Pöltens there are in Europe

Mid-sized cities in Europe tend to be seen as faceless, as places where buildings and shops are the same as each other, where we all put the same foodstuffs into our shopping trolleys, drink the same brew of beer and watch the same series on the internet or on TV. We live in what are interchangeable surroundings, toxic for local identity and diversity. The European Capital of Culture 2024 in St. Pölten focuses on such mid-sized cities overshadowed by a near-by metropolis. Towns that struggle to develop or maintain an unmistakable identity. Loss of identity is a threat hanging over many of Europe's St. Pöltens.

Our own town is still saddled with an image it in fact shed long ago: that of a grey, smelly, boring industrial city. This image simply does not do justice to the city's lived reality any longer. St. Pölten, like so many of its siblings, does not get anywhere near the appreciation from outside it would be entitled to. However, mid-sized cities have their own upsides and what they need to do first and foremost is to become more clearly aware of themselves. In the case of St. Pölten these upsides include the combination of peaceful diversity of its population, ease of transport, especially by train, and quite a range of cultural offerings within the city and its surroundings.

Mid-sized cities usually have between 20,000 and 250,000 inhabitants. We have now reached a point where 80% of the population in Europe live in an urban context – roughly in equal parts in mid-sized cities and in major cities. Europe's St. Pöltens, where people live in close social, spatial and temporal distance to each other, are therefore important catalysts for the solution of many social and other structural issues.

These St. Pöltens are often both more compact and more diversified than any given quarter of a metropolis. They are more family friendly, too. They have vacant sites and plots that can be put at the disposal of cultural and civic initiatives. They are in close contact with their environs, have better access to the resources offered by those neighbouring regions and are linked to them by better networks. Individual communication routes are shorter. Greater transparency makes it easier to initiate development processes. What we have come to understand since the preselection stage is that we do not any longer want to press the claim that we are the role model for mid-sized cities. We have no desire to present ourselves as “a cut above the rest”.

**Instead, we start a movement stimulating Europe's mid-sized cities. Together with them we want to become more sustainable, more livable, more European. This is a standing invitation to all of Europe's St. Pöltens: let's pool our efforts, we're in this together.**

The free movement of ideas and experiences, of people, of works of art and artistic content will energise this movement. What we are aiming for is to become a livable European mid-size city in a widespread network of cities where distances are reset on a human scale. While St. Pölten 2024 is proactively promoting this movement, a newly conceived cultural strategy, entitled “St. Pölten 2030”, stakes out the strategic scope and defines goals and the steps towards their realisation. This cultural strategy was unanimously voted for by St. Pölten's City Council on 30 September 2019.

#### United in Diversity

There is no doubt that Austria needs another city of culture located between Linz and Vienna. We believe that St. Pölten has got the potential to become a typical mid-sized city at the vibrant centre of regional and Europe-wide activities. We believe that St. Pölten, seriously focusing on its identity as a European city of culture, can enter into an amicable competition with Vienna and Linz – following that archetypally Austrian motto of “both ... and” rather than “either ... or”, to the lasting benefit of all parties concerned.

Wherever they are located in Europe, the St. Pöltens conceive and strengthen their sense of identity by constantly interacting with the other. What is true of cities applies in equal measure to human beings. We want

St. Pölten to be a venue of interpersonal exchange predicated on the respect for differences (in social status, ethnic origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender, ...). Diversity fires us up to become truly rooted in our specific location. Agility and movement, mobility and connectivity are essential requirements to keep this process alive – and we need to find ways to make it sustainable.

We want the livable mid-sized city St. Pölten to mirror life itself and to be full of unexpected encounters, creative outburst and disorder. Small is beautiful – but mid-size is even more so. Slowness can be a great asset in its own right.

#### Linking Europe to St. Pölten and Culture Region St. Pölten and vice versa: our strategic guidelines

That said, we are nevertheless realistic enough to see that, in addition to their strengths and potentials, many St. Pöltens, including our own, have a specific deficiency: they lack a clear profile. This lack casts a shadow on our image. St. Pölten is unfinished in many respects. Yet even this status does not have only downsides. The city's perception of its own identity swings back and forth between ambition and stagnation. Doubts concerning its self-perception open up design possibilities, to a degree where they become imperative. We want to clarify St. Pölten's cultural profile and to contribute to the city's sense of identity.

The strategic guidelines outlined in the cultural strategy “St. Pölten 2030” and in St. Pölten 2024 are identical. They reflect our strengths and the challenges we are called upon to meet, issues we have named as our European themes: diversity, migration, places, citizenship, nature and history. (► p 58/59) Together these issues form a framework for communication, making it easier for us to enter into a dialogue with other European mid-sized cities.

We have already started to establish resilient and durable relationships with other mid-sized cities in Europe to facilitate the exchange of information, ideas and people. Together we develop new approaches. We discuss vital issues on a European or global level and seek to integrate new insights into the cultural development of St. Pölten.

#### We link Europe to St. Pölten and St. Pölten to Europe within our strategic guidelines:

##### 1. Participation and active engagement: propagating and enabling an active role in shaping cultural life

Cultural workers in Europe's mid-sized cities depend for the way they think and act on the engagement and enthusiasm of residents. This is why we are determined to encourage and facilitate in St. Pölten all forms of participation so that as many residents as possible can take actively part in cultural life.

##### 2. Spatial resources: dedicating vacant sites to cultural purposes

All over Europe cities are looking for ways to make better use of vacant or little used buildings and plots – against the backdrop of steadily increasing land usage. We breathe new life into abandoned buildings and into monofunctional, unsustainably used land. By transforming these spaces into a testing ground we create place for culture, experimentation and communication.

##### 3. Audience development: communicating and mediating arts and culture and making it more accessible for a broader audience and especially for children

Our audiences seek to grow and diversify and to bond with us. We encourage individuals and groups to take an active part and are aiming to remove barriers of all kinds as quickly as possible. Our special attention goes to the next generation. We are convinced that artistic experiences are helping children to develop social and cultural competences. It is our aim to encourage our next generations to contribute to our shared future and especially to the environment and take their contribution radically serious.

##### 4. A network for the region: developing St. Pölten as the centre of the Culture Region St. Pölten and strengthening its ties with Europe

St. Pölten is located in the middle of a region richly endowed with art and culture. To release synergies between St. Pölten and the region surrounding it, we have set up networking activities on different levels. We aim to create a region with many internal connections featuring artistic and sociocultural content and programmes. The idea is for this unit to radiate to Europe and consolidate the connection.

##### 5. Capacity Building – the continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills and the sharing of insights and experiences

We steadily acquire new knowledge and new skills not only for our own use but also with a view to sharing them. Intense networking in Europe and the involvement of “unusual” partners will give us the opportunity to test new methods that will generate innovative and unexpected results and new, long-term structures – in the mindset of people and of institutions and enterprises involved.



LONG-TERM EFFECTS & LEGACY	WHAT WE HAVE DONE ALREADY – A SELECTION	WHAT STP2024 IS GOING TO DO
0 European Dimension: Linking Europe to St. Pölten 2024 and vice versa		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Creating a great community through the movement for European mid-sized cities</li> <li>▶ Re-engaging with European issues and values</li> <li>▶ Being aware of European history</li> <li>▶ Discovering wider Europe close to one's own home</li> <li>▶ Contributing to a sustainable future</li> <li>▶ Strengthening the European identity of citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ We organised the conference of the "Cooperation Network European Mid-Size Cities" and an exhibition. Topic: "Cultural Diversity and Exchange as a wake-up call to European mid-sized cities".</li> <li>▶ At St. Pölten's Former Synagogue we discussed "Europe at Home – How can we deal with Europe's great challenges closer to home?" with the President and the Vice-President of the European Forum Alpbach and other experts of the EU.</li> <li>▶ Together with the artist collective Rimini Protokoll, Landestheater NÖ paid visits to people at home. The idea: a hostess/ host is joined by fourteen guests in her/his livingroom. Together they play a game featuring Europe as a topic. Surprises are part of the game.</li> </ul>	<p>MAIN STATION Europe at Home</p> <p>GLANZSTOFF Rescaling Distances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hub Castle Viehofen</li> <li>○ Hub Former Synagogue</li> <li>● Stop Sankt Pölten Museum for European Integration</li> <li>● Stop A Great European Story</li> <li>● Stop KunstnetzWERK_Europa</li> </ul>
1 Participation and active engagement: propagating and enabling an active role in shaping cultural life		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Cultural life involves the active participations of people from all walks of life</li> <li>▶ All conceivable possibilities to improve participation in cultural life are used</li> <li>▶ Participatory formats are given a greater role in cultural development processes</li> <li>▶ Civil society initiatives rejuvenate the cultural scene</li> <li>▶ There is to be a significant increase in the number of co-productions and co-realizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The cultural strategy and the "Guidelines for Public Space" were developed in terms of content in such participatory formats as public dialogue forums or focus groups.</li> <li>▶ In collaboration with the platform KulturhauptSTART we have raised awareness of our agenda among people from all walks of life through the preparatory project "Grätzellabor". Formats used included "Take-Overs" at the platform's headquarters, weekly surgeries for residents and the "Salon24", a publicly accessible livingroom.</li> <li>▶ For the St. Pölten 2024 programme we have issued four specific project calls for different target-groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hub SONNENPARK/LAMES</li> <li>○ Hub Route 24</li> <li>○ Hub Mirage 24</li> <li>● Stop Start-Orchester</li> <li>● Stop Transformation Festival</li> <li>● Stop Grätzellabor</li> <li>● Stop The Wheel of Delight</li> <li>● Stop Futurama Lab</li> <li>● Stop Let's Draw!</li> <li>● Stop Critical Chance</li> </ul>
2 Spatial Resources: dedicating vacant sites to cultural purposes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vacant plots and other underused spaces are re-purposed for artistic uses</li> <li>▶ The potential of public space is put to multi-functional use</li> <li>▶ Care is taken that also cultural programmes on offer in public space are barrier-free</li> <li>▶ Cultural institutions increasingly present themselves in public space</li> <li>▶ The use of existing cultural infrastructure is reviewed and upgraded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The Summer School of the New Design University with its focus on public space has already been held twice. In 2019, students built "urban acupuncture spots". Talks on topics such as "Place Making" and panel discussions with experts were valuable additions to the week's programme.</li> <li>▶ The newly created "Guidelines for Public Space" put continued development of public space centre stage by focusing on eight fields of action and a set of targeted measures.</li> <li>▶ "StadtLandFluss": together with the platform KulturhauptSTART and cultural workers we transformed part of the Cultural District into a field of experimentation for the arts and culture for a day.</li> </ul>	<p>GLANZSTOFF Rescaling distances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hub Cathedral Square</li> <li>○ Hub Castle Viehofen</li> <li>○ Hub Route 24</li> <li>○ Hub Cultural District</li> <li>● Stop At home/In the garden/ On the beach</li> <li>● Stop Voice and Vote</li> </ul>

3 Audience Development: communicate and mediate arts and culture and make it more accessible for a broader audience especially to children		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Art and culture are being made more accessible to people from all walks of life</li> <li>▶ There is a steady increase in high-quality cultural outreach and education programmes – especially for children</li> <li>▶ The acquisition of social and cultural competences through the means of art is promoted</li> <li>▶ There is a focus on the removal of structural barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Together with the St. Pölten-based Institute for Jewish History in Austria we organised three historical city walks in search of traces of the times when Jewish life had flourished here.</li> <li>▶ We have developed a detailed concept for the Children. Art.Lab in a large, highly diversified working group and have established two in-depth focus groups in primary schools. We visited European institutions to conduct in-depth talks with several of them: "Children's Art House" (Rijeka/CRO), Bibiana-International House of Art for Children (Bratislava/SK), ZOOM Kindermuseum (Vienna/AT), Kindermuseum München (Munich/GER)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hub Children.Art.Lab</li> <li>○ Hub Castle Viehofen</li> <li>● Stop Club 3 Kids</li> <li>● Stop Reframing Heimat</li> <li>● Stop Food Connection</li> <li>● Stop Queerschnitt Film Festival</li> <li>● Stop The Perfect Feast</li> <li>● Stop Community Dance Days</li> </ul>
4 A network for the region: developing St. Pölten as the hub of the Culture Region St. Pölten and strengthening the city's ties with Europe.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ European networking in the fields of the arts and culture is given top priority</li> <li>▶ St. Pölten is closely linked to the region surrounding the city</li> <li>▶ The cultural and artistic offerings of St. Pölten and the surrounding region are promoted Europe-wide</li> <li>▶ The quality of transport within St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten has model character</li> <li>▶ Strengthening creative industries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ We have initiated a development process of the Culture Region St. Pölten in the fields of culture, business and tourism together with the province of Lower Austria and the province's tourism board. The region will also play a key role in Lower Austria's existing cultural strategy and the province's tourism strategy, which is currently taking shape.</li> <li>▶ We organised several meetings with the artistic and executive directors of those of the region's cultural institutions that have annual programmes.</li> <li>▶ We are in touch with the mayors of the district capitals of the Culture Region St. Pölten concerning their active participation and co-funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hub Mirage 24</li> <li>○ Hub Nuclear Power Plant Zwentendorf</li> <li>○ Hub Cathedral Square Visionale</li> <li>● Stop AIR-Train</li> <li>● Stop Direct connections</li> <li>● Stop Musical Impulse</li> <li>● Stop Trash Diaries</li> <li>● Stop River kilometre 2024</li> </ul>
5 Capacity Building – the continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills and sharing insights and experiences		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Specific further training programmes are organised for cultural activists and civic journalists</li> <li>▶ Regional and European networking in the fields of culture, education and social affairs is promoted</li> <li>▶ European know-how is being merged with regional specifics to create a new quality</li> <li>▶ "Unusual" partners are invited to play a role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In collaboration with local associations we organised the symposium "REALRAUM – Knowledge transfer and networking for cultural workers". Experts from places as far apart as Berlin and Timișoara took part in workshops.</li> <li>▶ We paid visits to Linz 2009, Plzeň 2015, Matera 2019, Plovdiv 2019 and to Rijeka 2020, and some candidate cities for 2025 Dresden, Chemnitz and Magdeburg, and exchanged ideas with the people in charge. In our skype conversations with people in charge of Eleusis 2021, Timișoara 2021, Novi Sad 2021, Kaunas 2022, Esch-sur-Alzette 2022, Galway 2020, Vezprém 2023, Tartu 2024 and Bodø 2024 and Banja Luka, Mostar, Dornbirn and Bad Ischl we discussed challenges, commonalities and concrete programme cooperations.</li> </ul>	<p>&lt;CulturalChangeCampus&gt;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stop Musical Impulse</li> <li>● Stop Grätzellabor</li> <li>● Stop Transformation Festival</li> <li>● Stop Platform for Young Art and Young Artists</li> <li>● Stop Visionale</li> <li>● Stop Changing Perspectives</li> </ul>

### What is left when everything is over?

The cultural strategy "St. Pölten 2030", which was developed concurrently and jointly with the bid St. Pölten 2024, contributed a great deal to making long-term effects clear. All strategic guidelines are linked to 13 fields of action like culture for children and adolescents, outreach, Europe

or artistic production and interdisciplinarity. St. Pölten 2024 will advance this agenda both during the application phase and with its programme. *The link to the executive summary of the cultural strategy can be found at [www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/news/culturalstrategy](http://www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/news/culturalstrategy)*



## We have laid solid foundations by developing complementary strategies

Mindful of our “legacy”, we have built on the capital’s cultural strategy paper “St. Pölten 2030” and other strategies such as the Integrated Urban Development Concept 2016 or the Whitebook on Education to develop complementary strategies. However, during the selection phase we learned that in order to make the long-term effects more concrete, we “had to change direction” in many of our projects. This is where in the last year, besides the cultural and artistic programme, a great deal of our energy went.

### Our four principles to change direction in order to influence the long-term effects positively

- Instead of a singular, choose an overall approach.
- Participation and the involvement of experts increases sustainability.
- Choose a new approach to projects that have been in the pipeline for a long time.
- Develop a content based concept and anchor it in existing strategies.

### Public space belongs to everyone – the “Guidelines for Public Space”

Public space is supposed to be freely accessible to the largest possible number of the city’s residents. As this is obviously not the case in St. Pölten at present, we started a participatory process, involving an interdisciplinary working group charged with formulating guidelines for the use of public space in St. Pölten. The upshot is eight fields of action with a broad array of measures to definitively change the way we perceive and use public space. These include the need to provide not only more but also more high-quality space for pedestrians, to link up the city’s districts more closely, to make public space consistently barrier-free and to expand green commons.



Krems, Culture Region St. Pölten

### Kids are the world’s R&D department – Children.Art.Lab

One of the results of the participatory process in 2018 was the decision to increase the number of cultural, outreach and education programmes for children. The new Children.Art.Lab is designed to facilitate children’s contact with the arts and culture. We developed the operating concept, functions and goals of the Children.Art.Lab together with an interdisciplinary working group, taking care from restart to integrate a broad range of expert knowledge into the process. We did so by massively involving local actors from the fields of social affairs, culture, art, education, the local scene and focus groups in primary schools. We conducted interviews with Austrian and international experts and future partners.

### In a Europe of the regions – the Culture Region St. Pölten

We are going to exploit to the full the potential of the unique cultural region surrounding St. Pölten and to boost regional networking in the fields of arts and culture in order to create a miniature region nestling in a Europe of the regions. The development will take place on three levels. The first level is predicated on content and artistic programmes and involves all cultural actors. The second level, conceived in terms of cultural tourism, is concerned with the development of what there is on offer like cultural packages, of communication paths and the regional transport concept. The third, organisational level is concerned with the creation of an organisational structure and with integrating the Culture Region into the cultural strategy of the Province of Lower Austria, the tourism strategy 2025 of the Province of Lower Austria and the cultural strategy “St. Pölten 2030”.

### Cultural infrastructure projects

We have also applied our principles to our cultural infrastructure projects like the Cathedral Square, the Former Synagogue or the Cultural District. Once we had felt the pulse of the city, we selected our projects, developed strategic and content based operational concepts in a participatory manner, linked them to our programme and set up a timetable. (► p 96/97)

## Traditional creative makers and young pragmatic brains together

St. Pölten suffers from not being visible and recognized as a creative hotspot to say the lightest. However, situated in between the creative powerhouses of Vienna and Linz, the creative brains in our city and cultural region are to be found in different environments.

On the one side, there are product designers, craftswomen and craftsmen, marketers, code writers or cooks who traditionally work in offstage and backstage roles inside companies. The key industries where these creatives work are production and automation technology, food and metal processing, papermaking, mechanical-engineering as well as wood and furniture. In their specialist roles they require practical, technical skills and experience that stimulate soft innovations that keep the companies competitive and stimulate a focus on quality, excellence, craftsmanship, or creativity. All of which are values in the core of our application.

On the other side, there is an emerging scene of creative young people in St. Pölten, to a great extent originated and supported by St. Pölten’s growing universities: for example the University of Applied Sciences offering courses in media management, IT security and social inclusion, and the New Design University which offers courses like “Design, Handicraft and Material culture” or “Graphic Design”. However, for a large part these students do not end up working in our city and Culture Region St. Pölten yet.

Our strategy is to connect St. Pölten’s creative people, make Creative Industries more visible and create spill-over effects to other sectors. This strategy to generate new stimuli has three approaches:

- We connect the “traditional” and the “new” Creative Industries’ people by using our [CulturalChangeCampus](#). A set of programmes is developed to connect local and specialised supranational and European networks and do specialised work sessions on finance, business models and media technologies.
- We focus on the creation of spill-over effects to other sectors in St. Pölten, for example transport and trains (on the Austrian Federal Railways Education Campus), health care (in combination with the largest hospital in Lower Austria), as well as cultural tourism and digital technologies.
- We provide start-ups with space and mentoring as part of our cultural programme based on our concept of “in-between” and “abandoned places”.

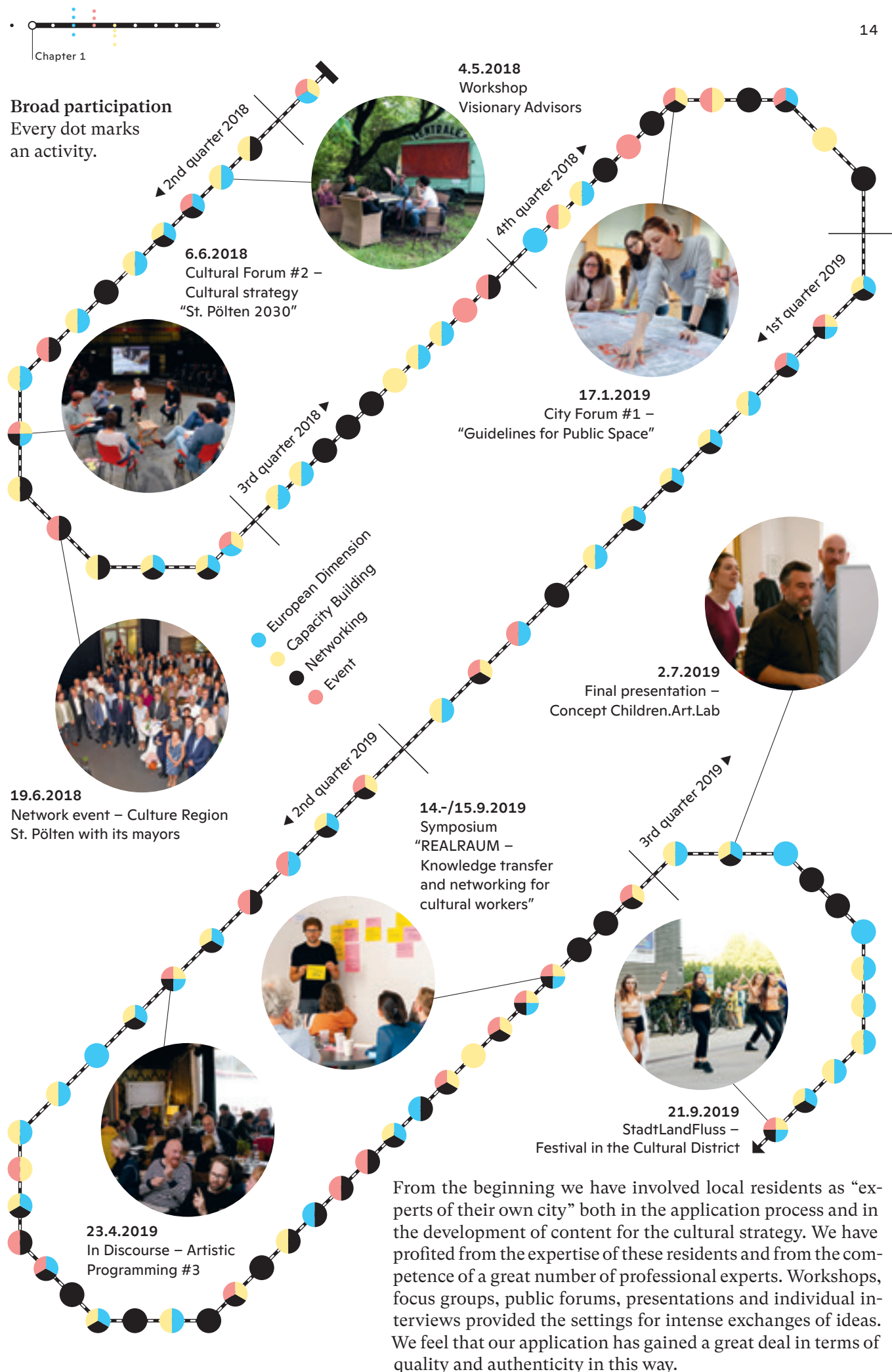
### Potential Partners:

St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, New Design University, Department for Development, Economy and Marketing St. Pölten; business platform St. Pölten 2020; Chamber of Commerce of Lower Austria, Kreativwirtschaft Austria, Plovdiv, Creative Region Linz & Upper Austria, Zukunftswerkstatt Mostviertel/Amstetten, Kulturvernetzung NÖ

### Some illustrations how this integrated strategy works:

- Inspired by our visit to Plovdiv 2019 and their pilot project in the city’s Kapana district, St. Pölten 2024 will be renting appx. eight vacant premises (such as former artisanal production facilities or workshops) in inner-city neighbourhoods affected by structural change and issuing a “Call for Creative Industries”. An interdisciplinary jury will help us to find eight innovative enterprises and start-ups, for all of which we will pay a year’s rent of up to EUR 500 a month. This is designed to introduce a new dynamic to these neighbourhoods, and thereby give them a new sense of purpose and a new lease of life.
- Since in Austria 25% of agricultural production is already organic, we set up a partnership with the Chamber of Agriculture, the Association of Austrian organic farmers (BIO AUSTRIA) and the Centre for Global Change and Sustainability (BOKU Vienna) to release lessons learned from the history of agriculture. We look forward to combining these insights with ongoing developments of innovative technologies inside companies that improve environmental protection and resource efficiency as part of the Stop “Where Does Your Food Come From?”
- Our cultural programme makes complex ideas easy understandable by means of storytelling: writers, filmmakers, game designers and radio makers express how interactions, specifications and policies of Creative Industries might be promoted in communities. Together with the University of Applied Arts we started the experimental project “Media in Transit”: Are people influenced by non verbal design while on the train? Furthermore, we make combinations between research on eco-friendly lifestyles in the Futurama Lab and initiatives with recycled fashion, we present “Living Archives” of media art in the Virtual European Capital of Culture and we experiment with food, furniture and migration in the Stop “European Livingroom” to name just a few.





Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the title on your city and for disseminating the results of the evaluation. In particular, the following questions could be considered: ▶ Who will carry out the evaluation? ▶ What objectives and milestones will be included in your evaluation plan, between the designation and the year of the title? ▶ What baseline studies or surveys do you intend to use? ▶ What sort of information will you track and monitor? ▶ How will you define “success”? ▶ Over what time frame and how regularly will the evaluation be carried out? ▶ How will the results be disseminated?

## Participatory, process oriented and evidence based

Continuous monitoring serves as our early-warning system. To be able to react flexibly to evaluation results, we leave space for reflection and revision – what we call “blank spaces” – in our programme. In addition to the classic evaluation methods we will enlist the services of residents and visitors – as Kultur-Checker, citizen scouts and story tellers. Their respective strengths, ideas and potentials will help us to learn and to take corrective action. In collaboration with local universities und European experts an independent board will be in charge of monitoring and evaluation.

**We involve citizens as the first step.** In their role of “civic scientists”, residents themselves play a “front-line” role. They observe, make notes, document and analyse from their perspective cultural events in the city and the surrounding region. We will present their findings together in a way that is both interesting and relevant to the city’s residents. **We allow course corrections.** Since cultural work is seen as a learning system, we leave manoeuvring room for reflection and revision. **We use state-of-the-art methods.** Our methods will lead to evidence-based decisions concerning the readjustment and continued development of our cultural strategy. **We set up a steering group.** This group, comprised of the Office St. Pölten 2024 and stakeholders drawn from the city and the province provide strategic and operational monitoring. In addition, an Advisory Board, comprised of experts drawn from the fields of science, culture and of residents, will convene once a year to discuss and analyse monitoring and evaluation results. This screening will be partly publicly accessible. We are in a continuous process of exchange with the evaluation team, other ECoCs and all relevant stakeholders.

**Evaluation is in the hands of an independent panel**  
On the basis of a call for tender, evaluation will be put in the hands of independent research institutions like universities and/or commercial market research institutes, some supra-regional, others regional. We will be cooperating closely with local universities. Our department of outreach, education and evaluation will serve as an interface.

**We make distance and closeness visible with performative research methods**  
In addition to the regular reports to the steering group and the Advisory Board we will experiment with new forms of making research results accessible, visible and understandable. In cooperation with artists we give visual expression to evaluation results. In this way we hope to be able to present complex facts both online and on infoscreens in an aesthetically convincing manner. Furthermore, we want to present results performatively. Participants in public events and in public space, who have been selected on the basis of specific criteria (age, occupation, origins, cultural interests) will be directed to position themselves in the audience. They will be joined by “invisible actors”, who represent marginalised population groups (migrants, people from underprivileged educational backgrounds). In these unusual constellations, social, cultural or ethnic distances and conflicts are made visible and perceptible at a stroke.

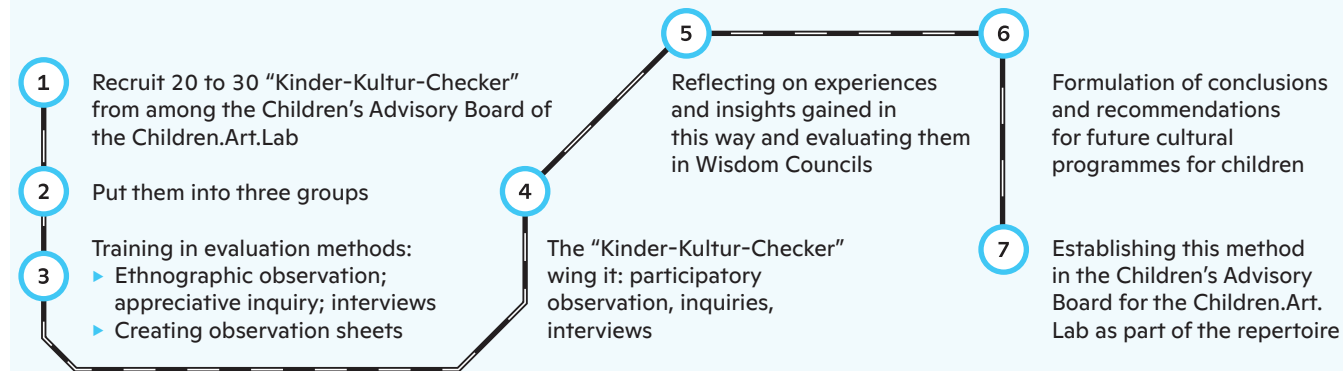
### A ten-year plan stakes out the path to 2030

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026–2030
<b>Collect &amp; track</b>	Statistical data, “Kinder-Kultur-Checker”, citizen scouts, storytellers, ...						
<b>Monitor</b>	Emphasis on inputs, outputs and readily discernible effects (outcomes)						
<b>Navigate</b>	Regular meetings with the steering group and the Advisory Board						
<b>Evaluate</b>	Emphasis on effects (outcomes and impact)						
<b>Negotiate</b>	Negotiating results in visual and performative terms, Legacy						

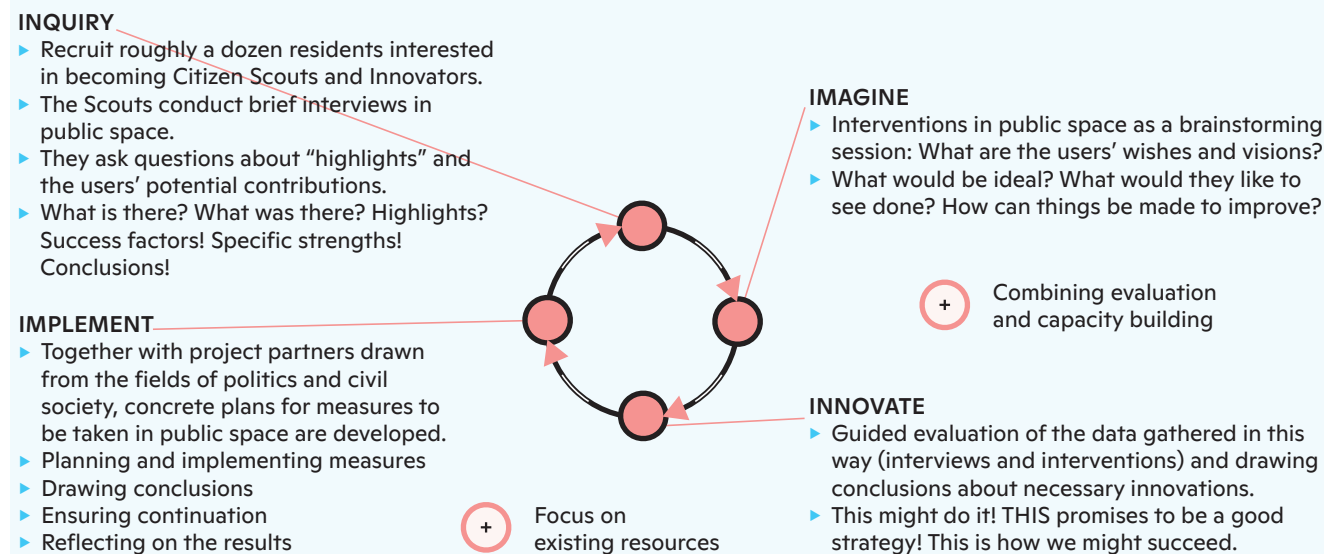
## The residents themselves take evaluation matters into their hands

Evaluation comprises an array of qualitative and quantitative survey instruments: opinion polls, qualitative interviews concerning analyses of the programme and of media content, network analyses and statistical secondary analyses. All these instruments allow painstaking reflection on the measures to be taken and an evidence-based development of the cultural strategy. The brief outlines of three groundbreaking studies below are intended to exemplify the participatory research that is our model.

### “Kinder-Kultur-Checker” for the development of artistic and cultural programmes for children

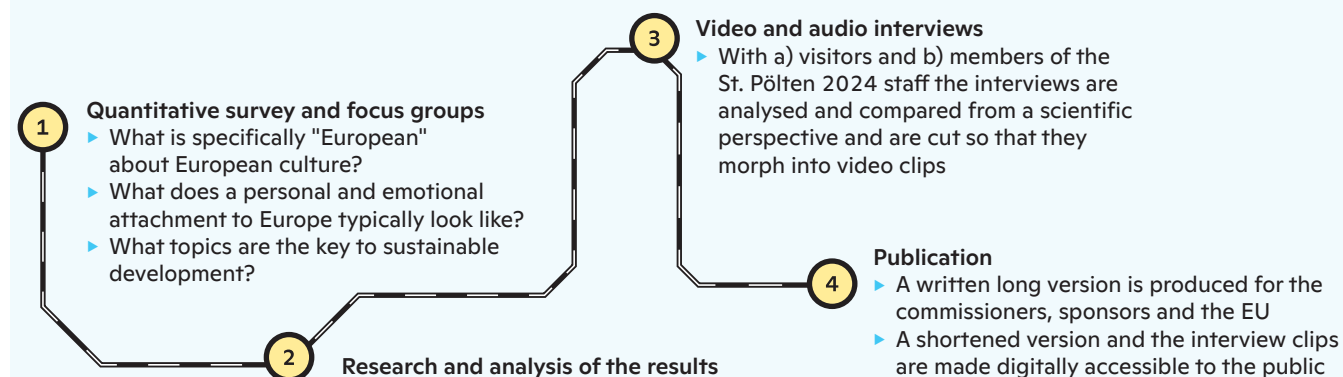


### Citizen Scouts for the design of public space



### Storytellers for European culture

In collaboration with the “Lab Democracy and Society in Transition”, which concerns itself with social and sociopolitical issues, especially with regard to democracy research and participation.



## The goals of St. Pölten 2024 are closely linked to those of the Cultural Strategy “St. Pölten 2030”

St. Pölten 2024 pursues medium- and long-term goals which are closely linked to the city’s cultural strategy “St. Pölten 2030” and the European Union’s ECoC criteria. It is the realisation of these goals that we take responsibility for and measure our success.

TARGET DIMENSIONS		INDICATORS
EU STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES (SO)	OUR COMPASS	
<b>SO1</b> Broadening the scope, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer and strengthening it through transnational collaboration.	<b>0</b> Linking Europe to St. Pölten 2024 and vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Intensity/quality of cooperations with supraregional, European and extra-European partners (artists, organisers, former and current ECoCs)</li> <li>▶ Proportion of the population with an adequate awareness of the European Union and its institutions</li> <li>▶ Proportion of topics of European and global relevance in official documents and in regional and social media</li> <li>▶ No. and quality of European and international town twinnings</li> <li>▶ Voter turnout in St. Pölten and the surrounding region for the 2024 elections to the EU parliament</li> <li>▶ No. of European artists, visitors and students, especially from CEE</li> <li>▶ Personal and emotional attach to their home in Europe and Europe at home</li> </ul>
<b>SO2</b> Facilitating and improving participation in and access to cultural events	<b>1</b> Participation and active engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Pride and social cohesion due to local initiatives</li> <li>▶ No. of key workers, volunteers and actively involved people</li> <li>▶ Percentage of projects of the local scene in the cultural programme</li> <li>▶ Share of the budget and of the city’s and the province’s cultural budget allotted to the local scene</li> <li>▶ Percentage of the cultural programme co-created by direct involvement of citizens</li> </ul>
<b>SO3</b> Strengthening and consolidating capacities in the field of culture and establishing links to other sectors	<b>2</b> Spatial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Extent and mode of use of public space by different groups of the population</li> <li>▶ No. of abandoned spaces that are given a new lease of life through culture</li> <li>▶ No. of public spaces newly used as experimental playgrounds thanks to the cultural programme</li> <li>▶ No. and capacity volume of newly developed infrastructure</li> <li>▶ No. of abandoned places used by creative industries</li> </ul>
<b>SO2</b> Facilitating and improving participation in and access to cultural events	<b>3</b> Audience Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ No. and quality of cultural outreach programmes</li> <li>▶ No. and social profile of visitors</li> <li>▶ No. of collaborative projects with schools</li> <li>▶ Increase in the participation of children in cultural projects</li> <li>▶ No. of homegrown productions, large-scale events and transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral discussions</li> <li>▶ No. of measures taken to ensure all-out accessibility</li> <li>▶ No. of international collaborations with and collaboration of universities and ed</li> </ul>
<b>SO4</b> Honing and highlighting the city’s international profile through culture	<b>4</b> A network for the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ No. and quality of experiences with regional cooperations</li> <li>▶ Frequency and quality of reporting about St. Pölten in national &amp; international media and on social media</li> <li>▶ Changes in the image and the narrative of the city</li> <li>▶ Increase in the numbers of visitors from outside the region</li> <li>▶ Increase in value creation in tourism</li> <li>▶ No. of people in Europe that are aware of St. Pölten 2024</li> </ul>
<b>SO3</b> Strengthening and consolidating capacities in the field of culture and establishing links to other sectors	<b>5</b> Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ No. of collaborative projects involving educational and social institutions</li> <li>▶ No. of collaborative projects involving “unusual” partners</li> <li>▶ No. of student that stay and no. of students that come back after studying abroad</li> <li>▶ No. of children (and their families) receiving training in cultural intelligence and the acquisition of competencies in the arts and culture</li> <li>▶ Creative industry job created</li> </ul>





#### Artistic and cultural content

Describe in detail the artistic vision and the strategy for the cultural programme of the year outlined at pre-selection stage, explaining any changes brought in since pre-selection.

Describe the structure of the cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities and the main events that will mark the year.

## Europe at home – Rescaling distances

### What fires us up –

#### Art and culture as game changers

The overall theme and leitmotif of St. Pölten 2024 – Rescaling Distances – conveys the ideas of change and mobility. For our artistic strategy we have therefore – with a nod to one of Franz Kafka’s parables – adopted a methodological approach that fits both these ideas: *You only need to change your direction*. Our artistic vision draws its strength from the energy of mobility and the power of transformation. What we want to change is not only the direction things are moving in, here and now, but also where we see them going in the future. What are the crucial elements that make up the prospect of a livable and sustainable future, which the nervous continent of Europe needs so desperately? As a European model city St. Pölten has a wealth of inspired and inspiring answers, which will be tested and developed in a laboratory the manageable size of a medium-sized city. In close collaboration with cultural workers from all over Europe, this lab will test alternatives to what is already being referred to as “the twilight of Europe” in academic discourse. With European partner institutions and the art community on our side, we issue a rallying cry for intellectual mobility and progressive solutions.

#### Local projects with European relevance

We will set out to provide answers to the urgent questions of our time – the future of work, the ecological crisis, technological change, the social question, the opportunities, risks and tensions created by digital capitalism, the challenges of identity politics – in a way that both meets the highest artistic standards and is site specific. We are looking to span the gulf between the limitations of our local roots and general European excellence. We will be developing complex projects that take marginalised groups into account and are relevant to European networking. We have a way of becoming active in places and situations where we are least expected. Our leitmotif of *Rescaling Distances* aims to marshal artistic processes to get rid of stifling routines and social demarcation lines.

#### Art and culture for children and the world of tomorrow

In our local here and now we bank on engaged, occasionally risk-fraught art and culture as “game changers”, taking care that the public is always involved. As we see it, “You only need to change your direction” – demands from us that we devote special attention to the potentials and perspectives of children and young people: after all, they are the real tomorrow’s people. We take great pride in the key construction project that will give this purpose life: the visionary *Children.Art.Lab*, an institution unique of its kind in Europe. The Lab will be joined by a multitude of innovative projects devised by, for and with children so that each day in 2024 will have its own specific programme: children design cultural formats realised as texts, installations and music; they create content on YouTube™; and they take part in WhatsApp™ groups, in ecology games and in street performances. We will set up substantive outreach programmes for children in the fields of the arts and culture and, on another level, children’s exchange programmes with European partner cities. By putting the emphasis squarely on children we want to lay the foundations for long-term cultural work with young people which involves international exchanges and will bear rich fruit in the future.

#### From a European city in transformation to a transformed city

Our artistic vision will unleash a dynamic that transforms the very essence of St Pölten in entirely unexpected ways: the city will feel different, sound different, smell different. The vision will be completely free from didactic grandstanding, relying instead on gestures of invitation, the energizing of local citizens and the contagious dynamism of the communication between old and young, between what is familiar and what is not, between tradition and innovation. In this context “You only need to change your direction” – is relevant. Much in the way of movement and mobility has always been there – precisely in places where the regional mingles with the cosmopolitan and the traditions of a workers’ city come face to face with that pluralism that has made – and will continue to make – St. Pölten open to exchange on every level.



# Programme structure

In 2024, arts and culture will be free to roam in and across St. Pölten

We underpin this “local art transport system” with a structure characteristic of a railway town.

The <CulturalChangeCampus> helps people who aspire to an active role in St. Pölten 2024, especially in programme design, to acquire the skills needed for the successful realisation of this aspiration. European exchanges and networking, further training and the targeted mentoring of a broad range of people will leave lasting traces of St. Pölten 2024 in the city and Culture Region St. Pölten long after European Capital of Culture year.

From MAIN STATION Europe at Home, rail-cars loaded with cultural energy moves along three tracks, with their symbolic vectors pointing in the three directions of *Come Closer* – *Rescaling the Social*, *The Long Now* – *Rescaling Time* and *Changing Rooms* – *Rescaling Space*. The three tracks correspond to the goals of the Rescaling Distances motif itself: recalibrating social, temporal and spatial distances, each of which includes aspects of the other two rather than forging ahead in isolation. Passing through several stops, the tracks head for three terminals. *Come Closer* terminates at *You*, *The Long Now* terminates at *Tomorrow* and *Changing Rooms* terminates at *Next Space*.

The three thematic tracks take together to the stage in the central interdisciplinary exhibition at the GLANZSTOFF Rescaling Distances, where the sky is the limit and anything is possible. From performances to the fine arts; from music to political activism.

## Stops

The tracks of the local art and culture transport system St. Pölten 2024 feature individual stops. They house novel venues and nomadic projects which are designed and realised as part of the artistic vision of St. Pölten 2024. Other stops are handed over to already existing organisations and promoters. All relevant local cultural institutions and initiatives in St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten are included.

### Track 1: Come Closer

The journey along the *Come Closer* track deals primarily with the reduction and transformation of social distances. Here we will seek to foster social interaction and cultural exchange at eye level. The goal is to replace distance and a lack of understanding with a growing sense of common humanity. What we are aiming for is a long-term improvement in coexistence on the ground through concrete contacts with a Europe that is far away only in terms of actual kilometres.

### Track 2: The Long Now

The track *The Long Now* both zooms in on the past and points out possible futures that already affect our here and now. It deals with memory and the continued presence of historical events as well as with phenomena that far transcend our own short life-spans – such as the climate crisis and nuclear half-life periods. In the vanishing point of *Tomorrow* variants of the future come into view that, for all we know now, may foster either utopias or dystopias.

### Track 3: Changing Rooms

In *Changing Rooms* it is space itself that puts on new attire and undergoes substantive change. *Changing Rooms* homes in on the difference between real and imaginary distances, creates connections between places that hardly knew each other at all before and changes the perception of already existing rooms and places. It directs attention to finds and cultural values related to the wider Culture Region St. Pölten shaking up and changing perception of already existing space, while at the same time delegating new, custom-designed tasks to that region.



## Hubs

Where the leitmotif ideas of the tracks cross and where particularly rich major projects and densifications take place, focal points or hubs, as we call them, are created. Hubs are the transshipment points for diverse practices and culminations of artistic and social ideas, allowing them to articulate persistent questions about Europe’s cultural, social and political self-perception in an experimental way.







Budget plan Programme Expenditure ECoC 2024*	2020-2022	2023	2024	2025	Budgetary funds not yet assigned	Sum
<CulturalChangeCampus> (capacity building platform)	€ 1,100,000	€ 700,000	€ 450,000	€ 250,000	€ —	€ 2,500,000
Opening and closing event	€ —	€ —	€ 1,000,000	€ —	€ —	€ 1,000,000
Track “Come Closer”	€ 450,000	€ 500,000	€ 2,674,200	€ 165,400	€ 2,100,000	€ 5,889,600
Track “The Long Now”	€ 60,000	€ 500,000	€ 3,790,000	€ 550,000	€ 2,400,000	€ 7,300,000
Track “Changing Rooms”	€ 80,000	€ 470,000	€ 2,622,150	€ 100,000	€ 1,700,000	€ 4,972,150
MAIN STATION Europe at Home, GLANZSTOFF Rescaling Distances	€ 200,000	€ 500,000	€ 1,400,000	€ 400,000	€ 1,200,000	€ 3,700,000
Purchase of necessary technical and general equipment	€ 200,000	€ 800,000	€ 1,200,000	€ —	€ —	€ 2,200,000
Event- and programme-related personnel	€ 1,761,500	€ 1,007,500	€ 2,415,500	€ 555,000	€ —	€ 5,739,500
Total	€ 3,851,500	€ 4,477,500	€ 15,551,850	€ 2,020,400	€ 7,400,000	€ 33,301,250

\*Unlike the periodized budget in the chapter on financing where cash flow is shown, this is about cost allocation to those years when projects happen

## Opening

From New Year's Eve 2023/24 on we will immerse the city in a new light, starting with a pre-opening event at the Cathedral Square. European Capital of Culture year is launched, and in the days until the European formal opening event on 13 January 2024, the city is gradually transforming into a stage: the *MAIN STATION Europe at Home* will be opened and a creative countdown of specific artistic interventions and openings will increase the tension.

At the Opening, a time-honoured utopian dream of St. Pölten's *Klangturm* (tower of sounds) will be realised: the inner city's airspace will resonate with music. Dozens of choirs from Culture Region St. Pölten plus choirs from EU's member states will be raising their voices in squares and streets to celebrate diversity and the idea of people coming closer to each other – the message St. Pölten 2024 has for Europe. The focal points will be

the Klangturm, the Cathedral Square with its new signature architecture and the axis linking the inner city to the Cultural District. The choirs' repertoire will contain musical references to the year's key motto for the Klangturm, *Voices & Votes*, which encapsulates the celebration of the human voice and of political intervention by voting.

After this truly polyphonic warm-up the choirs will congregate at the Cathedral Square for a joint performance overseen by a leading international musician such as Holly Herndo, FKA Twigs Brian Eno or Björk. A videowall link will allow us to transmit greetings to our ECoC partner cities in Estonia and Norway. This will lead into a ball likely to go on until daybreak. The European Opening is the perfect opportunity to get an experience of what will be on offer during the next months.



Visuals by OMAi

## MAIN STATION Europe at Home

Rather than to St. Pölten's actual main railway station, *MAIN STATION Europe* at Home refers to a car dealership, Autohaus Wesely, which moved out of the building decades ago. Only about 100 metres away from the town hall, the building will serve in 2024 as the ECoC homebase: as an information point and a central box office, as a meeting point, a round-the-year venue for interdisciplinary artistic interventions, a digital platform in virtual space and, of course, as a point of departure for journeys across the programme of St. Pölten 2024. On top of it

all, the *MAIN STATION* is the central hub for ideas that evolve around the ECoC's key motto *Rescaling Distances* and commute between St. Pölten and the world.

Our vision of culture is a process that never stops involving its audiences. What we want to do is to make the borderline between active performance and passive reception disappear. This presupposes institutional offers, experimental forms of participation and an innovative design for public and virtual spaces. It is our goal to make each resident of St. Pölten and the Culture Region

Austrian and international (alternative) choirs, Beat Box Ensembles, A-capella bands like Domkantorei, Konzertchor NÖ, BORG Chor, A Wöddchor, Chor 50 plus, Landesjugendchor NÖ, OSGS Chor, Mühlviertler Grenzlandchor Arnoldstein, Gesangskapelle Hermann, Wiener Jüdischer Chor, Schmusechor, Wiener Beschwerdechor, la lá, die massive beats crew, Bauchklang vocal groove project, mouth-o-matic, Mieskuoro Huutajat (FIN), The Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices (BGR), Barbara Furtuna (FRA), Latvian Radio Choir (LVA), Vocal Art Ensemble Sweden (SWE), Beryyam (FRA), Heymoonshaker (GBR), Aquabella (GER), Les Brünettes (GER), Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (EST), French Beatbox Family (FRA)

## Visuals

OMAi, Spirit Society,  
Clemens Haas, Moving  
Eyes, Jascha Süss





MAIN STATION with digital platform

and each visitor become actively involved in at least one European project, which would put the focus on the wider context of how each project resonates with Europe as a whole. *Europe at Home* is the name we have given to this type of approach.

In this space full of opportunities, which will expand continuously over the next few years, question marks will be put to inequalities and power structures and alternatives will be highlighted. This will assume the form of work in and for another, better Europe, which draws strength from its capacity for self-reflection, rejects self-approval and gets ready to change its course in crucial areas, from the fight against climate crisis to the fight for more European solidarity.

### The virtual European Capital of Culture

Anyone who cannot make it to St. Pölten in person must be given the chance to join the programme online. This works both ways: it will be possible to communicate with Europe in real time from St. Pölten. This will go much further than digital communication as we know it. Not only do we offer digital access to our project, we also want to invite projects to come to St. Pölten in a virtual form: we maximise cultural impact while at the same time minimising the ecological footprint for both humans and equipment.

Visitors will be given the opportunity, courtesy of the virtual twin of the decommissioned goods lift in the *MAIN STATION*, to explore digital worlds once they have put on VR headsets and data suits. The challenge here is that almost unlimited information and countless works of art in virtual space

demand a selection process, a process of spatial orientation and guidance. Visitors will reach the digital platform by a step into the goods lift, which then takes them – or so it seems – on a round trip through a tall building with its own curated exhibitions, virtual hackathons and digital symposia on different storeys. This virtual space is not just a mirror image or table of contents of the European Capital of Culture's real programme. It is a venue in its own right and a project that will exercise a large number of creative minds before it can be realised.

An online team of editors will take care of questions concerning individual subprojects and will continue to develop them in discussion forums, moderated online discussions and presentations, adding works selected from the input of the network community. We will be experimenting with a new dimension of the data-based accumulation of knowledge about the European Capital of Culture 2024 and develop Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to enhance St. Pölten's power of innovation. The programming of *St. Pölten 2024 AI* is designed to provide information whose retrieval would be beyond human intelligence, such as suggesting an ideal programme for seven-year-olds on the morning of 21 September 2024 or a day tour with the highest quota of South European projects at the Easter weekend. In keeping with the demands of NGOs such as Algorithm Watch, AI is also expected to fulfil the function of an ethical ideal: it is to provide algorithms that can be held to account and that will in any case be less guilty of discrimination than human decision makers, who are thus replaced by algorithms capable of learning.

#### Function

Homebase, meeting point, digital platform, round-the-year-venue, central box office

#### Local Partners

St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences/ media and digital technology, Martin Bosch (owner)

#### National Partner

Ars Electronica

#### International Partners

Esch 2022, Time Machine CSA, ICARus – International Centre for Archival Research



## GLANZSTOFF Rescaling Distances

Imposing and most definitely something to write home about: the Glanzstoff factory premises, where all the threads from the three dimensions of the St. Pölten 2024 leit-motif *Rescaling Distances* are pulled together. This now disused factory, whose beginnings date to 1904 (Imperial-Royal Monarchy production center, war-related industry, forced laborers during World War II, guest workers). When it was closed down in 2008, a preservation order was put on almost the entire complex. Today it may be read as a testament to European industrial architecture and as a ruinous legacy of the bygone modern era.

The former powerhouse – the turbine hall plus the boiler house – will be the venue for the main and interdisciplinary exhibition entitled *Rescaling Distances*, which aims to renegotiate foundational social, temporal and spatial distances from scratch. In keeping with the track *Come Closer*, it raises crucial questions concerning togetherness: Who are we, who are the others? What makes us what we are, what constitutes the otherness of others? What does it mean to be a resident of St. Pölten and at the same time a citizen of Europe and of the world in 2024? Where are “all of us” closer to each other than we might realise? How much manoeuvring space for negotiations is there in Europe between a liberal interpretation of democracy and the illiberal goal of an authoritarian, what-the-majority-wants-goes type of democracy?

At its heart, the track dubbed *The Long Now* is the remeasurement of temporal distances: if the modern era is our antiquity, what is our now? Is it a now where it is beyond our power to plan for the future because that future seems chaotic and hopelessly beyond our reach? This future is equally likely to be determined by retrogressive or by progressive forces. To exemplify this it is enough to recall recent references to national founding myths focused on a distant past and the many applications and developments of artificial intelligence. Both phenomena have decisive implications for our notion of “future”.

*Rescaling Distances* has an additional focus on the spatial transformation effects placed centre stage in the track *Changing Rooms*. What effects do the desire and/or the need for mobility have on the ground? In a mid-size European city such as St. Pölten, what effect does the constant toing and froing between urban and rural life, between work place, leisure activities and home actually have? From a specifically European perspective, where should the emphasis be on the city, where on the countryside? What can be done with virtual spaces in a mid-sized city?

#### Programme

Main Exhibition  
Rescaling Distances,  
The Sankt Pölten  
Museum of European  
Integration,  
Who needs Europe?

#### Artists

Thomas Bellinck (BEL),  
Ingri Fiksdal (NOR),  
Merle Kröger (GER),  
metroZones &  
Jochen Becker (GER)

“State” by Ingri Fiksdal



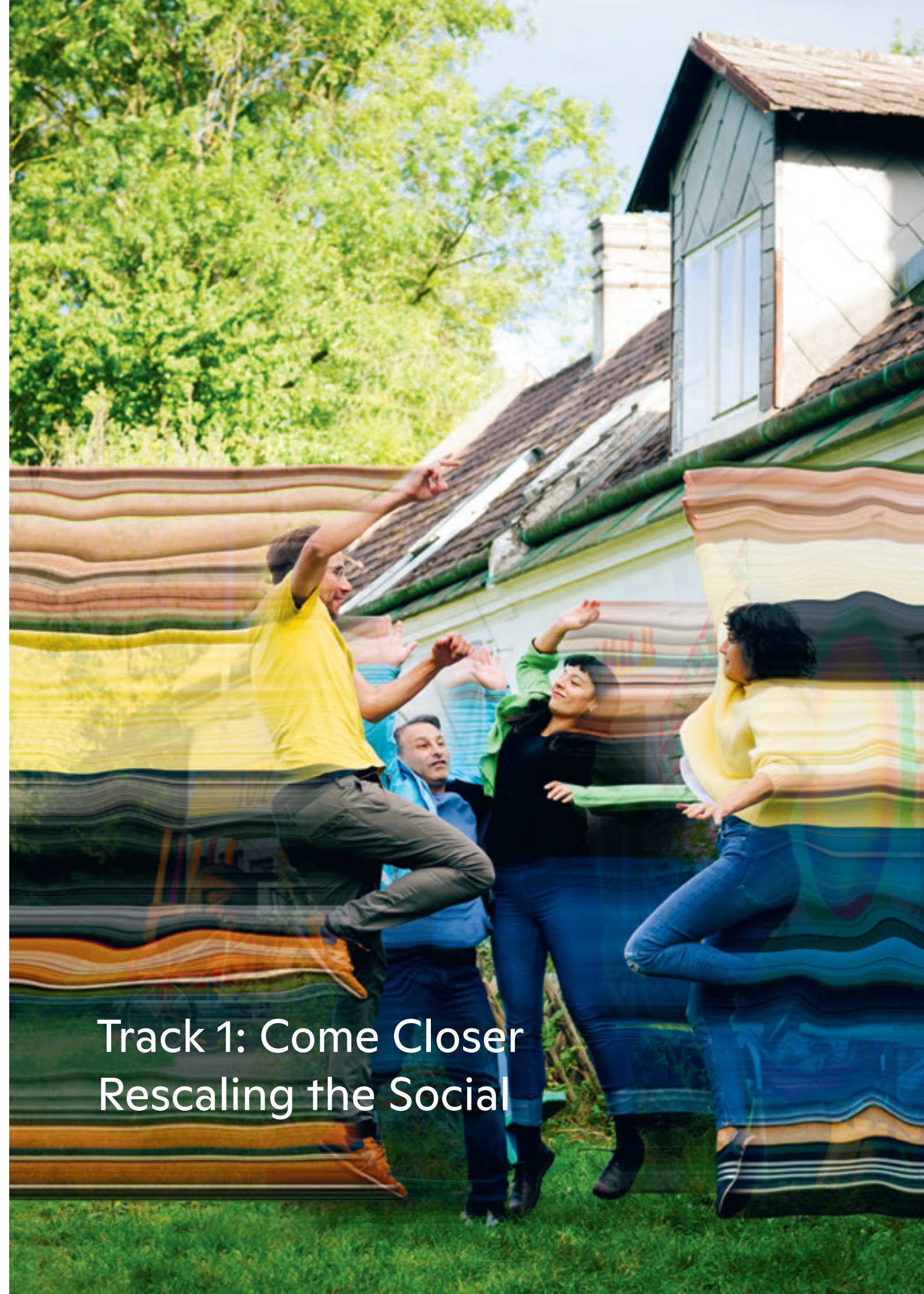




GLANZSTOFF

Belgian theatremaker Thomas Bellinck will realise a core project focused on the contradictions between the values Europe professes and its more or less complete lack of appetite for self-criticism. *The Sankt Pölten Museum for European Integration* is a fictitious museum co-curated by residents of St. Pölten who either sought refuge in the city or were expelled from it. Often their lot has to do with events of world-historical dimensions: the Holocaust as well as the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, the waves of “Gastarbeiter” and the wars in former Yugoslavia, in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. The museum may focus on “St. Pölten’s last Jews”. Or on refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq, who are waiting for a decision on their asylum application while still being denied a work permit. As “historians by experience”, these co-curators have an intimate, embodied knowledge of the violent dynamic of “othering”. They uncover processes of exclusion and inclusion and engage in research on whether and to what extent Europe actually stands by its core values of human dignity and human rights, liberty, equality and democracy.

In the warm season a camp under the open sky, provocatively entitled *Who needs Europe?*, will add another dimension to Europe’s self-questioning in the sense of Bellinck. It raises the question of how Europe’s self-perception is at the mercy of influences from outside. Under headings such as Afrotopia and Chinafrica global shifts in geopolitical power and discourse will be dealt with. High technology only too often camouflages political change. What would happen if the Chinese system of social credit were to be exported to Europe? This would surely have profound effects on the continent’s core values. *Who needs Europe?* wants to put a finger onto a number of sore points while showing at the same time that the waning of Europe’s cultural influence need not mean the end of the world as we know it.



## Track 1: Come Closer Rescaling the Social





## SONNENPARK / LAMES

50,000 square metres of green space surrounding two charming houses, carefully developed with input from all sides: this is St. Pölten's Sonnenpark, a 20-year-old location with a flair all of its own. It is home both to "La Musique et Sun" (LAMES), an association focused on art and subculture, and "SONNENPARK - Park der Vielfalt", whose members go in for natural sciences and work together to cultivate the green space. In around 2024 we will make the park, the clubhouses and their communities the life and the soul of a utopian project of international dimensions. Located at the interface of art, science and eco-activism, this project will draw on cultural traditions, scientific insights and alternative strategies of thinking and acting to unleash art's revolutionary power to effect change.

Even now, the Sonnenpark is a place where utopias and visions are made visible, perceptible, legible and comprehensible – by 2024 and thereafter things will keep on getting better and better. In 2020 to 2022 we will establish the prototype of a think-and-art tank linked to a Europe- and worldwide network; in 2021 to 2023 this construct will gradually open up to embrace civic society. In 2024 we will expand the Sonnenpark biosphere into the wider region and beyond to

present the results of the sociopolitical, scientific and artistic processes incubated in the think tank to the public at large. This presentation will make use of new formats and of installations, performances, social sculptures and the like.

The Sonnenpark and its associated community will make a significant contribution to European Capital of Culture year and the very diversity of the visitors it appeals to is likely to shrink sociocultural distances. As St. Pölten's green oasis, preserved by civil-society resistance against construction projects, the park is an ideal venue for addressing essential issues: how to cope with the global ecological crisis, how to strengthen our resilience, and so on. The two clubs have a great deal of experience in the field of knowledge transfer, as is evidenced by their Free-University lecture programme and their climate research lab for children and young adults.

On top of all of this, their work rests on interdisciplinarity, inclusion and participation, admirable values they will demonstrate against a backdrop of autonomy and authenticity.

### National Partners

Breath Earth, Climate and energy funds, Green4Cities, Kunstwolke Vienna, Office for sustainable competence, Pioneers of change, Setzkasten Vienna, Smart Pölten citizen participation, Studio Praxistest (Vienna University of Applied Arts), Subotron (digital games), Urbanize Vienna, AIL Angewandte Innovation Laboratory (planned)

### International Partners

Ambasada Timișoara (RUM), Bastl Instruments Brno (CZE), Hidden Institute Berlin (GER), Institute for environmental Solutions Cesis (LVA), Meetfactory Prague (CZE), Non riservato Milan (ITA), Trans Europe Halles, Urban Upcycling Hamburg (GER)

### Advisors

Lilli Lička ,  
Tomas Zierhofer-Kin



Installation by Wolfgang Pilat in Sonnenpark



## Children.Art.Lab

The Children.Art.Lab, which is due to open in 2023, is a place conceived and realised consistently on the basis of how children see things. An institution probably unique in Europe and certainly never before attempted by any of the previous European Capitals of Culture, it is a place where children up to 12 years of age will walk hand in hand with art and artists from all over Europe. In its content the Lab is unique: everything comes from contemporary art – in direct collaboration with European artists. The Children.Art.Lab puts high-quality contemporary artworks specially curated for and by children at the centre of outreach programmes explicitly designed for children. The whole range of current artistic production will be there, from video art, photography and painting to soundart, installation and performance. Interdisciplinarity and media diversity are our keywords.

The Children.Art.Lab minimises the distance between children, art and artists from different cultural and artistic backgrounds. It creates a non-hierarchical, non-judgemental space where all children across all barriers are free to develop social and cultural competences through their experience of art. The art labs and workshops lay down the foundations of what this institution is all about.

Contemporary art frequently provides the key to current societal, social and political developments, to subjective perspectives and aesthetic statements. Vaulting over language barriers, contemporary art offers ideal opportunities where communication can transcend borders and negotiate its way around obstacles of any kind. Most children are open-minded about new experiences and this is precisely where we want to start: we want to foster their curiosity and self-determination, their creativity of thought and their actions.

Concrete artistic programming will take shape in a discursive process and, as far as content goes, in close cooperation with the Artistic Director of St. Pölten 2024. This process will be overseen by the Children.Art.Lab's Artistic Director and the Children's Advisory Board, which will be involved in all of the institution's decisions concerning content, programming and design. Artists like Kateřina Šedá, who is based in our partner city Brno (CZ), Jakub Nepraš from Praha (CZ), Peter Land from Aarhus (DK) and Rebecca Horn (DE) are already under consideration for artistic projects. We will cooperate closely throughout with institutions all over Europe. The Artistic Director working in concert with co-opted artists and art educationists will develop comprehensive outreach and education programmes for the lab. These will be closely linked to the specific exhibition on show – be it in terms of content, artists, special materials or techniques. Every exhibition is accompanied by its own further-training programme and educational material is available for teachers and carers.

We are currently looking at three to four exhibitions a year. On at least six days a week these exhibitions and additional events – talks with artists, small-scale musical formats, performances, workshops and open studio events – will welcome children, their families and school and kindergarten groups. A small, but exquisite children's book library will add the dimensions of illustration and literature and host illustration workshops and readings.

### Local Partners

Kindergartens, schools, Bildungsdirektion Land NÖ, Pädagogische Hochschule, Familienland NÖ, cultural institution with children programmes, Musik- und Kunstschule St. Pölten

### International Partners

Bibiana International House of Art for Children in Bratislava (SVK), Children's House in Rijeka including Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Rijeka (CRO), MSU Zagreb (CRO), Nida Art Colony (LTU), Statens Museum in Copenhagen (DNK)

### Planned Partner

EUnetART





## Castle Viehofen

What associations are “castle” or “people living in a castle” likely to evoke? Chances are one might think of “privilege”, “nobility”, “emperor”, “kings and queens”. This is certainly no accident. It is in the nature of a castle to underscore the privileged social status of its inhabitants by its architectural splendour and to help the ruling class distance itself from their social inferiors. Its very splendour makes a castle an exclusive place. **Viehofen will disprove this cliché. European Capital of Culture year will make it an inclusive place and open it up to the public for the first time.**

Demarcation lines between above and below, inside and outside will be utterly expunged in 2024. Castle Viehofen is located in the northern part of St. Pölten which bears the same name and was falling into decay for a long time until the antique dealer Josef Figl, set out to breathe new life into what was already a near ruin. With its two 500m<sup>2</sup> storeys, subdivided into flights of rectangular rooms, with innumerable secondary rooms and a courtyard ideal for theatrical or musical performances, Castle Viehofen today is a unique venue for artistic interventions of all kinds. An additional feature is the breathtaking views it offers of the city and the Culture Region St. Pölten surrounding it.

In the flights of empty, generously dimensioned rooms we will stage an experiment of social alchemy entitled “**Luxury for the others**”, to pull off the transformation of **exclusion into inclusion**. Should any countesses or princes turn up at the feasts we will celebrate at Castle Viehofen, they will have to rub shoulders with people from marginalised and minority groups and the representatives of the Culture Region St. Pölten, who in their turn make use of this opportunity to get to know each other better. In the courtyard, a social sculpture commands admiring attention; elsewhere, culinary delights and cultural souvenirs reminiscent of migrants’ countries of origin will be on offer, and in the Salon Europa our guests will engage in leisurely conversations.

This is one realisation of our leitmotif of “Rescaling Distances” in Castle Viehofen. There is more. We invite visitors to take part in a highly individual artistic experience. In the ten rooms that make up one of the castle’s storeys we put on intimate one-on-one performances. This programme, conceived to go on for several months for several hours every day, will bring audiences face to face with performers from all over Europe. A place of aristocratic ostentation has suddenly lost its taste for social distance.

### Program

Luxury for the others, One-on-one Performances, Salon Europa, Social Sculpture, The Perfect Feast

**National Partners**  
EOOS

**International Partners**  
Meeting Brno



## • STOPS COME CLOSER

### • Transformation Festival

This new festival format sets itself two main goals: it wants to grow organically and integrate the local and regional communities. Opening up new possibilities for the arts, the annual *Transformation Festival* will be one huge “get-together” for the residents of the city and the Culture Region St. Pölten. For that extra touch, St. Pölten will invite people from all over Europe to make themselves seen and heard at the festival. All that is needed to make this happen will be provided: international collaborations, talk forums, exchange activities, artists-in-residence programmes and artistic formats that invite participation in both design and execution.

The motto that sums it all up is transformation. St. Pölten encourages its residents to understand public space as something to experiment with, something to reshape, something to change in a playful communal effort: something to give a whole new quality. As residents do this, they will rediscover the potential of their city – and of themselves. There will be specially equipped Transformation Stations, where visitors are invited to experiment with their own appearance, a metamorphosis that will be helped along by actors and performers. Live bands, dance karaoke and poetry slams all make it that much easier for everyone to join the fun. And at night there are all those pop-up clubbing locations where DJs, live acts and performance theatre offer their own irresistible attractions.

Even the preparations for the festival are remarkable for inviting a high degree of participation. Artists-in-residence give workshops in music, design, performance and the fine arts. Together with representatives of the local art scene, of schools, universities, the social services and companies, they take to programme work like ducks to water. Vacant business premises are given a new lease of life. Students of design and architecture, apprentices and craftsmen (and -women!) create the infrastructure needed for a weekend where residents can present the ideas they would like to see coming to life in their city. Street art, visuals and light art all contribute to a changed environment. Audience participation and the regular programme are like identical twins: really hard to tell apart.

The festival will again be part of the St Pölners’ sense of identity as a manifestation of change, joie de vivre and the many-layered exchanges taking place within the city, the region and in cooperation with the city’s European partners.

### • Reframing Heimat – Future of Folk Art in Europe

In view of the increasing plurality of residents’ sense of belonging both to St. Pölten and/or its environs and, in many cases, to their countries of origin, this interdisciplinary participative project seeks to expand the definition of “Heimat”. All too often the term is used to convey an agenda of exclusivity. The project team and people who have come from other countries to live among us here will travel to the latter’s native countries. There they will work with local dance groups and organise miniature *feasts* on the ground. All this is headed for a “universal folkdance” which is going to be part of the real thing, *the Reframing Heimat event*, choreographed by the renowned performance artist Simon Mayer. The culmination of this project will see several hundred dancers getting together, in St. Pölten’s public space in 2024.

### Process

Starting 2021, yearly festival for two weekends in June, continuation after 2025

### Local Partners

BORG St. Pölten (secondary school), Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Food-sharing St. Pölten, jumpers [re]loaded, LAMES, Landestheater Niederösterreich, New Design University, OMAi, St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, Theater Perpetuum

### National Partners

Calle Libre, Happy Lab, La Strada Graz – co-founder of IN SITU, Proberaum Scheibbs, Spielraum für Alle Innsbruck, Urbanize Vienna

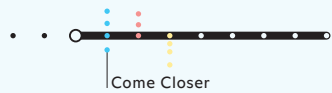
### International Partners

A Festival of Creative Urban Living (GBR), ATÖLYE – Creative Hub (TUR), Gallerie Sariev Plovdiv (BGR), Gallerie Crone (AUT / GER), Hidden Institute Berlin (GER), Kultura Nova Novisad (SRB), Non Riservato Milan (ITA), Parallel Polis Prague (CZE)

Teresa Distelberger, Simon Mayer

### International Partners

Centrale Fies (ITA), DansIT Workshop Studio Trondheim (NOR), EN-Knap company (SLO), Fira Mediterrània de Manresa (ESP), Rosendael Theater (NOR), Schauspiel Leipzig (GER)



• **The Food Connection**

Taking their cue from our concept of radically lived hospitality, artists Melika Ramic and Johanna Figl fuse an international cuisine delivery service with a performance involving people who have escaped from oppression and persecution, often in dramatic circumstances. Anyone ordering food typical of Syria, Iraq, Bosnia or Chechnia will get precisely that – plus stories told by the delivery people, presented in scenic form in the customers’ own home.

• **Where Does Your Food Come From?**

This project traces supply chains and networks from production to consumers and educates children on how to follow the journey of food from local fields and gardens to their table and what “regional”, “seasonal”, “organic” and “carbon-neutral” means. This will happen by shopping together at the market, cooking and eating together

• **The European Living Room**

The Tischlerei Melk addresses the topic of home making in an ethnically diverse Europe, with its tension between migration and the simultaneous desire for cultural belonging. People who have moved from third countries to St. Pölten and its environs will act as co-curators and invite ensembles from their countries of origin into the Tischlerei, which will then have been transformed into a living room. As warm-up acts, the first living room concerts will take place in 2021.

• **Tonkünstler Orchestra Lower Austria**

The Tonkünstler Orchestra Lower Austria comprises musicians from 26 different countries – the European idea and the idea of integration on a transnational level are visibly part of the orchestra’s DNA. A programme of 12 concerts in 2024 is designed to pay homage to the ECoC year: the orchestra’s choice of compositions, soloists and conductors is based on the twelve countries which have hosted European Capitals of Culture in the past, paying tribute to Europe’s cultural diversity. At each concert, musicians from EU countries other than Austria will be specially featured.

Furthermore, the internationally well-known Austrian composer HK Gruber has been commissioned by the orchestra to honour the ECoC year with a half-hour composition on the theme of the workers’ movement.

In September 2023 the Tonkünstler Orchestra make the newly revamped Cathedral Square the venue for a participative format in the form of *Orchestral Karaoke* (the Cathedral Square as the ultimate karaoke bar!), 2024 will see an event entitled *Symphonic Mob*, featuring an invitation to all to join a musical flash mob.

• **Queerschnitt Film Festival**

Several venues in St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten will be earmarked for projects to sensitise people to queer lifestyles. Top directors from all over Europe have addressed themselves to the topic of queerness, revealing its complexity and the challenges it entails. Panel discussions with experts complement the scheduled events and film screenings.

Trip the Light Fantastic

**National Partners**  
Lower Austrian Chamber of Agriculture (with countrywomen qualified to conduct workshops), Center for Global Change and Sustainability BOKU Vienna, BIO AUSTRIA  
**International Partners**  
Bodø 2024, Tartu 2024

Tischlerei Melk Kulturwerkstatt

Queeriosity  
**Artists**  
Alice Moe / Eric big Clit, Beatrice Behn, Katrina Daschner, Rosa Wiesauer  
**Local Partners**  
Cinema Paradiso, St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, frei.raum, LAMES



• **Freedom of speech – The rights of others**

Political cartoons and cartoons critical of religion have provoked violent reactions in Europe and the wider world, raising the issue of taboos and the limits on what can legitimately be said. The Caricature Museum Krems offers its own take on the topic by convening cartoonists in the run-up to ECoC year and in 2024 at its location in Krems to discuss the controversial topic of freedom of speech. This will include reflections on media history set against a changing political background.

• **Community Dance Days 2024**  
**Statt-Orchester**  
**At home/In the garden/On the beach**

The Festspielhaus St. Pölten is serving up several projects. The *Statt-Orchestra* gives free rein to productive dilettantism. It unites people who have always wanted to make music but cannot play an instrument and musicians playing an instrument they have never played before. The underlying point is active social inclusion and a joint reflection on Europe’s (musical) values, spiced of course by the sheer fun of it and the pure *joie de jouer*.

A project entitled *At home/In the garden/On the beach* sees the Festspielhaus putting its frequented environs of the Cultural District to social use: book stations pitch their tent in the green areas, the feeling of being on a beach is conjured up by a stage in or near the river and cultural events, such as a musical lunch, are laid on in the Festspielhaus cafeteria and the dining hall of the Lower Austrian Government District.

For the *Community Dance Days 2024* the Festspielhaus joins forces with European partners for dance projects to create new choreographies relevant to European issues, which will be performed in the partners’ countries of origin and in 2024 in St. Pölten. Dancing has a way of establishing emotional closeness, in keeping with our motto of “rescaling distances“. The project, as you would expect from its title, is ready to welcome all those who are interested in dance.

• **Glanzgänger\*in 2024**

Another participative project with broad appeal: students, farmers, workers, refugees and commuters pool their efforts with those of artists from around the world in creating music and dance miniatures, which will be presented to the public in three locations (factory, barn, refugee home). The threads spun in this way will finally be pulled together in 2024 in a spectacular hybrid event fusing concert, performance and party in the former GLANZSTOFF factory.

• **Sparring Partners**

Specialising in contemporary art and performance art, Kunstraum Niederösterreich is our ECoC satellite in the heart of Vienna. It will launch a format which combines aspects of an international-expert-studded talk show and performances. Sparring Partners will explore the productivity of the contrast between political attitudes and artistic positions. The series will focus on such controversial issues as Europe and “Heimat”, felt by some to be divisive but seen as a source of identity by others.

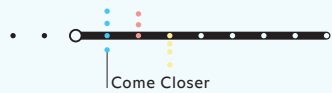
Karikaturmuseum Krems  
**Local Partners**  
AIR – Artist in Residence Lower Austria

Festspielhaus St. Pölten  
**National Partners**  
radio fm4, Tanz die Toleranz Wien, Tanzhafen-festival and Red Sapata Tanzfabrik Linz  
**International Partners**  
KoresponDance (Prague, CZE)  
**Planned Partners**  
CIRCUITDEBRIS Mostar (BIH), Community Dance Academy South Tirol (ITA), People Dancing Leicester (GBR), Tänzer ohne Grenzen (GER)

Annemarie Mitterböck, Romy Kolb

Kunstraum Niederösterreich





• **Becoming Europe / gestures 4 europe**

This dance performance by choreographer Brigitte Wilfing addresses the plurality of gestures indicative of attitudes towards Europe. In the setting of a polling booth residents are given the opportunity to mime how Europe appears to them and what in their view it should actually be. The results will be recapitulated in the form of holograms projected onto suitable surfaces in the city.

• **There will always be holes in the wall**

An artist, a cameraman and an anthropologist document in video form places for encounters such as community centres in the marginalised districts Molenbeek (BE) and Torpignattara (IT) and neighbourhood projects in small Austrian and South Tyrolean villages. The videos will be shown in St. Pölten in tandem with a participative project allowing visitors to get in touch with people on the ground.

• **Reel Play**

Having searched through their attics for 16mm film reels, the participants in this project, assisted by the artist Stefanie Weberhofe, cut and process the found material, matching it with a statement on Europe. In the end, this collectively produced found-footage film is digitised together with its sound track and made available to cinemas, schools and municipal councils in the Culture Region St. Pölten.

• **Visionale**

Assisted by artists, adolescents and young adults engage with momentous European issues such as the sustainable supply of energy and mobility, the eco-friendly use of the environment and peaceful co-existence. Art, street-art, music, video art, poetry, rap, DIY-Zines and performance all conspire to recharge the concept of sustainability with emotion and passion and to make it real. Art manifests itself in public space in such forms as sculptures, dance performances, flashmobs and social murals. Social murals, as their name implies, are murals with a social message. They pop up in unexpected places throughout the city, conveying a positive message, a credo, an attitude. Local and international artists will collaborate with institutions, civil-society platforms and schools to stake out an artistic sustainability trail across the city focusing on the “good life” and on the “city of the future”.

• **Futurama Lab**

A future-oriented society presupposes a sustainable, eco-friendly lifestyle embraced by all its members. Futurama Lab will create research-based art works drawing on scientific studies to address social and ecological problems such as the climate crisis – problems that affect all of us, regardless of where we live or work. In terms of content, Futurama Lab takes the UNESCO’s Sustainable Development Goals as a guideline. Aimed at social inclusion, this multilevel project culminates in an exhibition and a conference.

• **Trash Diaries**

Trash Diaries addresses the topics recycling and redesign in an attempt to encourage the public to avoid, reduce or reuse waste. An international open call invites people working in the creative industries to develop (fashion) articles made from waste or superfluous materials. A jury will select 15 items. The project uses conceptual

Brigitte Wilfing

**National Partners**  
mediaOpera, SeeLab, St. Pölten University  
for Applied Sciences

Christine Moderbacher, Paul Reade  
and Annika Lems

**International Partners**  
Associazione Casa Familiglia Lodovico Pavoni  
(ITA), Max Planck Institut für Sozialanthropologie  
(GER), Sireas Bruxelles (BEL)

Kino im Kesselhaus

**National Partners**  
Municipalities in the Culture Region St. Pölten

**International Partners**  
Europa Cinemas

ART EMBASSY / ÖiN / LAMES

**Process**  
Starting 2020

**Planned Artists**  
Emmerich Weissenberger, Nora Ruzsics, Kashink  
(FRA), Magdalena Chowaniec (POL), Millo (ITA)

**National Partners**  
BORG St. Pölten, eNu Energy and Environment  
Agency Lower Austria, Jugendklub Festspielhaus  
St. Pölten, Pionieers of Change,

**International Partners**  
Freiburger Gruppe OGR (GER), SAC Street Art  
Communication (SVK), YesYesWhyNot (IND)

**Planned Partners**  
AIL Angewandte Innovation Laboratory

Rainer Prohaska

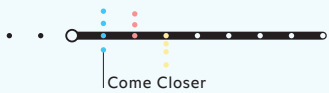
**Process**  
Starting 2020

**International Partners**  
Hidden Institute (GER),  
Institute of Cultural Studies (POL)

**Contacted Partners**  
zURBS (CHE), WRO Art Center (POL)

austrian fashion.net

**International Partner**  
NEONYT (GER)



fashion photography presented in a poster campaign in St. Pölten for an intervention in the market-oriented consumption mechanism and provides information on topical societal issues. It does so by providing poster and object art with new possibilities for intervening in public space.

• **Different work, different class**

The history of the working-class city St. Pölten is closely associated with major employers such as Glanzstoff, Voith or Harland’s Coats. What residual meaning have such terms as Proletkult, working class culture or even working class itself? What is the future of manual labour and, indeed, of work in any form? From 2020, this annual festival combines reflections and workshops on the status of manual labour and a cultural programme focused on topical variations on the industrial folk song.

• **Platform for Young Art and Young Artists**

The gallery is creating a five-year platform for young artists working in painting, graphic arts and sculpture. 2020 will see the first annual, jury-adjudicated competition on the topic of “Europe at Home” for young artists studying at Austria’s art universities and schools. The five winning works will be presented in May each year and in both May and October in 2024.

• **Music Office STP**

Music Office St. Pölten will be firing up up young people about music to make sure that the regional music scene keeps on going. It makes the potential of the St. Pölten music scene visible and, more importantly, audible and pursues the long term goal of transforming St. Pölten into a city of music. The *Playground Orchestra* uses playgrounds and their attractions as (percussion) instruments; “From seeming so to being so” casts a glance behind the scenes of the music business. All this is complemented by precisely targeted capacity building workshops for making sound tracks, overseen by musicians and producers both from the region (Michael Willer, to name but one example) and neighbouring European countries. Young people from all walks of life, including marginal groups, get to know the entire process of making music, from songwriting to sessions in the recording studio.

• **Grätzellabor**

Grätzellabor, which is planned to be operational at least until 2024, addresses issues of social coexistence by focusing on the two “Grätzels” [neighbourhoods] of Mühlweg/Kulturheim Nord and Linzerstraße/Löwenhof. Mobile structures, workshops and exhibitions of works by residents will be used to encourage local communities to engage with each other and to explore the history and the present-day potential of these areas. The results of this search for cultural identity will be brought vividly before visitors in 2024 in an interaction in public space between neighbours and local and international artists.

• **KunstnetzWERK\_Europa**

In conjunction with artists from six European mid-sized cities the Künstlerbund is looking to establish long-term connections to wider Europe. The project will culminate in 2024 in the residency of six visiting artists from other European countries in St. Pölten and,

**Local Partner**  
Chamber of Labour for Lower Austria

Galerie Maringer  
**Process**  
Starting 2020

Martin Rotheneder,  
Michael Willer (Idea Workshop)

KulturhauptSTART  
**Process** Started 2019  
**Formats**  
Stadtlandfluss, Salon24, Coming Closer, writing workshop, Takeover, OpenMic as guest, architecture days as guest, Home Visit Europe as guest; Europe-Pubquiz  
**Local Partners**  
Connected with many local Institutions, associations, universities

**Process**  
Started 2019  
**International Partners**  
Cooperation Network of European medium-sized cities, tranzit.sk, kair Košice Artist in Residence





conversely, the visit of six artists from St. Pölten to these European partner cities. The schedule includes participative formats, traveling exhibitions and a joint presentation in the St. Pölten City Museum as its fitting climax.

- **Hippolyt and Daughters**

The artists see topics featured in the ECoC year from a female perspective and speak up without fear or favour. Synergies realised through cooperation with musicians and writers, daughters all of them, will add great growth potential to this women's network. The women's project *Hippolyt and Daughters* has been testing its wings since January 2019: artists from St. Pölten and environs have been showing their works in the windows of vacant shops, lighting up grey facades. In 2024 the start-up will move up a notch or two or three.

- **Hogwarts is part of St. Pölten – European circus school & magicians' conference**

Convened under the patronage of the world famous magicians Thommy Ten and Amélie von Tass, both born in St. Pölten, the European Magic Conference will see the continent's best magicians gather in European Capital of Culture St. Pölten. Care will be taken that alongside the stars of the scene representatives of the dark arts from each of the member states of the European Union will be invited. This, too, reflects the diversity of Europe's cultures.

- **The Perfect Feast**

This dance-and-music performance takes its cue from annually recurring feasts celebrated by different cultures and from the fact that many elements of these feasts seem to be universal. The perfect feast arranged by and for children from the age of 8 could be a symbol of coexistence in a pluralistic European society or a multicultural city such as St. Pölten. It is concerned with diverse rituals but no less so with the individual ideas of children on the spot.

- **Club 3 Kids**

Every child from toddler to ten year old will be welcome at the round-the-year Club 3 Kids at the Cinema Paradiso, where an artistic activity to suit each and every one of them will always be available. Forget everything that has ever made you feel uncomfortable about entering a strange place. There are no barriers. It's just children and artists getting along like a house on fire.

- **Interreligious Dialogue**

In 2024, the St. Poeltner Dommusikverein transforms religious and cultural centres in St. Pölten and the Culture Region into venues for great sacred music. The project involves representatives of different faiths, thus contributing to their getting to know each other better and to engaging in creative exchanges. There will be one cluster of events in spring and another in the autumn. The time in between will be filled with commissioning and premiering new compositions, stage appearances of artists from all over Europe and the world and events featuring collaboration with other ECoCs.

Edith Haiderer, Ingrid Loibl

**Process**  
Started 2019

**Artists**  
Christine Moderbacher, Claudia Zawadil,  
Evi Benesch, Ingrid Reichel, Maria Budweiser

**National Partners**  
Office for diversity St. Pölten

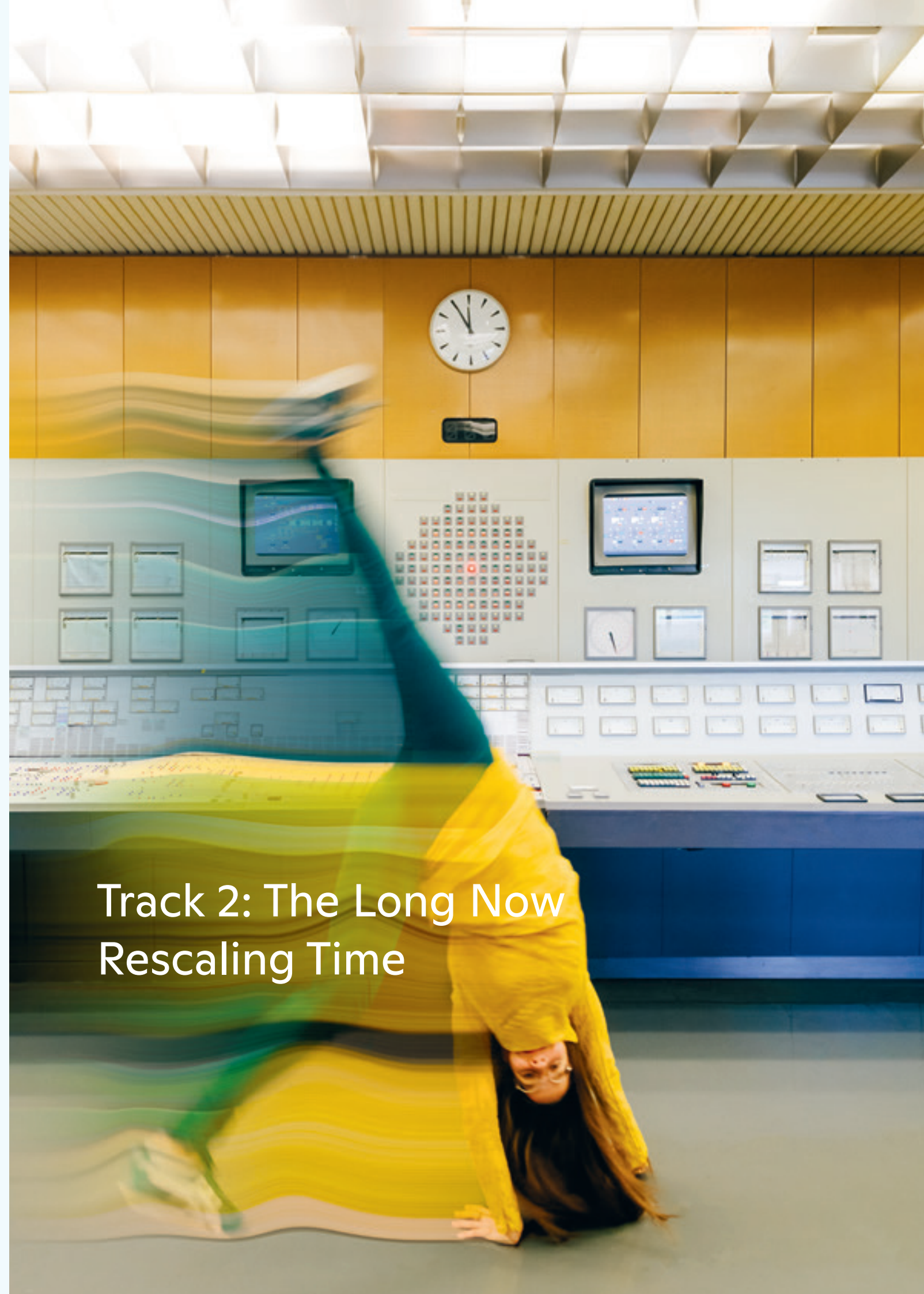
NXP Entertainment Group

Trip the Light Fantastic

Cinema Paradiso & Elisabeth Pöcksteiner

**National Partner**  
Jeunesse – Musikalische Jugend Österreichs

St. Pöltner Dommusikverein







HUB

## Cathedral Square

Thank heaven for the Cathedral Square! It is a tremendous gift for all those who are involved in planning ECoC year – and a tremendous challenge. It is a gift because Europe's stories and its history, **Europe's past, present and its future intentions are manifest here** more than anywhere else in the microcosm that is St. Pölten. Archaeological excavations, which were begun in 2010, have unearthed substrata that go back to Roman times. With finds that point to a pristine church and a burial ground with more than 20,000 skeletons, in use until well into the 18th century, they are a testament to Europe's millenia old Christian legacy. The invitation is out: Come and see the people who have passed through this region in the course of its age-old history, and be astonished alike at their differences and their similarities to us and to each other.

Today the Cathedral Square morphs into a market place twice a week, offering food-stuffs and other produce from the region encircling the city. This makes it an emblem of a deep rooted regional and ecological awareness – it is no coincidence that this is where Austria's first shops for organic food set up in business.

The Cathedral Square is also at the centre of a highly controversial debate about its future form and use, which show no signs of abating.

The extraordinarily many-layered Cathedral Square is ready to welcome an equally extraordinary, spectacular and versatile art sculpture capable of accommodating whatever demands are placed upon it. What we have in mind is a honeycomb-like installation that, taken as a whole, will function as a stage. Its shape, reminiscent of the honeycomb facade of our nearby, impossible-to-overlook "MAIN STATION Europe at Home", is an embodiment of the sustainability discourse and invokes that archetypal emblem of industry and camaraderie, bees. The individual segments of this honeycomb architecture, which provide so many stages for all kinds of projects, will also serve as go-betweens to deliver the messages of

the European Capital of Culture to the regions and to other European cities. Having been detached from the honeycomb as a whole, individual cells, complete with artistic content specially curated for this purpose, will go on the road. Transcending the city's boundaries, this strategy makes the Cathedral Square the focal point of the ECoC's key agenda: **Rescaling Distances – leaving one's own comfort zone and renegotiating the whole concept of belonging.**

**Local Partners**  
Cinema Paradiso,  
St. Pölten City  
Museum, BRG/BORG  
St. Pölten, the school  
of music and arts  
St. Pölten

**Programme**  
Opening, Orchestral  
Karaoke (2023),  
Symphonic Mob,  
Art Sculpture, Movies  
at the Cathedral,  
School Musical,  
artistic light design



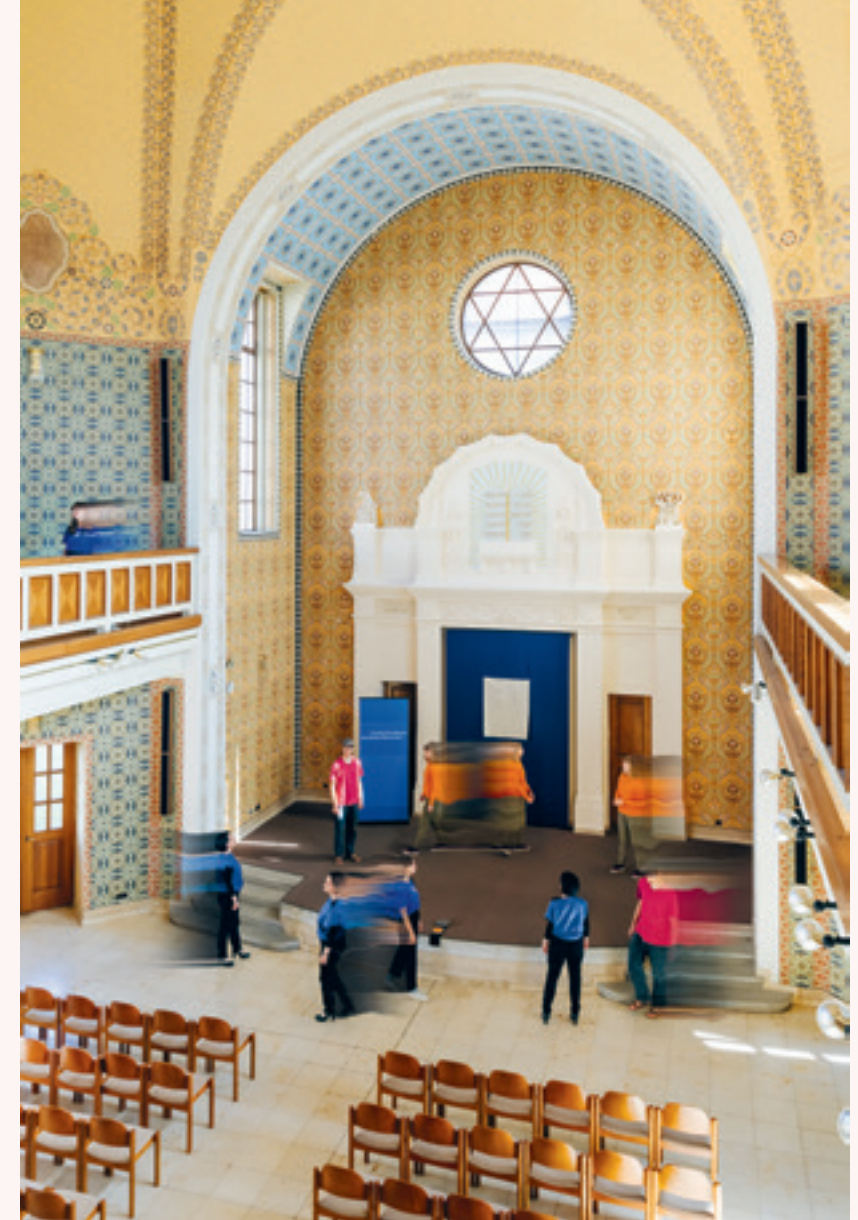
HUB

## Former Synagogue

Built in 1913 from plans by architects Theodor Schreier (1873 Vienna – 1943 Theresienstadt) and Viktor Postelberg (1869–1920), the Former Synagogue is the most important architectural symbol of St. Pölten's Jewish community, which flourished until the Nazis decreed its members' expulsion and murder. Jewish communal life was completely eradicated and only a handful of survivors chose to return to St. Pölten. The Synagogue building was returned to Vienna's Israelitische Kultusgemeinde (IKG) in 1952.

**The Former Synagogue is one of the few buildings of its kind in the German speaking countries to have been restored in all its former splendour.** Once a decision had been taken after lengthy discussions, restoration took place between 1980 and 1984. However, no provisions were made regarding the building's future use and no funds were made available to cover operating costs and personnel. In 1988, the Institut für jüdische Geschichte Österreichs (Institute of the Jewish History of Austria, Injoest) moved into the cantor's house of the Former Synagogue, which guaranteed a certain degree of accessibility for visitors.

St. Pölten's ambition to be nominated European Capital of Culture provides a unique opportunity to find a long-term use for this building in and beyond 2024 which does justice to its history and beauty. **What we are looking for is a centre of academic research and a venue not only for the commemoration of the Holocaust but for the celebration of Jewish culture and history, a platform for artistic and cultural events and for the public to engage with those phenomena that have turned this synagogue into a Former Synagogue: discrimination, racism, nationalism and political violence.**



By 2024 the Former Synagogue will have been adapted to house permanent installations such as a media station that picks out architectural details inside the synagogue and links them to photos, documents and reports by contemporary witnesses to bring a historical perspective into play. The installation *Jahrzeit*, part of the media station *Memo-rbuch St. Pölten*, which documents all the Shoa victims among the members of the IKG St. Pölten, commemorates one of them every month, using all the biographical details that have survived. The installation *Standpunkte* is designed to prompt discussions on topical subjects among young people.

From 2024, a major festival of Jewish art and culture will see the Former Synagogue host a raft of artistic events. The festival *Europa Jehudit* (Jewish Europe) focuses on Jewish culture from different regions in Europe and presents it against its social background. The emphasis is on the work of Jewish composers and musicians. Biographies, talks, readings, exhibitions and workshops will add depth to the festival.

**Programme**  
Installations: Spotlight  
On, Jahrzeit, Stand-  
punkte; Festival "Euro-  
pa Jehudit", European  
Debates

**National Partners**  
Jewish Museum Vi-  
enna, Austrian Jewish  
Museum Eisenstadt,  
Jewish Museum Ho-  
henems

**International Partners**  
Former Synagogue  
Kriegshaber, Jewish  
Museum Amsterdam,  
Jewish Museum  
Augsburg Schwaben,  
Jewish Museum  
Basel, Jewish Museum  
Bratislava, Old  
Synagogue Erfurt,  
Jewish Museum Essen,  
Jewish Museum  
Munich, Jewish  
Museum Prague,  
Samuel-Steinherz-  
Stiftung Brno





HUB

## Nuclear Power Station Zwentendorf

This is a one-off, a historical singularity only to be found in Austria: **a nuclear power station completed more than 40 years ago which never went onstream**. It would, however, be getting hold of the wrong end of the stick if one were to dismiss Zwentendorf as a sick joke. This Austrian singularity points both to the past and the future of problems that are now more serious and more urgent than ever before: the price we pay for progress, the relevance of civil disobedience against the backdrop of political hubris, the possible dawn of a post-apocalyptic world. In its historical cinemascop format the Zwentendorf saga is a perfect match for the European Capital of Culture track “The Long Now”.

In 1978 the citizens of Austria decided that the risks inherent in nuclear technology outweighed the economic advantages that technology promised to bring. The reactor lost its raison d’être in one stroke. Today it allows visitors to its control centre to form an impression, at least in radiation-free theory, of how a nuclear power station works, an opportunity that is on offer nowhere else in the world. Another upside of the concrete colossus: located in a setting of exquisite natural beauty, it serves as a year-round venue for extravagant events.

**The power station will be playing a key role in a two-day open-air music festival**, which will revolve around the seminal song *Radioaktivität* by the trailblazing German band Kraftwerk. Several European acts

which are either close to Kraftwerk in aesthetic and conceptual terms or have already explicitly covered Kraftwerk tracks or have a thematic agenda reminiscent of the way Kraftwerk’s original track courts the tingle of fear will take to the stage here. An open call for a *Radioaktivität* remix competition will be issued and the five best entries selected by a jury will be featured in live performances. A fitting climax to all this would be an open-air concert by Kraftwerk themselves against the backdrop of the never commissioned nuclear power station.

The venue will be put to multiple use. The first half of 2024 will see a documentary exhibition entitled *Meltdown at Zwentendorf*, which is all about using artistic means to throw light on international conflicts and civil-society activities. At the centre will be nuclear power stations such as Temelín, Jaslovské Bohunice, Dukovany and Mochovec, which all went into operation after Zwentendorf was rejected.

The second half of 2024 will be given over to a project entitled *After us/Après nous*. In performances, discussions and exhibitions we will be focusing on a posthuman era, which transcends any half-life period and indeed any human horizon of expectation. French theatre maker Philippe Quesne, who has turned himself into an expert of sorts on a future when humanity will be conspicuous in its absence, is planned for a commissioned work.

**Programme**  
After us / Après nous, Meltdown at Zwentendorf, Radioactivity  
**Artists**  
Krištof Kintera, Ira Melkonyan, Milan Cais

Milan Cais, Temelín



### • STOPS THE LONG NOW

#### • Where is time going?

Unlike those of the postwar era, social and political processes today evolve in a much more complex and less comprehensible manner. It is therefore all the more important to grant profile and identity to time by spinning the tale of its fascinating history. In 2024 Haus der Geschichte will be asking pertinent questions: How did that time regime evolve? What are its effects? Since the eighteenth century that regime has made itself felt in a decoupling of the past from the present, in the singularisation of stories to create abstract “history”, the establishment of a culture of musealisation and remembrance and of the idea of a future utopia to which all roads lead. Can this type of temporal regime be allowed to go on and, if that is the case, how is this to be done? In close contact with the exhibition the Tonkünstler Orchestra Lower Austria will develop a synaesthetic concert format which embraces the fine arts, literature and performance art.

Haus der Geschichte – Museum Niederösterreich

#### Local Partners

ELit Literaturhaus Europa,  
Tonkünstler Orchestra Lower Austria

#### International Partners

Estonian National Museum Tartu (EST),  
House of European History (BEL)

#### • River kilometre 2024

A boat ride along the largely forgotten remains of the Limes, the border fortifications of the Roman Empire, with the Danube’s river kilometre 2024 – believe it or not – bang in the middle. A festival of European music, *Flusskilometer 2024* will celebrate the pleasures of give and take as enacted by the styles of European music on their cross-border journeys from north to south, East to West and vice versa. That universally understood idiom – the sound of bagpipes, brass music and percussion – will delight audiences both on board river craft and at landing stages.

Festival Glatt&amp;Verkehrt

#### • Renaissance now

The renaissance castle Schallaburg had its heyday as a vibrant centre of cultural and political life in the sixteenth century. In 2024, in collaboration with a European partner, the castle, by then in its 50th year as an exhibition venue, will demonstrate that utopian thought and action are still relevant today and must be treated accordingly. The Renaissance is understood in this historic location as the catalyst of a European movement of comprehensive rejuvenation – or indeed, as the name implies, of a rebirth, which took place both on a local and a transnational level. Of crucial importance in all this was the establishment of an autonomous life space, which sought to shake off the dominance of cities in the search for solutions to urban crises.

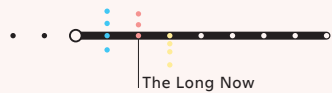
Renaissance castle Schallaburg

#### • The Region’s monasteries

The environs of St. Pölten alone boast a unique cluster of four monasteries, run by three christian religious orders, which had – and still have – a hand in shaping Europe: the Benedictines in Melk and in Göttweig, the Cistercians in Lilienfeld and the Augustinian Canons in Herzogenburg. To showcase the role they played in the development of Europe, these monasteries will establish a networked platform that allows visitors to experience the diversity of monastic life in great detail. As spiritual havens and highly differentiated cultural centres they are adept at transnational

Abbeys Melk, Göttweig,  
Herzogenburg, Lilienfeld





communication and at making themselves available to people on the ground – including those who have no close ties to the church. The Lilienfeld monastery sets off in search of its own roots in an exhibition with the theme “Europa daheim – Rescaling Distances”. It delves into its own history to show how Cistercians travelled from monastery to monastery to exchange knowledge and expertise. The exhibition is accompanied by a programme of classical music which will unfold throughout 2024.

• **The secret worlds of the cathedral and the monastery**

Behind the walls of St. Pölten’s cathedral and and the bishop’s seat lies a world filled with stories of human destinies. Pilgrimage routes, small devotional and/or memorial shrines known in Austria as “Marterl” and wayside chapels are testament to religious life in the country. The project, which will comprise film and video installations, sets out in 2024 to throw light on this highly ramified, transnationally relevant aspect of ecclesiastic history.

Anita Lackenberger

• **Lab Europe – Together we are Europe**

Who are St. Pölten’s new residents? Where did they come from? Why did they decide to up and leave? Together with the Center for migration research the two-tiered “Together we are Europe” project focuses on the years 2020 to 2023 to find answers to these questions. In addition to providing practical help to migrants and access to various networking programmes, it will devote itself through discussions and workshops to the analysis of the cultural and ethical challenges resulting from regional and global migration.

Renate Kienzl,  
Zentrum für Migrationsforschung

• **St. Pölten and its Environs in the National Socialist Era**

In an attempt to make comprehensible what now seems to defy understanding, St. Pölten City Museum will put on an exhibition in 2024 on the city and its environs during the Nazi era. The regime’s perpetrators and victims will be presented in model case studies and their motives for collaboration or resistance will be analysed and outlined. We start at the local level (prehistory, protagonists on the ground), move on to the region (Arbeitsdienst, relations with the “Gauhauptstadt” Krems, concentration camp Melk) and end with the transnational dimension (Where did the forced labourers come from? Where did St. Pölten’s men die as soldiers in the Wehrmacht? Where were St. Pölten’s Jews murdered?).

St. Pölten City Museum  
scholarly appraisal through DÖW,  
International Research Institutes,  
all of St. Pölten’s academic institutes

**Local Partners**

City Archive St. Pölten, Department of Contemporary History of the Landesarchiv Lower Austria, Diocesan Archive St. Pölten, Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW)

• **Contemporary Centre “Melk Memorial”**

The Melk Centre for Contemporary History, which is in charge of the Concentration Camp Memorial in Melk, will, starting in 2020, be organising international youth conferences focused on contemporary and democracy political issues. Works created offensively as a mirror of current socio-political challenges by the young people in the context of the conferences will tour their native countries before they are presented in an exhibition at the memorial sites at Melk and Erlauf. The exhibition will be part of a great youth exchange event in 2024.

Verein MERKwürdig

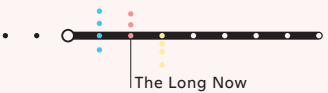
**Process**

Workshops starting 2020 with participants from Italy, Croatia, Germany and Austria  
Planned expansion to include Baltic States, Israel, South Eastern Europe and Ukraine

• **Tower of Memory**

The spire of the imposing, 14th-century Frauenbergkirche in Krems/Stein will be converted by 2024 into a state-of-the-art competence centre for history and political education. Augmented Reality will be only one of a number of tools for knowledge sharing. Restored

Department of Culture of the City of Krems



courtesy of the City of Krems, the spire will become a place for dialogue, where the past is made accessible under different perspectives for students and young adults

• **Migration – Nature takes to the road**

People migrate and so do animals. The result of stress caused by climate change, shifts in animals’ habitats have been on a rapid increase in Europe and all over the world. The consequences are often unexpected. A special exhibition in St. Pölten’s Haus für Natur in 2024 will focus on nature on the move, casting light on this subject in all its diversity.

Museum Lower Austria with Haus für Natur

• **European Revolutions in Contemporary Art**

Revisiting the history of political activism in art from the 1960s, the exhibition *Riot Revolutions* puts relevant artists and their work centre stage – from Vienna’s “Aktionisten” and their anarchist performance *Kunst und Revolution* in 1968 to Central and East European artistic positions of the 1970s such as Mladen Stilinovic, Sanja Ivekovic and Russia’s Pussy Riot.

Kunsthalle Krems

• **Peace, Sustainability and the Dictatorship of Love.**

**Rebelling for a new lifestyle. From Egon Schiele to Joseph Beuys and Jonathan Meese**

The exhibition focuses on an imaginative network of dissident artistic positions including painters such as Egon Schiele. In an astonishingly prescient way, these artists anticipated much that is familiar to us from today’s debates seeking to reform our lifestyles – sexual emancipation, spiritual special paths and alternative forms of social life such as the utopian artists’ colony Monte Verità in Switzerland. The exhibition project traces the tangled routes and inter-relatedness of modern European artistic life designs, looking for insights that might be applied to our present situation.

Landesgalerie Niederösterreich

• **Artificial Schiele (Schiele 4.0) –**

**Egon Schiele and Digital Reality**

What would Egon Schiele, who, as we know, was imprisoned on trumped-up charges for three weeks in Neulengbach in 1912, do if he were to return today and immerse himself in the digitised world of the twenty-first century? The painter is reimagined as a cyborg in this station drama set in and around Neulengbach Castle. He cannot but run foul of political and artistic norms, and find himself in prison all over again.

Karl Hintermeier

**International Partner**

Egon Schiele Art Centrum Český Krumlov

• **Will even machines dream one day?**

The (virtual) Literaturhaus Europa sets out to explore the influence of Artificial Intelligence on our lives. Young people from ten different countries, working as roving reporters in the setting provided by eljub (European Youth Movements), provide copy on this subject. Dialect poets and international spoken-word performers put AI (Artificial Intelligence) centre stage in their joint acts. A mobile “Speakers’ Corner” tours the Culture Region St. Pölten, inviting audiences to engage in a debate with speakers. Video clips featuring interviews with writers in ELit partner cities are aired and uploaded to a website conceived as a virtual room together with a selection of project texts. Every year participants review what they have achieved at the Europäische Literaturtage. The climax is scheduled for 2024, when all the elements mentioned above will be pulled together in St. Pölten.

ELit Literaturhaus Europa

**Local Partners**

Festival Glatt&Verkehrt, Haus der Geschichte - Lower Austria Museum, AIR-Train

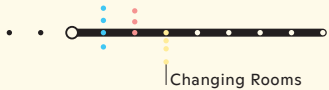
**International Partners**

Beletrina Ljubljana (SLO), eljub european movement, Jewish librari Timișoara / LITFest Festival (RUM), Lettres d’Europe et d’ailleurs Paris (FRA), Literaturhaus Drei Raben (HUN), Literaturhaus Hamburg (GER), Sounds Right London (GBR)





# Track 3: Changing Rooms Rescaling Space



HUB

## Cultural District

Despite its closeness in the government district to St. Pölten’s city centre, the Cultural District conveys the impression of being out of the loop, of leading an extraterritorial existence, a symbol of the disconnect between the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria. Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Lower Austria Museum (including Haus der Geschichte and Haus für Natur), Lower Austria Provincial Library, Lower Austrian Provincial Archives and the Klangturm (tower of sounds), all of them institutions installed in the 1990s during the transformation of St. Pölten into the capital of Lower Austria, are now surrounded on all sides by largely lifeless terrain.

In light of 2024, this awkward state of affairs calls for a radical implementation of “You only need to change direction”. What is completely inadmissible is to insist on seeing the Cultural District in isolation. The spatial context of the entire city needs to be taken into consideration: exploiting the vicinity of the Traisen river, re-routing cycle paths and footpaths so that they cross the Cultural District, connecting it on an emotional, artistic and content-driven level to the inner city, the Former Synagogue and the Children.Art.Lab.

We also want to redefine the function the Cultural District offers for the city and its residents: its large open spaces are ideal for public art and for surprising artistic takes on the themes of water, wind and light. We are looking to present a new interactive installation every summer.

### Cultural District

**Programme**  
Opening, At home/  
In the garden/On the  
beach, Community  
Dance Days 2024,  
Musical lunch,  
Radical Radio Europe,  
Radio Networks,  
Speakers’ Corner,  
Stadt-Orchester, Transformation Festival,  
Voice and Vote, Where  
is time going?

### Mirage 24

**Concept**  
Peter Fattinger,  
Veronika Orso,  
Lorenz Seidler  
**Programme**  
ECoC Challenge,  
Research Lab



Model of Mirage 24

HUB

## Mirage 24

A nomadic experiment. A festival, always on the move from St. Pölten to Europe beyond the city’s boundaries, to places as far away as our European neighbours in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia. A means of transport to connect people and places. A stage on wheels, designed for public space, that allows residents to exchange their role as spectators for that of contributors. And those are only some of the uses of the mobile mirror stage Mirage 24.

The mirrors of the open stage structure reflect the surroundings; people’s own mirror images become overlaid by those of others, of places and landscapes. This interactive set-up animates observers to – literally – reflect on themselves and their surroundings and to adopt new perspectives. The mirror stage features two lateral openings, providing a frame for people, places and landscapes and opening up a vista on and across the central main stage. Mirage 24 has a curated programme in store: concerts, readings, film screenings. It has collateral uses as a “research lab” in that we take stock of talents and traditions in workshops and talk shows, contributing in this way to the transfer of culture, knowledge and skills between the inhabitants.

Alternatively, pageants and the stage head from St. Pölten into the region or progress from village to village. “Delegations” of the current venues accompany Mirage 24 and celebrate the handover as travelling players.

The event format “ECoC Challenge” takes its cue from the “Saalwette”, the auditorium wager which gave the German TV show “You bet!” its name and its cachet. We invite residents to join in enacting specific competences and issues of their communities on the stage improvised. The winning team is chosen by public voting and will feature it in a performance in St. Pölten.





HUB

## Route 24

Nat King Cole, Chuck Berry and the Rolling Stones once hymned Route 66. However, that is a thing of the distant past. In the ECoC year we will proclaim the opening of Route 24. In keeping with our device of “You only need to change direction”, we form five streets into an innovative ensemble, where art will be giving a new lease of life to empty, underused, abandoned or “occupied” spaces. This will include a certain – productive, it is hoped – turmoil in public space during the one and a half months over which the project will play out in street after street.

St. Pölten’s most frequented shopping street, the Kremsergasse, will house a long-term project which will see the street’s cobbled stones develop an uncanny and mysterious life of their own, shaking up the perceptions of passers-by. Pavement design, flying objects, unexpected noises and stretches of lawn – this is art signalling to shoppers that it is time to take a breath and give social empathy a chance.

The Marktgassee, a centrally located alleyway, is made the object of a most unusual barter: the short alleyway is revamped by Czech artist Kateřina Šedá in such a way that our guests in 2024 will to their surprise and in the middle of St. Pölten find themselves in what deceptively looks like an alleyway in Brno. Conversely, the residents of Brno will be able to call a piece of St. Pölten their own...

St. Pölten’s Linzer Straße is another inner-city invalid with lots of vacant properties. Argentinian author and director Mariano Pensotti will be coming to the street’s aid in real-documentary manner by creating an immersive spectacle with the allure of a blockbuster, featuring a cast of professional actors and residents. Another key role is planned for the Bühne im Hof, one of Austria’s most successful small theatres, which will be taking its particular brand of stage art into the open in Linzerstrasse and other underused spaces in the vicinity.

In a street in what estate agents like to call an “exclusive residential area”, an artist group and residents set to work on projects which call traditional demarcation lines between inside and out and boundaries in public space into question. Art will provide the tools to discover and open up as yet unknown walkways in this street and make several of those wonderful gardens, where trespassers are normally not welcome, accessible to the public.

The Wiener Straße, too, has many unused or underused spatial resources, vacant business premises and romantically overgrown backyards. Open Stage St. Pölten invites local and international groups to make use of public space and of these vacancies – for projects ranging from art in public space, pop-up theatre and street art to workshops.

### Programme

Bühne im Hof – Renaissance et Resistance / Pop up Performances, Walk by Art, Street-painting Festival, Art in public space, Pop-up theatre, Workshops, Street exchange, Transformation Festival, Grätzellabor

**International Artists**  
Kateřina Šedá (CZE),  
Mariano Pensotti (ARG)

**National Partner**  
La Strada Graz,  
co-founder of IN SITU



R.A.M.B.O. at Linzer Straße

## • STOPS CHANGING ROOMS

### • Klangturm (tower of sounds)

Raise your voices, make yourselves heard! There is no better place to do this in than the Tower of Sounds, which was built in 1996 but has since 2013 fallen silent.

In 2024 we will transform this spectacular sight into a symbol of the voice of every single human being. Under the motto of “Voice and Vote”, voices will be heard in the Tower of Sounds that are often kept silent even in our democracy and are only too often phased out in everyday life: the voices of the very old, of the young, of marginalised groups. This is all about solo voices, the power of polyphony, the power of the voice as as harmonious sound and as a scream, the voices of animals.

A curated programme for 2024 will feature musical and sociopolitical highlights. We invite everyone to make themselves available. It is above all their voices we are after. Visitors will enjoy a curated musical and sound art programme comprising many different genres; they can say whatever they feel needs to be said at a Speakers’ Corner; and other ECoC projects are free to use the Klangturm for their presentations. With support from the local indie radio stations Campus City Radio, Radical Radio Europe and from regional artistic initiatives, we will transform the Tower of Sounds into a radio station, transmitting its programmes in conjunction with other European stations with no regard for national borders.

The Tower of Sounds is the most prominent symbol of St. Pölten’s ubiquitous underused spaces. This is just one of the many exciting projects we will be devising to call it back to life.

### • Radio networks

Campus & City Radio 94.4 are the media face of St. Pölten 2024 and will make sure that all of Europe can tune in to our city. In keeping with our leitmotif “Europe at home – Rescaling distances” we will set up a radio network to provide journalistic coverage of the activities of St. Pölten 2024 and lend media presence to the city’s artistic productions. Faithful to the principles of community radio stations we invite residents to make themselves heard. In October 2024 we will put on a three-day festival/symposium at the Klangturm entitled Klangstadt, which promises to mark the climax of a year of intensive radio work.

### • Radical Radio Europe (RRE)

St. Pölten has a globally unique landmark: its Klangturm (Tower of Sounds), which can be seen from a great distance and is a distinctive feature of the city’s skyline. It is in the nature of things that this tower needs to make itself heard. RRE’s activities will transform the tower as a radio transmitter and receiver into a European radio hotspot, establishing St. Pölten as a powerful voice in Europe.

Conversely, RRE will also bring Europe to St. Pölten, turning the Klangturm into a place for encounters through performative radio – “radio for ears and eyes” – radio workshops for children and teenagers, lecture performances, and talk formats in the spirit of good news. Twelve different international artists and art groups will be invited to create RRE’s 2024 program.

### • Direct connections

We all know that huge data streams course continuously through our ultra connected world. What we are much less aware of is the physicality of those streams, a deficit the Fineart Galerie Traismauer seeks to address by making communication visible in an attractive and productive way. Light signals in

### Programme

Voice and Vote, Radical Radio Europe, Radio Networks

Campus & City Radio

### Local Partners

St. Pölten University of applied studies, LAMES, IMA Institut für Medienarchäologie

### National Partner

Ö1 Kunstradio

### International partners

Kaunas 2022, Esch 2022

IMA Institut für Medienarchäologie

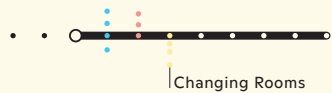
### National Partners

Ö1 Kunstradio

### International Partners

radio, EBU Ars Acustica Group





Morse code connect the Traisen river valley with Krems. Messages formulated by residents are transmitted between Krems-Stein, Hollenburg, Traismauer, Herzogenburg, Unterradelberg and St. Pölten and even as far as Moravský Krumlov. Artists develop and devise objects, sounds and haptic experiences at the “transmitter stations” and in select locations in the region between Krems and the Traisen valley. The project will be on stream throughout 2024 and will raise awareness about the importance of collaboration.

• A Great European Story

The 2024 programme of the Landestheater Niederösterreich will feature a great and specifically European story, realised as a co-production with theatres and theatre groups from other European Capital of Culture Cities in Estonia and Norway, hopefully with Bosnia as well. Dramatists from the three countries will jointly write scripts for the stage that work both as stand-alone plays and as three parts of a Netflix-like series. The three plays will be performed as a theatre marathon in the three cities. The premiere will take place in St. Pölten in 2024 with an at least trilingual cast.

• Invisible Cities Lab

The international performance collective The Doing Group uses interventions, workshops and interactive performances to get to the roots of St. Pölten’s hidden realities. Inspired by Italo Calvino’s *Invisible Cities*, they focus on residents and on views of the city that have previously been largely ignored. The project is designed to empower those residents to use their imagination and their memories to upgrade their own agency in the city.

• The Wheel of Delight

Rather than concentrating on St. Pölten’s inner city, the project embraces the city’s ten other, more rural districts, whose residents have tended to develop an identity defined by their immediate surroundings. Artists from all over Europe will be invited to provide central locations in these districts with interactive fun-fair attractions of the merry-go-round type. Propelled by muscle power, it is hoped they will prove genuine magnets.

• I’ve got something to tell you

Murals, large-format wall paintings and their messages are a dominant feature in many metropolises. By now this cross between street art and art in architecture has found international favour not only with the sprayer scene but also with planners and property developers. In 2024 this urban art form will be presented in all its aesthetic and political diversity.

• Let’s draw!

Drawing is a language as simple as it is universal. An installation in St. Pölten’s public space presents drawings by artists from eight European countries as well as contributions from closer to home by projecting them onto an attractively styled facade. The public joins the fun by drawing on iPads and having their drawings animated by Tagtool technology. OMAi is supported by the Tagtool community’s international network.

Fine Art Galerie Traismauer

Local Partners

Cities: St. Pölten, Krems, Traismauer, Herzogenburg, regional wine growers, educational Institutions

International Partner

Moravský Krumlov (CZE)

Landestheater Niederösterreich

International Partner

Tartu 2024, Bodø 2024

The Doing Group

National Partners

Stadtpotentiale Innsbruck, diemonopol

Kunst im öffentlichen Raum Niederösterreich

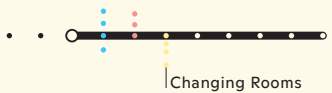
International Partners

AIIR – Association for interdisciplinary and intercultural research Zagreb (CRO), Køs – Museum of Art in Public, Spaces (DNK), Light in Fine Arts (GER), Platform Kunst in Opdracht (BEL)

ORTE Architekturnetzwerk Niederösterreich

Artists: Mural artists from different European Countrys Local Partners: Cinema Paradiso, Lower Austrian Creative Academy, St. Pölten City Museum National Partners: AIR – Artist in Residence Lower Austria, Calle Libre

OMAi – Office for Media and Arts, International und Tagtool Community Artists: Alean Ovramenko (UKR), Benjamin Rabe, Ilan Katin (GER), Carlos Perez (ESP), Frances Sanders Dima Berzon (CZE),Dieter Puntigam, Tom Stockinger (AUT), Jon Burgerman, Fabric Lenny (GBR), Lora Shopova, Ivan Shopov (BGR), Sofia Cordoba, Matthew Watkins (ITA) National Partners: CYW Ars Electronica, Soundframe Festival International Partners: Lunchmeat Studio and Label (CZE), Monstra Festival (PRT), Southampton University (GBR), Theatre of Animation and Art (UKR), Urbans Projections (GBR)



• AIR-Train

The train has been an archetypal symbol of transport since the days of J M W Turner’s *Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway*. The Artists in Residence (AIR) Train commutes between St. Pölten and Krems. Offering a limited time window and a decelerated experience of space, it provides ample opportunity for reflection and contemplation – a welcome alternative to everyday routine and the hubbub created by the wealth of cultural offerings. The ECoC year and the fact that trains are an eco-friendly means of transport will combine to increase the use and significance of the St. Pölten–Krems rail link. Artists will be invited to create a succession of works for the AIR train. Some actions, performances, readings and interventions will be intermittent, others are fixtures throughout 2024.

• Cinema Paradiso

St. Pölten’s arthouse institution Cinema Paradiso takes to the road in 2024. A tractor with a suitably adapted trailer transports European film culture from the capital to the country. Screenings will materialise out of nowhere, guerilla-action style on some occasions, on others they will be integrated into village festivals and on yet others they will be part of an event featuring young film makers. We will see movies at the cathedral and special programs in the regular venue

• Critical Chance

Experimental theatre maker and performance artist Stefan Kaegi has made a name for himself by, among other things, being part of the renowned Rimini Protokoll. In 2024 he will stage mass bicycle tours, where participants will experience St. Pölten and its environs in an altogether new light. Providing a musical setting for the city and the Culture Region, a sound track and loudspeakers play out alongside the individual cyclists, who will each contribute their own voice and their own social role. The overarching theme is the demarcation lines separating city and country and their consequences for people and the environment currently being renegotiated almost everywhere in Europe. The resulting travel experience will feel like a collectively produced documentary with great political relevance.

• European Union Youth Orchestra

From 2021, the only avowedly pan-European youth orchestra and the chamber-music ensembles formed from it will be using its residency in Grafenegg to play a succession of concerts in unusual venues with partly new audiences scattered across the entire Culture Region St. Pölten. In 2024 these concerts will be streamed live to the other European Capitals of Culture.

• Musical Impulse – Musical Region Dunkelsteinerwald

Music is a strong means to foster new regional identities. Twelve municipalities in and around the Dunkelsteinerwald forest and Göttweig Monastery unite to bring together cultural initiatives, associations and locals in a collaborative project based on existing resources to bring them on a higher level. Local communities are the cornerstone of engaging cultural events; the locals not only attend events but actively develop and host them.

AIR – ARTIST in RESIDENCE Niederösterreich

Planned National Partners

Galerie Stadtpark Krems, Kunstmeile Krems, NÖ Festival und Kino GmbH, Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB), ORTE Architekturnetzwerk Niederösterreich, Unabhängiges Literaturhaus Niederösterreich, Verkehrsverbund Ost-Region (VOR)

Programme

Club 3 Kids, Crossing Europe Filmfestival goes St. Pölten, Movies at the Cathedral

Stefan Kaegi (GER)

Local Partners

Grafenegg / Campus Grafenegg

International Partner

Ferrara Musica (IT)

Danube University Krems – Center for Applied Music Research

Involved Municipalities

Bergern im Dunkelsteinerwald, Dunkelsteinerwald, Furth bei Göttweig, Hafnerbach, Mautern an der Donau, Nussdorf ob der Traisen, Obritzberg-Rust, Paudorf, Rossatz-Arnsdorf, Schönbühel-Aggsbach, Statzendorf, Wölbling

Local Partner

Göttweig Abbey



In a sound installation city and countryside exchange places: sounds from the city are heard in the middle of the forest; sounds associated with nature find their way to central St. Pölten. In 2024 an international Audience Development symposium at Danube University Krems will also examine how the experience of the Dunkelsteinerwald musical experiment can benefit other European regions.

#### • Eurotour

Initiated in 2017, the Europaballett's Eurotour is based on an international network that has already established partnerships with Rijeka, Sopron, San Remo, Novi Sad and Osijek. The project, which is designed to be expanded to digitised outreach activities, will be continued until 2027. 2024 will mark a climax with a European dance festival characterised by a maximum of social inclusivity. An open air event and projects specifically designed for children are in the pipeline.

#### • Chamber Music Festival 20:24

Strict etiquette had better be left at home: The ChamberFest 20:24 presents chamber music and lieder in public locations so that barriers to entry that have deterred many people – perhaps particularly the young – are practically non-existent. Several artists from different European countries will take part in this dusting-off operation, which will include cooperation with social institutions such as the Emmausgemeinschaft.

#### • PNYX

In keeping with the reference to the original *Pnyx*, the place in Athens where the *Ekklesiai* or meetings of the people were held, artist Robert Jelinek's version is a meeting place in the public space. His PNYX is a 36-square-metre, closed letterbox system complete with its own PO boxes. A competition will be held in collaboration with 27 institutions, festivals and associations to select tenants for these boxes from all 27 EU member states. The new tenants will be given keys to these PO boxes and postal addresses. This creates in St. Pölten a virtual, but thoroughly analogue postal European Union. The installation and the organised events deal thematically with reunion, Heimat, identity, migration and other provocative subjects such as tax havens and the registration law.

#### • A SHIP WILL COME

This project, jointly organised with donaufestival, begins and ends in St. Pölten. Between these two end points, the craft mentioned in the title is away on a voyage on the Danube, from which it will return with a cargo that is surprisingly different from the one it departed with, when that cargo was ceremoniously bade farewell in St. Pölten. The shipload of artistic "contraband" is destined for four European cities – Bratislava, Budapest, Novi Sad and Belgrade –, where it is unloaded with all due pomp and circumstance. The boat returns loaded with artistic cargo, which will be presented at the Domplatz at the climax of the closing event. The Danish performance group SIGNA, which specialises in the creation of haunting parallel worlds, will be onboard. Its approach makes the audience part of the performance by involving them in one-to-one talks in a styled setting. What we get here is a sort of ghost ship with a cargo of contraband. Having dropped anchor in the four European cities, it mutates for a few days into a speculative space for SIGNA's fictive reality.

Europaballett St. Pölten

#### International Partners

Theatres in Rijeka, San Remo, Sopron, Osijek and Novisad

Lukas Kargl

Robert Jelinek

#### International Partners

Institutions, festivals or associations from all 27 EU member states

donaufestival

#### Planned Ship Stops

Bratislava, Budapest and Novi Sad or Belgrade

## The thermometer calls the tune – does it really?

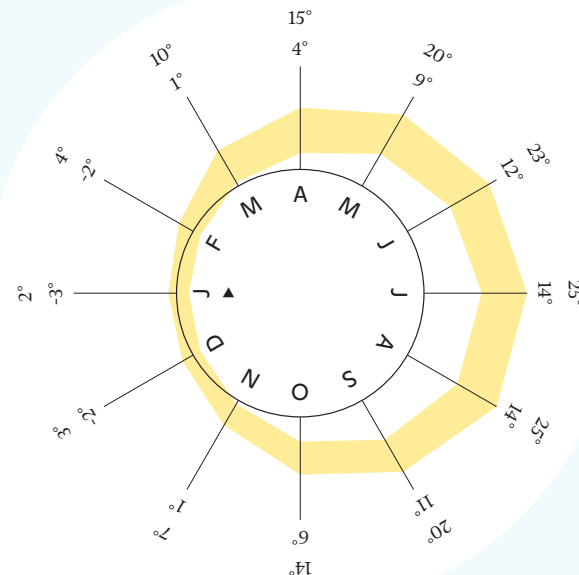
### -3 to 10 °C

The calendar of St. Pölten 2024 is filling up day by day. We start on New Year's Eve 2023 by bathing the entire city in an altogether new light, starting with the *Cathedral Square*. Once European Capital of Culture year has been formally opened on 13 January 2024, a succession of brilliant indoor projects will make light of wintry temperatures at the *Former Synagogue*, the newly built *Children.Art.Lab*, the *Cultural District*, *St. Pölten City Museum*, *Castle Viehofen* and, outsourced to the Culture Region St. Pölten, at the *Tischlerei Melk* and the *Kunstmeile Krems*.

### 4 to 23 °C

As spring approaches and we don't need to heat up indoor rooms so much, projects that will take to the stage include outdoor events: they will range from the fictitious *Route 24* to the ever-green oasis of alternative culture in the Sonnenpark. Spring will also see the opening of the main exhibition *Rescaling Distances* in the former Glanzstoff factory premises.

Temperature in degrees Celsius  
Climate data of Austria, ZAMG,  
branch office St. Pölten



### -2 to 14 °C

In the autumn, our activities once again return to the more comfortable indoor venues. On the menu now is a rich series of exhibitions, literary events, concerts, discussions, European exchanges and social programmes, projects in virtual space and a whole raft of works for the stage. These are partly conceived as work in progress or as additional or final modules of formats that had been evolving over the course of the year or even longer. The decommissioned Nuclear Power Station Zwentendorf will host a second project focused on speculation about the future relationship between humanity, technology and nature. This exhibition revisits an earlier one staged in the spring that recalled the historical dimension of the power station, which was mothballed after its completion in 1978. The title of the exhibition invokes the uncertain future after 2025: *After us / Après nous*.

### 14 to 25 °C

The warm temperatures of summer will tempt projects right out into the open and to venues and encounters with a powerful surprise factor. The mobile mirror stage *Mirage 24* descends on a number of locations and the summer camp of the *Rescaling Distances* exhibition pitches its tents outside the former factory. Wherever you turn, you will come upon artistic interventions that interweave the local woof with an international warp: in the streets of the cities, in nearby castles, abbeys and monasteries, on crafts sailing the Danube and in artistic cycling tours from the city to the Culture Region St. Pölten and back.



How will the events and activities that will constitute the cultural programme for the year be chosen?

## Step by Step

The programme of St. Pölten 2024 is anchored in a broad participative process and will continue to be developed under the aegis of an artistic directorship, which has yet to be nominated. Starting in 2020, this development will be oriented towards the strategic themes outlined in Bid Book II. Cultural institutions, associations and players have pooled their creative energy and European ambitions with the conceptual and curatorial competence of the team (Andreas Fränzl, Thomas Edlinger, Romana Maliti, Elisabeth Schack) we have put in charge of artistic project development for the selection phase.

### The matrix that serves as the basis for the selection of programme ideas

- the strategic guidelines for the application and the cultural strategy
  - European dimension – European themes, partners and artists
  - Spatial resources – public space, cultural institutions, abandoned places
  - Participation and engagement – co-creation, co-realisation, outreach
  - Audience development – a new interpretation of the relationship between artists, audience and organisers
  - Regions and networks – setting up networks to facilitate exchanges between the city, the Culture Region St. Pölten and Europe
  - Capacity building – expanding and sharing competences, testing innovative ideas, laying foundations for the legacy
- the artistic vision “Europe at Home – Rescaling Distances”
- balancing the different genres between art and (socio-)cultural projects

### Open call for ideas

We sent out an invitation to St. Pölten’s and the Culture Region’s institutions and associations, to cultural workers, artists and interested residents as well as to universities, schools and the business community, encouraging them to submit projects. The present programme is made up of a selection of representative Stops drawn from more than 300 submitted projects.

### An excerpt from the call:

*The age we live in faces a number of grave challenges, such as the polarisation of society, the potential disintegration of Europe and the wish to withdraw behind border walls. St. Pölten 2024 therefore wants to focus firmly on all that seems alien and distant. Eyes, ears and hearts, both of the city’s residents and of visitors, are to be opened to new perspectives.*

*Setting out to renegotiate distances in such problematic fields as history and the future, urban and rural environs, private and public, individuals and society, we want to promote awareness, curiosity, understanding and respect for people living alongside us, who are only too often seen as “different” and “alien”.*

*What distances does your project idea propose to remeasure, challenge or even overcome altogether? Which of the challenges currently confronting Europe is this relevant to? Would the involvement of European partners enrich your project? What can wider Europe learn from St. Pölten and the Culture Region? What can St. Pölten and the Culture Region learn from its fellow Europeans?*

(► [www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/joinin/callforideas](http://www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/joinin/callforideas))

### Further development of the programme from 2020

Bid Book II and the programme set out in it, *Europe at Home – Rescaling Distances*, will be used as the basis and will supply guidelines for advertising the vacant positions of the artistic director and in the team of curators. In addition to the realisation of the programme as set out in Bid Book II, roughly 30% of the programme budget (► p 22) is dedicated for further development and consolidation through new projects, using vehicles such as theme specific calls or collaborations.

The <CulturalChangeCampus> will be used to try out, network and develop further both project ideas that have already been submitted and any new submissions. This process will be accompanied and influenced by participative public events. Programme development will be revealed and explained on an ongoing basis in a series of surgeries, focus groups and discussion forums. By conducting this discourse in public we want to avoid the trap of an “ECoC echo chamber”.

How will the cultural programme combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?

## New routes of access

Using an innovative combination of venues, genres, artists and audiences, St. Pölten 2024 will open up new routes of access to our material and immaterial cultural heritage and investigate a series of possible future scenarios.

By emphasising our local heritage we focus on the cultural mosaic that reflects Europe’s essential diversity and highlight it both for our audience as a whole and for our various European partners. Giving hospitality a radically new interpretation, we will present a wide range of realisations of popular culture, such as brass band music, traditional music and dance. Blue collar and railway workers’ culture with all their cultural associations and institutions will be given a platform alongside the truly polyphonic choral, architectural and gastronomic scenes. All these groups will engage in a dialogue about the past, the present and the future with artists and groups from other European countries. This will be at the forefront in *Reframing Heimat* (► p 31), which is looking to put together a universal folkdance.

### Enlightened facades

Baroque portals will become the canvas for digital works of art. Tagtool allows artists to give stately facades in St. Pölten’s inner city a new lease of life.

### baroXmedia

This is the title of a series of experimental media projects conceived by students of St. Pölten’s University of Applied Sciences for the Internationale Barocktage Stift Melk. The media centred transformation of physical reality into a virtual data matrix proves to be a methodology that is distinctly reminiscent in several respects of the baroque.

### Organ meets electronic music

Organ music at St. Pölten’s splendid cathedral has a centuries-old tradition. At the same time, St. Pölten boasts quite a few internationally renowned composers and performers of electronic music. St. Pölten 2024 will build a bridge between sacred music played on the organ and electronic music.

### Several projects oscillating between past, present and future will take place in a more academic setting:

#### ARCHAEOLOGY

St. Pölten has a great number of important archaeological finds, such as the leftover of a Roman palace underneath the Cathedral Square and a one-thousand-year old cemetery with more than 20,000 burials. Digital projection will transport this evidence of the city’s past into the present.

#### Living archives

In collaboration with the abbeys of Melk, Herzogenburg and Lilienfeld Stift Göttweig will showcase the sacred and secular musical legacy of the region between the Danube and the valley of the Traisen. Historical networks extend far into Europe, notably to South Moravia, the Danube countries and Italy. Located at a crossroads between art and academia this participative exhibition project links a time-hallowed cultural legacy to a state-of-the-art hi-tech present.

#### European Design Lab

Recourse to craftwork as a model of sustainable production is becoming more and more common in our digital age. Linked to design, craftwork has become a key point of reference in the investigation and fostering of social developments. Interdisciplinary teams of students from St. Pölten and partner universities in the region develop new concepts and concrete solutions for coexistence in the region.

We are aware of the fact that there is still a lot of potential for development. Based upon our broad network of local and regional partners we will further develop a challenging but exciting process to combine our local heritage with innovative and experimental artistic expressions.

#### Partners

Cultural Association of Austrian Railway Workers, Lower Austrian Brass Band Association, Kultur. Region. Niederösterreich, Volkskultur Niederösterreich/ aufhOHRchen/ Haus der Regionen, Chor Szene Niederösterreich, Musikschulmanagement Niederösterreich, Museumsmanagement Niederösterreich, BhW Niederösterreich (Bildung hat Wert), Zentrum für Museale Sammlungswissenschaften

#### Enlightened facades OMAi

baroXmedia  
Ars Electronica Futurelab, Internationale Barocktage Stift Melk, Landesgalerie Niederösterreich / Kunstmeile Krems

Organ meets electronic music  
orgelplus, Bodø 2024, Tartu 2024

Archaeology  
Medical University of Vienna – Center for Forensic Medicine, Institute for Forensic Medicine of the University of Bern, EURAC Research – Institute for Mummy Research

Living archives  
Abbeys Göttweig, Herzogenburg, Lilienfeld, Melk

European Design Lab  
Initiated by CraftLab Obergrafendorf – Christian Herzog & Petra Wieser in partnership with New Design University Brno University of Technology (CZE), Academy of Fine Arts and Crafts Bratislava (VSVU)



How has the city involved local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme?

## Listening – Debating – Disagreeing – Agreeing – Developing – Concretising

St. Pölten 2024 has involved local artists and cultural organisations from its beginnings. The European Capital of Culture Year is a huge opportunity and huge challenge for the local and regional cultural scene. It took a year to realise just how huge. Within the framework of the platform KulturhauptSTART, artists, associations and cultural institutions have been actively involved in all our events and ideas as far back as 2016. That is when our special ambition started to grow: a desire to set off together off the beaten track, to think in new directions, to start experiments, to develop new international networks and grow capacities that will change the city forever.

By that time public support for this courageous and innovative application was so great that it spurred on a series of unanimous political decisions that also led to an autonomous management organisation to organize, structure and push the process. We as Office St. Pölten 2024 actively harnessed this energy and channelled it through more than 250 bilateral cultural talks and various participative formats from KulturFOREN to the series of events “Artistic Programming in Discourse”. Here the detailed thinking, the interconnection, the inspiration and the construction of ideas worked together to our common aim.

### Were those open calls a good idea?

In spring 2019, we reached out to four target groups: cultural institutions, cultural associations, creative artists, artists and interested citizens, as well as universities, schools and businesspeople. These calls were accompanied by a detailed briefing explaining our selection criteria in public information events and on the web: [www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/joinin/callforideas](http://www.st-poelten2024.eu/en/joinin/callforideas)

The artistic project development team selected 58 of the 308 project ideas that were submitted as stops for Bid Book II. Of these, 29 came from institutions and 29 from associations and individuals. For the sake of transparency, the project ideas of all those who agree will be published on the St. Pölten 2024 website.

Yes, the four calls involved us in a great deal of work and talks but they did give us a fair chance to support and become part of a common application that motivated our cultural and civic agents and energized the team of St. Pölten 2024.

In addition, the platform “KulturhauptSTART” 2019 continuously organised events in cooperation with us in the formats “Salon2024” and the public “Jour Fixes” for networking and information for the local scene. In June, the symposium “Realraum - zu Wissenstransfer und Kulturvernetzung” took place in cooperation with the art and culture association LAMES.

### How to move on from here?

Starting in spring 2020 the program for 2024 is being developed in a joint process with thoroughly prepared and designed pilot projects. We have lists and project plans telling us where to start. Through the <CulturalChangeCampus> all we have learned so far in terms of cooperation, dramaturgy, production and audience development is shared and channelled into training programmes. Experience from other European Capitals of Culture shows that selecting a large number of projects at such an early stage involves risks. We will minimise these risks by following a clearly structured process with decisions in selection for preparation to be made in 2021 and pre-production agreements put in place in 2022 by the artistic direction and the curator team. 10-20% of the programme is to be left open for separate decisions until 2023.

The 2025 programme, for which the Melina Mercouri Prize budget will be used, will consist to a large extent of European reflections on the European Capital of Culture Year.

Please give some concrete examples and name some local artists and cultural organisations with which cooperation is envisaged and specify the type of exchanges in question.

So far we have worked intensively with members of the local scene not only because they are a big part of getting this bid off the ground but also because we see them as part of our team and agree with them wholeheartedly on the size and scope of an ECoC. This is the result of an intensive exchange in the past years and the strong commitment in the cultural sector for the project 2024.

What we have seen so far is that the whole process needs a well structured and continuous debate so that we can work together. Basic elements of that conversation are the attitudes needed to make an ECoC grow into a civic initiative on a European scale. It is vital that there should be a mutual understanding both of the ambition to grow and the need to take risks. Some have a lot of experience of working across European boundaries, other less, but we all have a strong will to cooperate with European artists and partners at all stages of a project. We are all aware that the sector as a whole has an enormous opportunity to learn and that this means engaging with talent on the ground to improve competences and foster excellence. What is actually vital is not an equal distribution of resources but the quality of each person and artistic idea and the chance to have a deep, lasting and sustainable impact. We will develop artworks in co-creation and -production in partnership equally with the cultural and civic agents as well as with the end user and visitor.

We have respect for the artist's way of working, the passion-love-relation in every situation, the people with whom we engage and the sympathy that grows throughout the process so that the focus is always on artistic excellence and quality. As a next step we hire an Artistic Director and Curators to safeguard the whole process and ensure that the bid remains the leading document on how the development of the programme will evolve. In this way we have already been able to include concrete co-production projects as *Stops* in our programme both from the major cultural institutions such as the Festspielhaus St. Pölten, the Landestheater NÖ, Cinema Paradiso, the Museum Niederösterreich and the Landesgalerie Niederösterreich, which opened most recently, the abbeys and monasteries in Melk, Göttweig, Herzogenburg and Lilienfeld, the Grafenegg Festival, as

well as from associations such as the Plattform KulturhauptSTART, SONNENPARK/LAMES, the Künstlerbund artist's association, the Institute for Media Archaeology and the Centre for Migration Research.

Central projects of the programme serve as an interface for other local and regional cultural organisations and local and European artists, for example:

### ► Transformation Festival

This new yearly format is a well and truly new, though seamlessly organic departure platform integrating the form, nature, and appearance of the local and regional communities of artists. Opening up new possibilities for the arts, the annual Transformation Festival is a gathering of a diverse selection of cultural players that espouses a community-building ethic, and a value system that celebrates life, personal growth, social responsibility, healthy living, and creative expression for the residents of the city and the Culture Region St. Pölten. For that extra touch, we invite people from all over Europe to make themselves seen and heard in their own plain and honest way. This initiative starts in 2021. Furthermore our format *Route 24* will bring local and international groups together in the public space and in abandoned places.

### ► Mirage 24

This travelling open stage brings artistic life to many villages in the Culture Region St. Pölten and invites local artists to find their place and their themes there. Competitions, performances, fun-culture mixed with artistic excellence will fill streets with open stages in St. Pölten, the Culture Region and in other European mid-sized cities.

In addition to the 64 partners whose projects were selected via our calls, we are striving for cooperation with the following partners:  
FM4 Frequency Festival in St. Pölten (150,000 visitors), NÖ Dokumentationszentrum für moderne Kunst, Choreografiezentrum der Musik- und Kunstschule St. Pölten, Youth Centre Steppenwolf, Fest der Begegnung (Feast of Encounter), Association akta-Kunst im interdisziplinären Raum, Association Die Puppenwerkstatt, Association raumgreifend, Association Freunde der Wilhelmsburger Keramik, Association Kultur im Schloss Walpersdorf, Galerie Daliko, Verein Burg 2025 (Burg Neulengbach), OpenGLAM.at, Vocal Groove Project “Bauchklang”, Band und Music Production Team “House of Riddim”, Höfefest, Music Festival Barockfestival, Music Festival Musica Sacra, Music Festival Jazz im Hof, Reading and Literature Week “Blätterwirbel”  
Donhofer, Evi Leuchtgelb, Friedrich Sochurek, Mark Rossell, Roland Fink



Elaborate on the scope and quality of the activities: ▶ Promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens; ▶ Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;

## Europe at Home

Without a European dimension the whole business of any European Capital of Culture Year fails. How come? The initiative thrives on interactions, disruptions, disagreements, innovation and fruitful exchanges involving all the people in Europe that have or will have some kind of a relationship with St. Pölten.

If we are going to operate in this personal space, we need to work at the right level of intimacy and in a very honest and direct way. Rescaling distances and embracing Europe as our home means to reflect on our daily life – housing, furnishings, food, dining and clothes – and let it trigger inspiring discussions about our cultures in the broadest sense. On the other hand it also means to spread out and let ourselves inspire by the European diversity of answers given to the urban challenges of our time and start experiments on small and local scale. This is what we mean when we speak of “Europe at Home”. We are talking about a place where small is beautiful and warmth is strength.

The work we have done so far with our own population has showcased diversity for us in a series of questions, large and small, with the answers to be given as we work our way through. Our strategy is to put critical, healthy pressure on relationships, highlight disruptions and retell the story of Europe in time, space and in a social context.



St Pölten is a railway town in its very bones. It lies directly on the east-west connection between Budapest and Munich. 30 years ago, at the fall of the Iron Curtain, St. Pölten found its perceived geopolitical position on the edge of Western Europe shifted all at once into its heartlands. Strange as it may seem, we in St. Pölten and Lower Austria have not yet fully come to terms with the full effect of the positive challenges posed by a 400 kilometre long open border towards our neighbours Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. The intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding is still somehow focused on an east-west divide. The north-south axis is a different matter. There is still a great deal of untapped potential to be mined in our relationships with Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia. Our strategy must be to range across social and cultural barriers if we are to undertake a successful exploration of the evolution of ideas in the world of the home.

## A place for everything and everything in its place

We explore Europe at home by seeking out common ground: how our language and names are adopted and changed (Route 24 ▶ p 46), why the way we eat and celebrate has changed (The Perfect Feast ▶ p 36), how fashion is evolving (Trash Diaries ▶ p 34) or how virtual space is dissolving and enriching our familiar environment (Digital Platform ▶ p 23). Our overall strategy is to retell the history of ideas, people and inventions using migration stories as our starting point. After all, we are – more or less – all migrants and the effects this has had on European conflicts can be rediscovered through personal stories about the world wars, Napoleon (who was here), the Balkans, current waves of refugees from the Middle East. We can study the impact past and present migration has had on our neighbourhoods. One way is to combine organised walks through industrial buildings and environments with visits to neighbourhood labs in densely populated areas, with a guest worker and a local maverick building the storyline together as they go.

In this respect St. Pölten 2024 uses the very problems that beset everybody seeking to bring people together. Life on line, the creative industries (where language is often less of a barrier, home centred and pan European climate change solutions, tool use, shopping and DIY – all of these play their part. Such a cumulation of practical togetherness shows the importance of the European ideal. Our strategy to support this European integration is to showcase how as time passes the increase of freedom of choice stimulates solidarity between individuals. We do this in concrete terms by bringing together people that experience crisis and share their problems via their chatboxes, blogs, graffiti, chronicles, inventories, ordinance, court reports, wills and other documents pertaining to their everyday lives.



Elfriede Jelinek's "Am Königsweg" by Nikolaus Habjan at Landestheater NÖ



### How do we implement this “Europe at Home” approach?

In order to establish intensive relationships between macrocosmic Europe and microcosmic St. Pölten in the ECoC year, we have identified six thematic strands as interfaces for European exchange. The themes are integral parts of our existing and evolving programme within the three tracks. Every theme can be seen all the way through the cultural programme and every theme has its own assigned place in our landscape highlighting places where we start to explore Europe at home.



### unCommon European History

If we walk from the Cathedral Square to the Former Synagogue, we can feel the presence of Europe in every stage of our city’s development – Roman times, migration of peoples, repopulation through monastery buildings, peasant revolts, a flourishing Jewish religious community, its brutal destruction by the Nazis, industry taking over the town – the list is endless. This is our heritage. It is also our inspiration – both the glue that holds us together and the medium by which we can see ourselves from the outside and consider how we might change and develop. We will use the digital part of our projects to bring together those who are interested in using heritage in this open manner as a motor for social change and understanding.

- Hub Cathedral Square
- Hub Former Synagogue
- Stop Melk Memorial
- Stop Tower of Memory
- Stop Archaeology at Cathedral Square
- Stop St. Pölten and its Environs in the National Socialist Era
- Stop Living Archives



### European Neighbourship & Citizenshood

Standing on the Rathausplatz, we can take any one of the small streets around us as the starting point for the many relationships we are building between these parts of our entrepreneurial city and surrounding neighbourhoods in smaller towns and villages in the region and across Europe. We bring the neighbourhood between member states to the level of a small urban neighbourhood and “exchange” an alley in the centre of St. Pölten with an alley in Brno by means of artistic-architectural transformation. In return, visitors to Brno will of course be enchanted in their turn by a small piece of St. Pölten. Our cultural and creative entrepreneurs and citizens strike up relationships with people in the partner cities. In 2024, St. Pölten will create a democratic political foundation for these projects in cooperation with Danube University Krems and the five-year project “The Future of Democracy in Austria and EU-rope”. In a broad youth campaign, we want to achieve, both in the city and the region, the highest voter turnout of all under thirty year old voters in the European Parliament elections 2024.

- MAIN STATION Europe at Home
- Hub Route 24
- Stop Grätzellabor
- Stop Lab Europe – Together we are Europe
- Stop Voice and Vote
- Stop Direct connections



### Nature, Climate and the wreckage of the Future

Those who bike south for a few minutes from St. Pölten railway station will find the 5 hectare, well-kept and participatively designed *Sonnenpark*. Here the two associations Sonnenpark and LAMES are developing an international utopian project embracing art, science and eco-activism. Together with European partners, they are test driving possible solution to making the future a more ecological and sustainable place. Another venue is the Nuclear Power Station Zwentendorf – 30 km away and never in operation – where the public are confronted by the horror picture of a posthuman world: a reference to the costs that humanity must incur if it ignores existential threats. Our method here is to demonstrate that it is no longer possible to cling to social norms and cultural identification in the face of global warming and other global crises and the answer starts with each and every one of us.

- Hub SONNENPARK/LAMES
- Hub Nuclear Power Station Zwentendorf
- Stop Futurama Lab
- Stop Visionale
- Stop Migration – Nature takes to the road
- Stop Where Does Your Food Come From?

## Europe at Home

### European Diversity Released

Ten minutes away by bus is Castle Viehofen, where the social barriers that the building once trumpeted are overcome symbolically and actually as everyone is called upon to participate. The range of St. Pölten 2024 stretches from the Queerschnitt Film Festival to the experience of European diversity in terms of important gender movements that are destined to grow over the next few years, combatting discrimination and attitudes of denial and offering challenging solutions to misconduct, representation and inclusion. Our approach is to call out the lack of diversity and show that now is the time to act and speak up for accountability, consequences, promotion and retention. We will call attention to the sad fact that discrimination is an ever-present fact for many Europeans. Our method is to include a range of old and new marginalised groups from our own and other medium-sized cities, formulate messages and actions that work together and connect places that symbolize lack and openness towards diversity in our towns and cities.

- Hub Castle Viehofen
- Stop Queerschnitt Film Festival,
- Stop There will always be holes in the wall,
- Stop Becoming Europe/gestures 5 europe

### Migration is Mobility

The mobile stage vehicle *Mirage 24* crosses the surrounding region and the city throughout the year. It deals with mobility of ideas, services and people as it poses major challenges for policymakers. Our approach here is to point at often distorted public perceptions of immigration as they cast their shadow over the human challenges and consequences of migration. With such a mass of information within our reach, what we remember and what we forget, especially the role played by memory in the configuration of individual and collective identities, we have a rich field for exploration. The deletion, the uses and misuses of memories that excluded, revised or reinforced narratives once accepted as dominant and usually opposing those affected, is the subject of the temporary flagship project *Sankt Pölten Museum for European Integration*.

- Hub Mirage 2024
- Stop The Sankt Pölten Museum for European Integration
- Stop Food Connection
- Stop A SHIP WILL COME
- Stop Eurotour

### Sense of Undiscovered Place

The Cultural District hard by the provincial office of the state of Lower Austria is – to say the least – very different from the rest of the city and quite literally has to be seen to be believed. Our approach here is to look with minds set firmly to “cultural” and “creative” for some kind of inner coherence with the wider city by searching out the meaning buried in many abandoned spaces in its streets and squares. Using such artistic and cultural methods we can arrive at a freedom of interpretation and generate an acceptance that leads us to discover a deeper experience of the city as a whole. On the way we take along experiences from other midsize cities that have undergone their own transformation from industrial and workers’ cities towards service cities. We invite our own citizens and the many visitors to the city to revise, refocus and renew their sense of the place where they live or which they visit.

- Hub Cultural District
- Stop Transformation Festival
- Stop The secret worlds of the cathedral and monastery
- Stop The Wheel of Delight
- Stop I’ve got something to tell you
- Stop Critical Chance



Elaborate on the scope and quality of the activities: ▶ Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships. ▶ Name some European and international artists, operators and cities with which cooperation is envisaged and specify the type of exchanges in question. Name the transnational partnerships your city has already established or plans to establish.

Our approach is that the cultural producers and creative activists – local and European in a curated relationship – look beyond their borders and learn from each other as they co-produce, co-create, co-construct. Our strategy therefore is to learn by doing – right from the start through artistic pilot projects – and through close collaboration with European partners and our ECoC network. Without European artists, agents, operators and their transnational partnerships the ongoing process of development of the cultural programme would clearly fail. In the end, their artistic inspiration and energy makes our cultural activities relevant and fascinating for European communities and citizens and provide an enduring legacy for all.

#### How do we learn in practise?

Several international gatherings are being hosted in the preparation period:

▶ We are going to start this process in the **Cultural Change Campus** with our local cultural players and European experts aiming to give change a place in St. Pölten. From 2021 onwards this process will get its inspiration, feedback and visions through the **Cultural Change Summer Camp**, at which we will be gathering around 20 young European artists and scientists alternately in Schloss Grafenegg and in St. Pölten. They will develop and present their own perspectives on our European interfaces, which will provide us with the framework of an exciting programme for 2024 in the project *Who needs Europe?*. During this annual camp European artists from our programme will set up ateliers and monitor what comes out of them. During 2023/2023 some local artists will be asked to join in producing pilot schemes.

▶ In these **debates, ateliers and pilots** we focus on our six European themes (▶ p 58/59) to develop new perspectives and to change direction with the aim of creating something new and vibrant. We will be working together with people from regions and countries where we can take stock of the fundamental questions relating to European unification: Catalonia, Corsica, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Basque Country, Istria, Flanders, Upper Silesia, South Tyrol on independence, Greece, the Netherlands and Germany on the euro crisis, Great Britain and Ireland on Brexit, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Serbia, Greece, Romania and Austria on the question of EU enlargement, Tunisia and Morocco with regard to flight routes across the Mediterranean.

▶ Last April St. Pölten hosted a two days conference for the **Cooperation Network of European Mid-Sized Cities** that has 34 member cities from 13 European countries with the stated aim of generating cooperation initiatives where culture will be instrumental in finding solutions to crucial issues in our societies. Heidenheim (GER) is picking up the baton in the following year with a conference on progress and new initiatives. In 2023/2024 we aim to organise an international conference in St. Pölten on cultural education aimed especially for children in mid-sized cities.

All of these activities and international gatherings will create transnational partnerships and so constitute and contribute to our movement of mid-sized cities in Europe.

#### International artists

Mariano Pensotti (ARG), Thomas Bellinck (BEL), Lora Shopova (BGR), Ivan Shopov (BGR), Kateřina Šedá (CZE), Milan Cais (CZE), Křištof Kintera (CZE), Jakob Nepraš (CZE), Rebecca Horn (D), SIGNA (DNK), Carlos Perez (ESP), Kashink (FRA), Philippe Quesne (FRA), Jon Burgerman (GBR), Fabric Lenny (GBR), Merle Kröger (GER), Stefan Kaegi (GER), Mitrozone & Jochen Becker (GER), Sofia Cordoba (ITA), Matthew Watkins (ITA), Millo (ITA), Ingri Fiksdal (NOR), Jacek Zydzorowicz (POL), Ana Kun (RUM), Magdalena Chowanec (RUS), Ira Melkonyan (UKR)

All international partners are in chapter 2. Here is a representative selection:

Estonian National Museum Tartu (EST), Lettres d'Europe et d'ailleurs Paris (FRA) A Festival of Creative Urban Living (GBR), Schauspiel Leipzig (GER), KoresponDance (CZE), WRO Art Center (POL), Monstra Festival (PRT), Ambasada Timișoara (RUM), Meeting Brno (SVK), ATÖLYE – Creative Hub (TUR)

Can you explain in detail your strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?

#europe@home  
#rescalingdistances  
#mobility  
#childrenartlab  
#abandonedplaces  
#migration  
#changedirection  
#yourstory

All of Europe's St. Pöltens put together house a greater number of inhabitants than the continent's great metropolises. In such cities, distances are shorter, relationships more personal, development processes more flexible and the urban pulse rate less hectic. Speeding down creates greater awareness and enhances personal interaction. This is where we come in. We want to spread discussion stimuli using digital and analogue communication channels to provoke reactions, diverging opinions, ideas and emotions from our potential visitors by allowing them to participate in the transformation of St. Pölten in real time. In this way, St. Pölten is transformed into a screen where an interested audience – from citizen to mayor – can project models of European co-existence: What do we mean by Europe at Home? What does being at home mean in Portugal, what does it mean in Poland? How do the two differ? And when all is said and done, aren't we all St. Pöltners at heart?

Based on targeted invitations and bilateral visits involving our European partners in programme development we will build the foundations of a communications network in cyberspace step by step, which will ultimately give us access to the broadest of publics. Our *MAIN STATION #Europe@home* is fitted with a digital platform connecting us emission free and in real time with the whole of Europe; it features a superimposed virtual skyscraper with digital conference rooms, exhibition spaces, stages and labs. This quite literally puts it at the fingertips of every European willing and able to contribute in real time from their own home to the design of the *Virtual European Capital of Culture* and to become a temporary visitor or even a resident of St. Pölten 2024.

We will initiate public debates using digital and analogue channels on issues related to our six European themes.

Developing and implementing our programme will allow us to make our ideas relevant at a personal level and at the same time on a macro level, the potentially huge network of European mid-sized cities. St. Pölten 2024 is determined to involve all active participants and all visitors in a new, personalised relationship with the great challenges of our time, which are only too often seen in abstract terms: what does climate change really mean for each and every one of us? How will the polarisation of our societies and the continuing erosion of solidarity affect our daily lives? What impact will Artificial Intelligence really have? Let's pool our resources in the vibrant lab of St. Pölten and get to work on our #europe@home of the future!

Two projects exemplify where a change of perspectives in future housing and neo-ecology could lead to:

▶ The Alpenland building society will be building up to 300 innovative residential units as part of its model building project "Leben morgen" by 2024 – not least so it can offer accommodation for visitors and artists. A temporary pavillion located in the inner-city project area will open in 2020 as a neutral communication site where ideas for sustainable modes of housing will be discussed, with input from European architectural experts.

▶ Starting in 2020, we will be installing a think tank devoted to the development of a European and/or globally networked test model for ecological utopias as part of the *Hub SONNENPARK/LAMES*, whose sociopolitical, scientific and artistic results will be presented to the public in 2024.

#### What will you do tomorrow in next space?

In 2024, St. Pölten will be at the centre of an impressive ECoC process exploring great European level challenges in the cosy intimacy of a medium-sized city, putting its artistic weight behind the impetus for sustainable urban renewal. #changedirection will then go beyond conceptual status and become instead a living reality for every holidaymaker in Vienna or the Wachau, for those who pass St. Pölten by car or by train and even those who had never before known there was a city called St. Pölten.

We must re-evaluate distances, create personal and content-related closeness and change direction in essential matters: from the *MAIN STATION #Europe@home* along the three *Tracks* to the central exhibition, providing access to the terminals *YOU*, *TOMORROW* and *NEXT SPACE*: visitors are in for an exciting, inspiring and mind-blowing trip across Europe.



Describe the links developed or to be developed between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title.

In the coming years, we will use visits, invitations and direct exchange, especially in the areas of capacity building, volunteering and outreach to learn as much as we can about the preparation and implementation of the cultural programme from the experiences of what will by then be the former ECoCs of 2020–2023 and especially other ECoCs in a 300 kilometre reach. Most of this will depend on the chemistry uniting the teams and operators working in these cities.

For direct cooperation in the cultural programme itself, our focus is on our partner ECoCs 2024. We have developed a clear plan for this with a budget of approximately 250,000 Euro. With these ECoCs we will propose the following procedure. After two field research visits in 2020 and 2021 we establish concrete joint actions in the field of the artistic programme, cultural education and capacity building with each city. Within our artistic programme cooperation we will organise workshops on our six European themes in order to prepare concrete joint action contracts throughout our artistic programme. These workshops will provide the liberty to draw other more unexpected partners into the mix to generate ideas or combine proposals and test them through pilot projects financed by the <CulturalChangeCampus> fund.

In the past six months we have had at direct exchanges with all selected ECoCs and all candidates for 2024 as well as with four candidates for 2025. We expect some of the contacts with candidates will last, regardless of the outcome of the competition.

#### Examples of joint action agreements:

##### ECoCs 2020

- **Rijeka:** Art and culture education with the Children's House in Rijeka  
*Children.Art.Lab*
- **Galway:** in the field of capacity building, with particular regard to European networking and funding opportunities  
<CulturalChangeCampus>

##### ECoCs 2021

- **Timișoara:** Our cooperation is especially based around Community Building through our partner institution Ambasada; Andreea Iager-Tako held a workshop for the local scene within the symposium REALRAUM SONNENPARK/LAMES
- **Novi Sad:** We will take part in projects like "International Gastronomic Conference", "Art of Migration in Art", "Synagogue – The Meeting Point"  
*Castle Viehofen* and *Former Synagogue*
- **Eleusis:** Exchange with local artists on current questions of European integration; cooperation on the project "Art@work" under the theme "EU Working Classes"  
*Who needs Europe?* and *Different Work, different Class*

##### ECoCs 2022

- **Kaunas:** Cooperation with the "Tempo Academy" and on cultural education with children  
<CulturalChangeCampus> and *Children.Art.Lab*. Together with *Esch* we are taking part in the "No Border Radio" project. There is further cooperation concerning the virtual and augmented reality of digital and real spaces in our universities  
*MAIN STATION Europe at Home*

##### ECoC 2023

- **Veszprém:** Cooperation between the "International Festival of Religious Music" and "Musica Sacra" in St. Pölten and in the preparation of many gastronomic projects, especially in the context of organic food highlighted in  
*Where Does Your Food Come From?*

##### ECoCs 2024

- Our theatre project *A Great European Story* connects all ECoC 2024 partners. A series of pieces on daily life in Europe are created individually in different ECoCs, and are then performed individually in each city in 2024. Tartu and Bodø have agreed. Due to warm connections with our Bosnian communities we hope Mostar and Banja Luka will be staying on board.
- **Tartu:** The contemporary music festival Sound of Souls in Tartu joins our innovative approach in the project Organ- Meets Electronic Music held in St. Pölten Cathedral. Our project *Where Does Your Food Come From?* and Tartu's *Growing With Your Food* jointly teach kindergarten children and older youngsters on how to follow food from local fields and gardens to their table and mouths.
- **Bodø:** We have agreed to cooperate on *Organ meets Electronic Music*, *Where Does Your Food Come From?*, *Children.Art.Lab* and on an outdoor project on mountain cabins as European cabins of culture.

##### ECoC 2024 in Austria

What puts us into the same boat with our colleagues in Bad Ischl and Dornbirn is not only the challenges that go hand in hand with a bid for European Capital of Culture but a clear and unequivocal commitment to Europe. In view of what we have in common, an agreement has been struck up to jointly develop European projects in the fields of art and culture, regardless of which Austrian city carries off the title.

Explain in detail how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year.

## People are the engine driving St. Pölten 2024

From the very outset the motor driving St. Pölten's bid for ECoC 2024 was the creative initiative of the city's civil society. It has been quite a dazzling process – but soulful. Roughly four years ago, a handful of people deeply committed to the city's and the region's artistic and cultural life banded together to promote that bid: adopting the association format, they used the dedicated platform KulturhauptSTART to set up a network involving the greatest possible number of players and communities. By the time the bid was formally announced by the political decision makers in September 2017 in the presence of 350 committed citizens, civil society had already given its first demonstration of its creative potential being united around culture. We as the Office St. Pölten 2024 are the instrument for civil society in this process of self-organisation and empowerment of residents – and continue to do so!



#### Aspiration (until 2019)

##### Pre-selection phase:

Spreading information, getting organised, identifying needs and wishes, forming networks, analysing stakeholders, surveying the actual state, testing needs for new capacities

We identified persons in leading positions in existing networks and lobbies to win them for the idea of ECoC. In the city and beyond we established contacts to various people in educational institutions (universities, schools, Departments of Education), social institutions (Diversity Office St. Pölten, Youth Centre), the local and regional art scene, cultural institutions and in tourism and economy (Plattform St. Pölten 2020).

##### How did we do this?

- First we sought to measure the city's social and cultural potential in detail. We conducted more than 250 personal talks, often lasting for several hours, with multipliers active in a broad range of different fields.
- Supported by different hosts, we used large-scale public dialogue formats to establish connection with the city's residents and listen to them. These dialogues were set in venues such as a spacious "culture tanker", an abandoned industrial productions facility and a vacant shopping mall.
- In specially convened Round Tables we debated views, disagreements and ideas on social issues with representatives and experts of cultural life, the sciences and of business.
- We organised technical interdisciplinary groups to develop long-term strategies (Guidelines for Public Space, cultural strategy "St. Pölten 2030" and the development of the Cathedral Square, the Children.Art.Lab and the Former Synagogue)
- To make a maximum number of people aware of ECoC, we mailed each of our 3 Culture Journals to 35,000 households and engaged in close collaboration with the local media.





### Selection Phase:

#### Creating and drafting the programme, carrying out and testing pre-projects, including people and making them feel welcome

Our strategy of providing the involvement of the civic society with the broadest possible basis is realised in concentric circles. The innermost circle is made up of highly motivated cultural workers and culture aficionados, who do not need any prompting to take an interest in the cultural scene and in public life. They are joined in a second circle by those whose interest in cultural life is more selective and thematic. Finally we are planning to inspire and embrace in a third circle sectors of the population that have, for financial, digital or social reasons, been excluded from – or have to date not sought to gain access to – cultural life.

On our way from the innermost circle to the periphery we have succeeded, with the help of key workers, in establishing relationships with a number of communities of St. Pölten and the Culture Region. Key workers are committed persons who become multipliers in their social and professional environment. SONNENPARK, LAMES and KulturhauptSTART have given us access to the local scene and artists, the Lower Austrian Department of Education to schools. St. Pölten's University of Applied Sciences and the New Design University puts us in touch with the student community and the Plattform St. Pölten 2020 with the business community.

These collaborations made it possible to work with dedicated partners to realise pre-projects. Through these concrete activities with children, adolescents, the local scene, teachers, students, business people and people with a migration background we learned and deepened our connections. To quote only a few examples: *Coming Closer* brought a play to the Social Pediatric Centre for Children and Young People to give disabled children

cultural experiences in their familiar places and lead to programme parts. *GLANZ.STÜCKE* cast light on the topics "environment" and "sharing" for preschool children and primary schoolchildren that is multiplied in the hub SONNENPARK/LAMES. And in the *Summer Schools* of the New Design University students developed their approaches to public space in two rounds and made a first start looking for new meanings of abandoned places in the city.

Together with local associations we organised the symposium *REALRAUM – Knowledge transfer and networking for cultural workers*. Topics such as crowdfunding, audience development and the roles played by the local scene in ECoCs exercised national and European experts in 15 workshops and debates. In tandem with KulturhauptSTART we used the *Grätzellabor* to foster active involvement with formats such as the temporary living room *Salon 24*, takeover formats or barrier-free consultation-hours for residents. The Centre for Migration Research helped us to experiment and organise together guided tours of the city designed to sensitize participants to the stories migrants have to tell and to places within St. Pölten that have been shaped by migration. In the *Zukunftswerkstatt*, students from the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences discussed their city with a wide variety of citizens.

We invited four target groups to engage in brainstorming for ideas relevant to St. Pölten 2024: schools, cultural institutions, the local scene, private individuals and businesses. The *Open Calls* were accompanied by inform-and-build evenings involving the artistic project team and a writing workshop overseen by KulturhauptSTART. Many of the ideas have been integrated into the programme as *Stops*. However, all projects which are not in the Bid Book II still have the chance of being realised.

### Preparation & Invitation Phase (2020–2023) and Articulation (2024): Mere contact or true connection?

We look forward to deepening the relationships we have developed. Of great importance to us is the cooperation with social and educational institutions and with key workers. A catalogue listing tools, further-training and networking measures is ready to be used in our <CulturalChangeCampus>. There our key workers are further motivated, inspired and their listening-skills are stimulated.

Our programme is designed in such a way that as many people as possible are invited to have the opportunity to participate in St. Pölten 2024: as co-producers, co-organisers or co-creators. An intention that is made especially explicit in the track *Come Closer*. The *Stop Reframing Heimat* sees residents of our city and the Cultural Region St. Pölten paying their native countries a visit; new arrivals will invite ensembles from their regions of origin into the *European Livingroom*, and the *STATT-Orchester* transforms people without musical expertise into orchestra musicians with the help of their passion for listening.

Involving the civic society requires a precise analysis of the composition of many different communities. Personal encounters are indispensable, as are consequent decision-making processes and precise monitoring and evaluation: insights into the role of audiences as co-creators gained in impact circles are continuously fed into the development process of the cultural programme 2024.

### Our numbers

- ▶ At least 5,000 people contribute actively to St. Pölten 2024 – from stewarding to helping to evaluate projects, from co-creators to co-organisers.
- ▶ The diversity of the population is reflected in all our audience and in our programmes.
- ▶ For all dialogue and target groups there will be suitable formats, offers and invitations. Engaging with the programme of St. Pölten 2024 is the medium by which they get to know each other better, kindling the wish to accept responsibility for each other.
- ▶ Every child in St. Pölten and the Culture Region will be taking part in at least one of the Children.Art.Lab's activities.
- ▶ Everyone of the 250.000 inhabitants of St. Pölten and the Culture Region is set to have at least one active encounter with the ECoC.
- ▶ We expect at least 2 million visits.



### Continuation Phase (from 2025)

The legacy of the engagement and participation process is close to our hearts. We expect it to develop our capacity to reflect and listen to people and opinions that are often ignored. What is essential is that we keep working consistently on sensitive topics. It brings together neighbourhoods, Europeans and communities and therewith implements our cultural strategy. Essential is to keep finger on the pulse in a transparent and open manner and we will continue to do so.

### In concrete terms this means that in 2026:

- ▶ The community of key workers is stronger than ever and in the process of expanding to other areas of the main infrastructure of the city.
- ▶ The <CulturalChangeCampus> is a permanent institution ensuring that St. Pölten is an active urban society marked by lifelong learning and open access to better qualifications.
- ▶ Citizens are actively involved in the evaluation of the cultural strategy. A wide understanding of culture is general throughout our society.
- ▶ St. Pölten is a place of balanced distances – between artistic and cultural genres, large and small associations, between young and old, between even the most diverse communities and above all between our own locality and wider Europe.
- ▶ Art and culture are for everyone, both in their content and in their location.
- ▶ The Children.Art.Lab is established as a hospitable, open and inclusive space where everything is possible. It has an international network.



How will the title create in your city new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people, volunteers and the marginalised and disadvantaged, including minorities? Please also elaborate on the accessibility of these activities to persons with disabilities and the elderly. Specify the relevant parts of the programme planned for these various groups. Explain in detail your strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

## Forget groups – work with people

Despite all efforts – what we have not yet succeeded in achieving is a full reflection of the diversity of St. Pölten's society. How will we reach those who are not yet aware of us? Fathers on parental leave, the withdrawn lady in the wheelchair, the busy 35-year-old living in the digital world, the elderly married couple with lots of time on their hands, the young skateboarders? Our strategy: We approach them with the help of key workers and with an honest and sympathetic interest in their lives. In this way we will win new visitors and, even more importantly, we take another step in the direction of engaging an emancipated urban society in cultural coproduction. The removal of architectural, physical, financial and geographical barriers is a goal we are looking to achieve as soon as possible.

It is social barriers more than any others that prevent people from participating in cultural life. It is here where the gaps that we have to overcome are the deepest. And with all due respect for the theory of target groups, what is at least equally relevant for St. Pölten 2024 – and for many other mid-sized cities – is: FORGET GROUPS – WORK WITH PEOPLE! Each and every human being is unique. All of us have our own needs and all of us make our contributions to cultural life in our own different ways. There is no such thing as the prototypical wheelchair user, the refugee, the transgender person. People with special needs are to be found in roughly equal proportions in the group of highly motivated culture vultures and in the group of non-visitors who do not – yet! – know that the programme is just as relevant to them.

### Come and participate “as you are”

Whether full-time employed, volunteers, marginalised groups, people with special needs or senior citizens: in each phase of the conception and the programming of ECoC year we keep an eye on what makes our potential co-creators special. In our mix of measures and offers we do not forget anyone. We look to understand and respect just what is of interest and just how much time and engagement will be available for each as we design our various invitations to participate. The pilot projects we have done so far have already given us some idea what programmes will attract the attention of specific groups and who are the key persons we need to bring in to win the trust of all communities. From an innermost circle of highly motivated visitors we will work our way step by step to the outermost circle of those who have so far been largely excluded from cultural life.

**Mrs Berger**, 66, a retired grammar-school teacher resident in St. Pölten, is active in all matters to do with culture. Since her retirement she has all the time in the world for concerts, the cinema and her Landestheater NÖ subscription. She is a member of a far-flung social network and it is a foregone conclusion that she always knows exactly what is going on.

### 1. We are a go-to destination for lovers of high culture

#### WHAT WE PROPOSE TO DO

We shrink the – fortunately already short – distance to the cultural scene even more by inviting people like Mrs Berger to artist talks at GLANZSTOFF in the company of the Artistic Director, offering them guided backstage tours and the opportunity to gatecrash rehearsals. We will step up our marketing and communication activities to provide additional analogue and digital information specifically targeted to this group of visitors.

**Mr Mayer**, 33, singer-songwriter and organiser of music events, has a mission: he wants to stimulate the local music scene in St. Pölten and the Culture Region, regardless of the age of the musicians. In his view, there is an acute shortage of workshops for young musicians. He is determined to make a difference.

### 2A. We recruit key workers

#### WHAT WE PROPOSE TO DO

We will place ads in newspapers and on the internet to recruit honorary key workers and we will be using personal contacts for that purpose. Their contribution is extremely valuable: key workers open doors, put their contacts from their present or past professional lives at our disposal and motivate communities we might not otherwise have drawn in to participate in St. Pölten 2024.

### 2B. We empower key workers

#### WHAT WE PROPOSE TO DO

Rather than just being left to their own devices key workers can count on substantial support. Committed residents are welcome to take part in workshops on key work, where we share information on the content of St. Pölten 2024 with them. We will use the <CulturalChangeCampus> to organise regular meetings with a view to establishing networks and realising new ideas, f.e. the development of a system to facilitate access to art and cultural events: people who are unable to participate in public life due to special circumstances are literally taken by the hand to take the first step together. We will be offering coaching and specific trainings on important topics. Our Education & Outreach Manager is available for help and advice. Key workers will be given an official St. Pölten 2024 pass to strengthen their authority and their group identity.

**Mr Jovanovic**, 50, born in Serbia, was 20 when he came to Austria. For several decades he held down a job at the GLANZSTOFF factory in St. Pölten. When the factory closed down, he switched to driving a taxi. Contacts to the local cultural life? Practically non-existent.

### 4. We are getting through to communities that have so far taken no part in cultural life or have felt themselves to be excluded from it

#### WHAT WE PROPOSE TO DO

#### Pointedly including “non-cultural” offers in various areas of public life

- Employers rent staff to specific artistic and cultural projects as *Helping Hands*. As extras or producers they get to know new cultural areas. (Brigitte Fuchsbauer)
- Our *ambassador programme* accompanies those people who in their everyday working lives are the first to come into contact with visitors to St. Pölten: taxi drivers, shop assistants and hotel staff.

#### Getting people to become an audience by surprise, say, in public space

- The *Wheel of Delight* installs interactive artworks in public space that can be operated by muscular force. (p 48)
- In *Hub Route 24*, entire streets are given an artistic makeover and this will provoke shifts of perception in people who only wanted to do a bit of shopping. (p 46)

#### Showing interest in people's lifeworlds

- The *St. Pölten of Migrants*: What do we know about migration? What sites and spaces associated with migration can be found in the city? With the Digital Story Telling tool we enable people to tell concise stories. Reframed in a multimedia format, they will either be made available on the internet in 2024 or presented in suitable locations in analogue form. (Zentrum für Migrationsforschung)
- The *Grätzellabor* seeks to strengthen the identification of different communities with their neighbourhoods. To this end it organises creative dialogues in workshops and other mutual exchange formats. (p 35)
- The cross-generational *Spielmobil* is on its way to nursing homes, schools, parks and social institutions for a reason: it wants to peek behind the scenes at the lives of marginal groups. The tool it uses for the purpose is the rental of indoor and outdoor games and “TalentScouting”, a format that allows people to show off their talents. (G. Kulhanek, J. Diendorfer, M. Lesnik, G. Pöck, A. Bernhard)
- Coming Closer* first and foremost brings cultural formats to familiar places where marginalized groups can experience a (possibly first) cultural experience together with familiar persons. (KulturhauptSTART)

#### About: Children

- In the all-new *Children.Art.Lab* we establish a close contact between the youngest members of our society, contemporary art and culture and European artists. It will reach beyond its walls with a number of extramural activities. (p 69)

**Manuela**, 17, a student from Wilhelmsburg, is passionate about sports. Her interest in culture is limited: though he likes music and never misses a Frequency festival. About the Cultural District St. Pölten she knows only one thing: it's a great place for skateboarding.

### 3. We reach communities whose participation in cultural life is selective

#### WHAT WE PROPOSE TO DO

#### Offers for special interests

- In the *Visionale* younger communities and artists deal with future-oriented European themes such as environmental issues. Means of transport: street art, music or rap. (p 34)
- DIY is the flavour of the year: *Repair Cafés* provide help to people keen on repairing their own stuff, Fab Labs introduce their visitors to the world of modern production techniques. (Gesa St. Pölten, Hackerspace St. Pölten, Repanet Austria)
- We want to use the *Queerschnitt* Film Festival to sensitise also a broader audience to queer lifestyles. Well known directors from all over Europe will demonstrate this theme in all its diversity. (p 32)

#### Digital offers

- The *Virtual European Capital of Culture* is a virtual venue in its own right with a great number of formats, such as hackathons, symposia and exhibitions. (p 23)

#### Co-Creation offers

- Glanzgänger\*in 2024*: Assisted by artists from all over the world, students, farmers, workers, refugees and commuters will create miniature music and dance pieces. (p 33)
- Inhabitants of St. Pölten who have either come to the city to take refuge there or have been expelled from it are offered a role as co-curators at the *Sankt Pölten Museum for European Integration*. (p 26)

#### Programmes in unusual or underused venues

- The closed down *GLANZSTOFF* factory serves as the venue for the main exhibition. (p 25) Anyone who has ever been inside the factory will be keen to revisit it.
- The *Parking Decks of the Senses* provide visual, audio-visual and olfactory guided tours across locations normally reserved to those in search of a parking space. (Project submitted by Albin Wegerbauer)

#### “Culture plus...”

- Family-run farms are ideal places to experience what is so special about the region's countryside. Herb pedagogues, nature and landscape educationists and gardeners step up to their roles as *ambassadors of the region*. (Lower Austrian Chamber of Agriculture)
- The *Culture Cycling Path* from St. Pölten to the Culture Region takes in world sights, public art, architecture and culinary recommendations all served up by a cycle path map and corresponding app.



## Architectural, physical, financial and geographical barriers

We have identified a number of barriers in the run-up to St. Pölten 2024 to tear them down so that our projects are within easy reach of a broader audience. This is our first logical step on the path of diversity: no barriers.

Financial obstacles are tackled jointly with the “Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur” initiative founded in 2003. People on a low income have free admission to cultural institutions. A large portion of our programme will be freely accessible. The *Virtual European Capital of Culture* networks all those who are stopped by geographical barriers from joining us in person: St. Pölten 2024 spreads its digital wings and creates a great mix of narratives that include as many experiences, ideas, languages and artefacts in Europe as possible in real time. There are also projects moving through the city and the region, such as the *Tractor Trailer Cinema* and the *AIR-Train* of the *Hub Mirage 24*. We overcome linguistic barriers by publishing vital information in different languages as well as in Braille and tactile alphabet and with the help of sign language interpreters and Easy Reading texts. Physical barriers are likewise removed, for instance in the adaptation of the *Festspielhaus St. Pölten*, or they will pointedly be avoided as in the planning of the *Children. Art. Lab*. We take care of children within the framework of cultural mediation programmes. In 2024 there will be a children’s programme 365 days a year.

Culture-minded persons with mobility issues are invited during the conception phase to help us identify physical barriers. As *Barrier Checkers* they will point out hazards to us, allowing us sufficient time for their removal. The *<CulturalChangeCampus>* is designed to sensitise people to the topic and result in the realisation of inclusive formats. Some dialogue groups are supported by monitoring programmes in which key workers will play a role.

### Local Partners

TMS Tourism School, WIFI St. Pölten, primary schools Otto Glöckel and Daniel Gran I., BRG/BORG St. Pölten (6th form college), Bundes-Bildungsanstalt für Sozialpädagogik, Business School St. Pölten, Integratives Montessori Atelier, ASO St. Pölten-Nord/ASO St. Pölten Mitte, Schulzentrum Mary Ward St. Pölten, Neuen Mittelschule Viehofen, School of music and arts St. Pölten, New Design University, University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten with the Social Department, Ilse Arlt Institute for Social Inclusion Research and the Institute for Media & Digitale Technologies, Bertha von Suttner Privat University, Center for Migration Research (ZMF), Associations SONNENPARK and LAMES

### National Partners

Technical University Wien, ORTE Architekturnetzwerk NÖ, Alpenland, Management of the Lower Austrian Schools of Music, Lower Austrian Institute of Education, Lower Austria’s Director of Education, Danube University Krems

## ART AND CULTURE ENRICH THE DAY-TO-DAY EXPERIENCE OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

Schools, more than any other institutions, are faithful mirrors of our society, they are meeting places for youngsters with widely different social and cultural backgrounds. In this microcosmos, we want to promote the haunting role played by art and culture in the day-to-day experience of the young generation. Through key people and our Open Call, we have already begun to actively collaborate with schools and universities.

How do we work and live in Europe’s mid-sized cities in the future? Along our six European focal points (► p 58) we will develop specific co-creative processes for and with pupils and students. We want to press the reset button for our youngest citizens to redefine the relationship between themselves and their city, its cultures, its other residents of whatever age and, last but not least, their approach to art and artists. We will create programme and education offers targeted at all age groups, in public space, in schools and educational institutions, in museums and theatres, in libraries and in our exciting new venues. In collaboration with the Lower Austrian Institute of Education and the Lower Austria’s Director of Education we will involve educators both as lecturers and as participants in the Children.Art.Lab and the *<CulturalChangeCampus>*.

### Selected projects:

- As part of the free Aktion *Landeshauptstadt*, some 23,000 pupils from all over Lower Austria visit St. Pölten every year. Exploring a 2.4 km long stretch qualifies the children as “*promenadologists*” and prepares them for a joint expedition of discovery across the city.
- In 2024, students of the BRG/BORG St. Pölten will take on the roles of cultural event organisers, singers, actors and dramaturges. They will create a *musical* and perform it at the Cathedral Square.
- In addition to Holocaust themed events, the cultural outreach programme put on by the *Former Synagogue* will create a lively interaction zone to foster a positive perspective on Jewish culture. (► p 39)
- At the SONNENPARK, a *Climate Research Lab* will be set up focused on the topics of climate and energy. It will feature a modular outreach programme for schools and the interested public. (► p 28)
- *Other innovative school and university programmes*, that reached us via the call in the fields of social inclusion, community building, gastronomy, the aesthetic education of children with special needs and projects related to “Discover Peace in Europe” will be developed in collaboration with the applicants.

What will undoubtedly be a highlight is the construction of a unique centre for the interaction between young people, contemporary art and European artists. This will be *the* go-to place for children, families and educational institutions: the Children.Art.Lab.



## The Children.Art.Lab – “Education through art” rather than “education for art”

The dangers that are testing our environment to the limit and ever widening social faultlines in our societies are a significant part of the burden we are laying upon succeeding generations. To empower the next generation to stand up to the challenge this will bring, we must, at the very least, help them acquire some necessary skills. How? By bringing them together with high-quality contemporary art and the most fascinating European artists. This is why we are creating a new institution, the Children.Art.Lab.

The Children.Art.Lab will be unique in Europe in that it is developed from within arts for the long-term enlargement and enrichment of a rapidly changing education landscape. While many schools are simply trying to serve the demands of our performance-oriented society, the Children.Art.Lab will be looking to foster all the creative, empathetic, social and manually skilful aspects of life in a civic community. What we are seeking to achieve in the newly conceived Children.Art.Lab in collaboration with outstanding local and international artists is to attract the youngest members of our society from literally all walks of life. By inspiring and thrilling them with art, children will acquire the skills that take their fancy.

The Children.Art.Lab is a venue where children, art and artists come together, in spite – or because – of their different social, cultural and artistic background. Children from other ECoCs, on a visit to St. Pölten – perhaps as part of a summer camp – will bring their own different perspectives into play. The Children.Art.Lab’s

off-site activities will allow children outside the institution to get to know it. We aim to facilitate inspiring and formative encounters with art that will introduce children to new and diverse experiences of the world.

Following the motto “Create Your Own Future City”, children are encouraged to accept responsibility for co-existence and for their own future living environment. An immersion in contemporary art and careful sensitisation to language and what we do with it will facilitate inclusion, itself indispensable to community formation.

The *Children’s Advisory Board* oversees all in house decisions concerning content, programme, architecture and design. This advisory board went on stream in autumn 2019 and reflects St. Pölten’s social diversity in its composition.

The Children.Art.Lab networks at the local, regional and European level: with kindergartens, schools and many other institutions drawn from the fields of art and culture, social affairs, diversity management and the sciences. Its goal is large-scale content-related collaborations and joint quality assurance measures. There will be a standing offer of further-training programmes, methodological discussions and best-practice dialogues – all linked to our *<CulturalChangeCampus>*. The Children.Art.Lab will seek to establish itself as a competence and counselling centre for children’s art-and-culture education programmes. In addition, it will serve as a network and information platform for top-quality educational programmes for children in St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten.



## <CulturalChangeCampus>

### Our city is a campus:

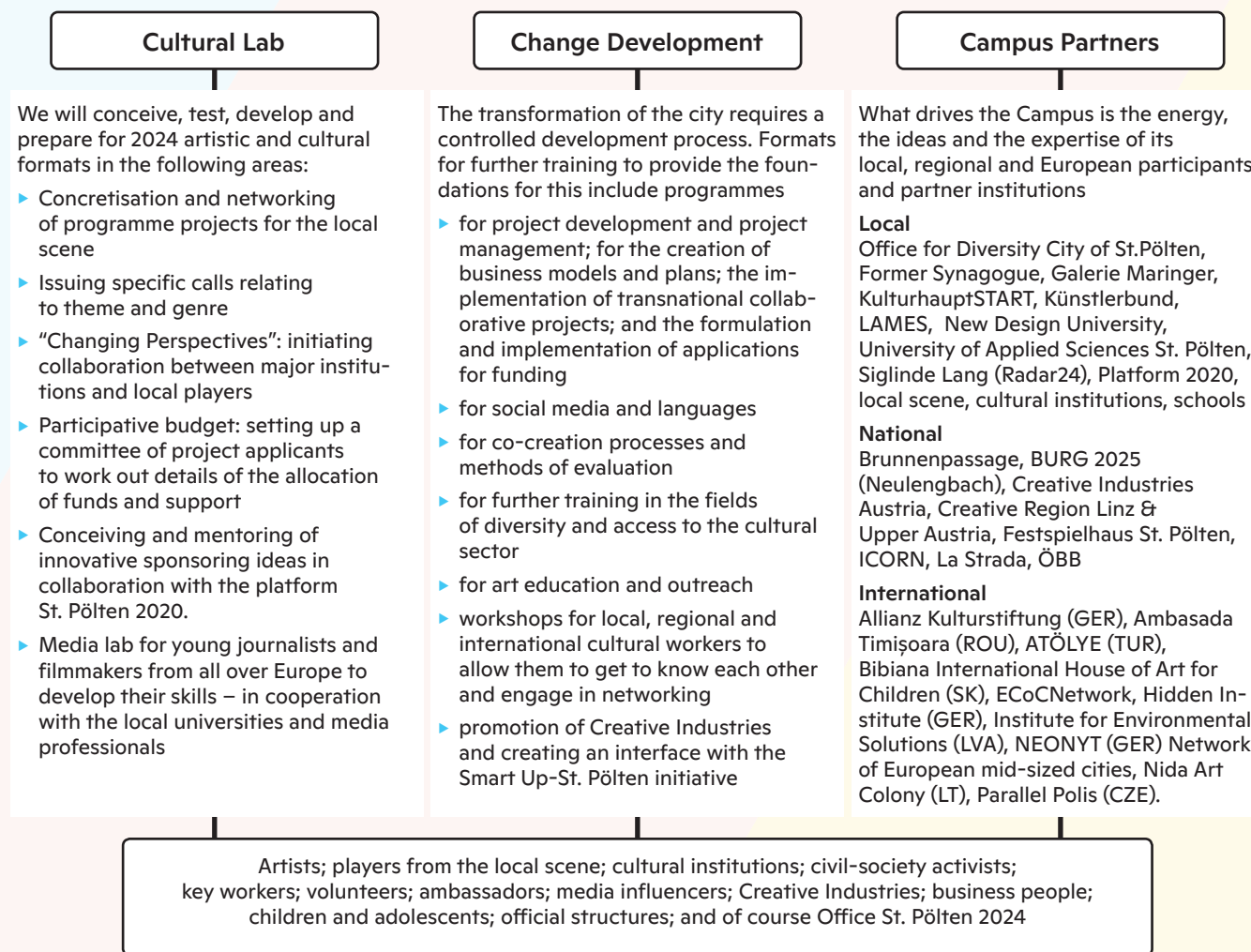
#### How we grow on our Capacity Building Platform

We want “to give change a place”. The <CulturalChangeCampus> is of key importance to the implementation of European Capital of Culture 2024. It will empower all those who want to play an active role to leave well-trodden paths, see things from a new angle and adopt new roles. The civil society energy should transform itself to such an extent that it drives the trains on our programme tracks and thus represents an important role in the further development of the programme and the city. As part of the continued training of our civil society, of “cultural creators” and of marginalised groups, we will forge our content hand in hand. The legacy left by St. Pölten 2024 will be there for all to see both in the city and the Culture Region. But before we reach that stage, the <CulturalChangeCampus> will be our preferred venue for bringing our own cultural profile into sharp focus, highlighting the exceptional creative status demanded by a European Capital of Culture.

The collaborative ventures we have already initiated with schools, universities, associations, institutions and the artistic and business communities have demonstrated just how powerful a tool

like our Campus format is. Conceived as a wanderer, it stops off in places such as St. Pölten’s Festival Hall, the Volksheim Viehofen, in vacant business premises, cantines and other venues patronised by our audiences. Together we will be testing innovative projects, conceiving new initiatives, seeking advice from European experts and building networks. The emphasis is quite clearly on “learning by doing” in the context provided by experimental pilot projects, dedicated preparatory projects and the involvement of all those who want to play an active role in St. Pölten 2024.

Endowed with one tenth of the programme budget (2.5 million euros), the Campus will go on stream in successive stages during the second half of 2020. It will start by setting up and expanding European networks, using such methods as cooperation and information exchange, assessing demands of the local scene, the concretisation of projects already submitted and the conception of test projects. Campus activities will come to a head once in 2023 with the final preparations for ECoC year and then again in 2025, with programmatic reflections on that remarkable year and the translation of its legacy into “transformed normalcy”.



### Operating budget for the title year, Income to cover operating expenditure:

Please confirm or update the budget figures using the tables below.

Explain any differences with regards to pre-selection

The City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria have voted unanimously to approve both the operational programme budget, amounting to a total of EUR 60 million, and the “cultural infrastructure list”, totalling EUR 36 million. Funding for both these budgets is thereby assured, and an application for the relevant federal contributions has been submitted.

#### Total operating budget (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside to cover operational expenditure)

Total income to cover operating expenditure in EUR	From the public sector in EUR	From the public sector in %	From the private sector in EUR	From the private sector in %
60,000,000	55,000,000	91.67%	3,500,000	5.83%

The financial gap of 1,500,000 euros results from the fact that the Melina Mercouri Prize, which is endowed with the same amount, cannot be considered secured at the time of application.

#### Income from the public sector:

What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure? Please fill in the table below:

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	in EUR	in %
national government	17,833,333	32.42%
city	17,833,334	32.42%
province	17,833,333	32.42%
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri prize)	0	0%
other	1,500,000	2.74%
<b>total</b>	<b>55,000,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

#### City of St. Pölten and Province of Lower Austria

St. Pölten’s City Council voted unanimously on 26 November 2018 to commit EUR 17,833,334 on behalf of the city to the operational budget. The Provincial Government of Lower Austria voted unanimously on 25 June 2019 to commit EUR 17,833,333 on behalf of the province to the operational budget.

To cover the possibility that St. Pölten is not nominated ECoC 2024 St. Pölten’s City Council voted unanimously on 24 June 2019 to commit EUR 8,000,000 on behalf of the city to the operational budget of the “Plan B scenario”. The Provincial Government of Lower Austria voted unanimously on 25 June 2019 to commit EUR 8,000,000 on behalf of the province to the operational budget of the “Plan B scenario”. There is the firm intention both on our part and on the part of the City of St. Pölten as well as the Province of Lower Austria to implement the key projects of Bid Book II.

#### Federal Government

The envisaged funding contribution of the Republic of Austria to the operational budget of EUR 17,833,333 was the topic in first official talks in spring 2019. In early

summer 2019 a formal funding application was submitted by the Office St. Pölten 2024 to the Bundeskanzleramt/Sektion II – Kunst und Kultur. A funding decision will be taken after the ECoC decision.

#### Others – especially municipalities of the Culture Region St. Pölten

Talks were held in 2019 involving representatives of the Office St. Pölten 2024 and the mayors and officials in charge of cultural affairs of the three district capitals located inside the Culture Region St. Pölten: Krems, Melk and Lilienfeld but also the city of Neulengbach. They want to take an active part in St. Pölten 2024 and the development of the Culture Region St. Pölten – and to make significant financial contributions. Furthermore, the municipalities are being asked to make contributions in kind available, such as event venues, technical equipment and staff. Moreover, the Mayor of St. Pölten received a clear signal in personal talks with his colleagues, particularly from the municipalities of Herzogenburg, Traismauer, Wilhelmsburg, Böheimkirchen, Obergrafendorf and Prinzersdorf, that these municipalities will participate in St. Pölten 2024 – also financially.



What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover operating expenditure?

#### EU Subsidies

The Office St. Pölten 2024 has set itself the objective of seeking further EU funding. These figures will depend on the budgets/financial frameworks adopted by the EU for 2021 to 2027 and on funding programmes that are yet to be (re)launched (Creative Europe, Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Citizens for Europe, etc.). We are therefore not yet in a position to provide reliable information regarding revenue from the public sector to cover operational expenditure. St. Pölten 2024 profits enormously from the expertise NÖKU has acquired in submitting and realising EU funded projects in the fields of art and culture and beyond.

We will use and share the experiences we have accumulated over the last 20 years or so, the competence and expertise we have acquired in submitting and realising EU funded projects. In doing so we hope to enlarge our budget's room for manoeuvre in pursuit of the ECoC's sustainability and legacy and to document, broaden und intensify networking with European partner institutions through these EU projects.

In keeping with the current state of our artistic programme planning the following EU funding programmes are of special interest for us now:

#### ERASMUS+

- ▶ Children exchange programmes between our Children.Art.Lab and other European cultural institutions for children e.g. in Rijeka/HR, Bratislava/SK or Copenhagen/DK
- ▶ Exchange programme involving “young delegates” of the European Committee of Regions which will be part of the Europa Forum Wachau 2024 at Stift Göttweig linked to the project “Who needs Europe?”.
- ▶ Youth exchange programmes of ELit - Literaturhaus Europa and eljub - Europäische Jugendbegegnungen

#### EUROPA CINEMAS

- ▶ Cinema Paradiso (St. Pölten), Kino im Kesselhaus (Krems).

#### CREATIVE EUROPE

- ▶ “European Orchestra LABORatory II” with international Orchestras organised by the Tonkünstler Orchestra together with The Netherlands Symphony Orchestra (NL), the Hallé Symphony Orchestra (UK), the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (CZ), the Romanian National Symphony Orchestra (RO) or the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra (ES) (audience development project for golden agers)
- ▶ European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO) with its residency partners Grafenegg/AT and Ferrara Musica/IT as well as other European partners

According to what timetable should the income to cover operating expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

source of income for operating expenditure	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
EU <sup>1</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	1,500,000
national government	0	1,420,938	1,806,658	4,945,905	6,302,250	3,357,582
city	2,400,379,50	1,420,940	1,806,700	4,945,905	6,302,500	956,909,50
province	2,400,379,50	1,420,940	1,806,700	4,945,905	6,302,500	956,908,50
sponsors	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	750,000	150,000
Others <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0	0	3,500,000	0

1 Melina Mercouri Prize

2 Ticket revenue for admissions and education programmes, shop and merchandising revenue, revenue for renting out catering outlets, revenue from the exploitation of rights, cloakroom proceeds, revenue from the sale of catalogues and evening programmes, donations and funding provided by the municipalities in the Culture Region St. Pölten, by embassies, cultural institutes and other funding institutions

What is the fund-raising strategy used to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?

## Values in partnerships

Creating partnerships is the sponsorship strategy pursued by St. Pölten 2024. Workshops and strategic presentations overseen by the leading staff of the Office St. Pölten 2024 are designed to help companies, foundations and other organisations both public and private discover shared values and themes where they feel they can make a contribution. The shared goal and basis for all collaborative projects is added value for society!

#### How can this be made to work?

Our working method is rapidly becoming more and more concrete. Take the Lower Austrian Chamber of Agriculture for example. In a major organisational reshuffle, they decided to supply their staff canteen with regionally sourced produce. This has made the menu more diversified, since it now depends on what is in season; it has also helped to cut costs. In collaboration with St. Pölten 2024, the idea now is to take a leaf out of the Agriculture Chamber's book and to raise this initiative to an entirely different level: a test canteen will be instrumental in working out guidelines, including a market survey and networks reducing the distance between farmer and consumer, to spread the good news and infect other companies with enthusiasm for this concept. The collaborative project draws attention to the shared value of sustainability and the idea of cutting distances, this time exemplified by regionally sourced food.

#### Different types of contributions

Each company has its own individual profile and its own resources. Given our desire to exclude no one, we have created different types of participation offering options suited to all potential partners. Companies are invited to gift us their staff's time or let us use vacant or underused spaces; they may support us with contributions in kind; they may take charge of the implementation of a specific project, make a financial contribution in classic style or share their media space with us to stimulate discussion; or simply spread the spirit of St. Pölten 2024 in their networks. As things stand, we have factored in an 1.5 million euros for our operational budget but we are aiming to surpass this figure.

#### Categories according to level of involvement

Category	Type of contribution	Contribution	Our quid pro quo	
Main supporter	Support the project St. Pölten 2024 in its entirety	▶ Financial assets ▶ In-kind assets	Creating tailor-made packages (use of trademark, presence at strategic events, presence on our website, involvement in press work, consignments of free tickets, ad spaces in print and digital media and, potentially, the development of partner-specific pictorial logos )	CLUB 2024
Programme supporter	Support the artistic programme	▶ Financial assets ▶ In-kind assets		
Co-Creators	Develop specific projects in collaboration with St. Pölten 2024 (e.g. in the area of socioculture, culture tourism or hospitality)	▶ Financial assets ▶ In-kind assets ▶ Temporal assets		
Friends (smaller businesses)	Spread the St. Pölten 2024 spirit in their networks	▶ Financial assets ▶ Temporal assets		
Culture partners (all cultural and educational institutions in St. Pölten, Culture Region and Lower Austria)	Communicate us in their networks	▶ Financial assets ▶ Temporal assets		



## Networking and exchange as key factors

We are already busy networking to ensure our pool of partners keeps expanding: locally and regionally via the business platform St. Pölten 2020, nationally and internationally by negotiating the support of major Austrian corporations, whose core markets are concentrated in Central and East Europe. The Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) are to become our strategic partner in the field of sustainability. Initial talks are already underway with the top management.

From 2020, the networking and communication platform “CLUB 2024” will enable all partners to fine-tune their efforts to establish new contacts, to benefit from the advice of specially invited experts and to work on tailor-made collaborative projects.

## Taking business on board for implementation

Committed businesses will want to make use of the opportunity to realise their own projects from which society as a whole and St. Pölten 2024 stand to benefit. Content-based participation is likely to strengthen a sense of togetherness and of local identity, especially when large and small find common topics. In what is known as our [CulturalChangeCampus](#) we support businesses in planning and realising such projects. A leading expert on the ground, the business platform St. Pölten 2020 with its more than 200 affiliated small

and medium-size businesses in St. Pölten and the Cultural Region St. Pölten will put its know-how, networks and resources at our disposal. As part of a dedicated working group a core team is proactively involved in St. Pölten’s application process. Our call for support has already elicited exciting ideas:

- ▶ [SDG Call for Ideas](#): Projects designed by businesses to contribute to reaching the 17 Sustainable Development Goals will be supported in the implementation phase and with communication. (Christian Brandstetter, Dominik Mesner, Roswitha Reisinger)
- ▶ [Helping Hands](#): Businesses “gift” us staff time or tie in their team-building activities with St. Pölten 2024. Both parties stand to profit from new experiences, know-how and interdisciplinary collaboration. (Brigitte Fuchsbauer)
- ▶ [A 24-Kilometre-Long-Smorgasboard](#): Inspired by Ruhr 2010, the S33 motorway links the Danube valley to the Traisen river and St.Pölten. For one day, this motorway will be given over to an utterly counterintuitive use: one huge smorgasboard of artistic, cultural and culinary delights. (Gastro St. Pölten, Musikschule St. Pölten, Traisental Tourismus)
- ▶ [Menu translator](#): This open-source tool makes restaurant menus accessible in many different languages by means of a QR code and can be used by all kinds of catering outfits. (Katja Rendl)

## Operational Expenditure

Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure, by filling in the table below.

programme expenditure	promotion and marketing	wages, overheads and administration	total of the operating expenditure
33,301,250 EUR <sup>1) 2)</sup> 55,50 %	10,585,000 EUR 17,65 %	16,113,750 EUR <sup>3)</sup> 26,85 %	60,000,000 100 %

- 1 includes event- and programme-related personnel (Curators, Technical Department, Production Department, Audience Development, Capacity Building, drivers, festival assistants, security, supervisors ...)
- 2 includes the purchase of necessary technical and general equipment
- 3 includes administrative personnel (two Managing Directors, Head of European Affairs, Artistic Director, Communication Department, Ticketing, Office Management, Human Resources Administration, ...)

## Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure

timetable for spending	programme expenditure		promotion and marketing		wages, overheads and administration	
	in EUR	in %	in EUR	in %	in EUR	in %
2020	1,550,300	4,66%	650,000	6,14%	2,750,459	17,07%
2021	1,563,933	4,70%	735,000	6,94%	2,113,885	13,12%
2022	2,276,156	6,84%	1,010,000	9,54%	2,283,902	14,17%
2023	9,456,062	28,40%	2,805,000	26,50%	2,726,653	16,92%
2024	14,326,300	43,00%	4,850,000	45,83%	3,980,950	24,71%
2025	4,128,500	12,40%	535,000	5,05%	2,257,900	14,01%

## Budget for capital expenditure

What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year?  
Please fill in the table below:

Cultural infrastructure (▶ See Chapter 6: Cultural Infrastructure List)

income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure	in EUR	in %	Plan B <sup>3)</sup> in EUR	Plan B <sup>3)</sup> in %
national government <sup>1)</sup>	5,333,333	14.81%	5,333,333	17,78%
City	11,658,333	32.39%	8,658,334	28,86%
Province <sup>2)</sup>	19,008,334	52.80%	16,008,333	53,36 %
EU (excluding the Melina Mercouri prize)	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,000,000</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30,000,000</b>	<b>100 %</b>

- 1 Amount requested
- 2 Fundings provided by the Province of Lower Austria comprise subsidies and also what is known as Bedarfszuweisungsmittel.
- 3 Plan B covers the possibility that St. Pölten is not nominated ECoC 2024

Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure?  
If not, when will they do so?

## City of St. Pölten and Province of Lower Austria

The City Council of St. Pölten voted unanimously on 24 June 2019 to commit a financial contribution in the amount of EUR 11,658,333 on behalf of the city towards investment expenditure (cultural infrastructure list) totalling EUR 36,000,000. The Provincial Government of Lower Austria voted unanimously in principle on 25 June 2019 in favour of the cultural infrastructure list in the total amount of EUR 36,000,000. The Province has committed itself to fund these costs in conjunction with the City of St. Pölten, using also so called “Bedarfszuweisungsmittel” and additional subsidies to be provided by the Federal Government.

To cover the possibility of St. Pölten not being nominated ECoC 2024 a reduced variant of the cultural infrastructure list was approved totalling EUR 30,000,000 (Plan B). The City Council of St. Pölten unanimously voted to commit to this variant a financial contribution in the amount of EUR 8,658,334. The Province has committed itself to fund these costs in conjunction with the City of St. Pölten, using also so called “Bedarfszuweisungsmittel” and additional subsidies to be provided by the Federal Government.

## Federal Government

First official talks were held between the Lower Austrian Government and the Federal Government/BKA, the Office of the Federal Chancellor, in spring 2019 regarding the funding of two projects of the cultural infrastructure list (Children.Art.Lab and the Former St. Pölten Synagogue, with a total budget of EUR 16,000,000) totalling EUR 5,333,333. These led in the early summer of 2019 to the submission of an official funding application by the Office St. Pölten 2024 to the Bundeskanzleramt – Sektion Kunst und Kultur. A funding decision will be taken after the ECoC decision.

An application will also be made to the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism for additional funding for the general renovation and the repurposing of the Former St. Pölten Synagogue.



What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?

In the absence of suitable EU funding programmes in Austria no applications for EU funding are currently being envisaged.

According to what timetable should the income to cover capital expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture? Please fill in the table below.

Source of income for capital expenditure	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0
national government <sup>1)</sup>	0	0	0	0	5,333,333	0
city	0	2,915,000	2,915,000	2,915,000	2,913,333	0
province	3,000,000 <sup>2)</sup>	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,008,334	0
sponsors	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others <sup>3)</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	0

1 Funding requested

2 dedicated explicitly for structural work in preparation of projects from the cultural infrastructure list according to a resolution passed by the Lower Austrian Provincial Government on 25 June 2019

3 Plus potential funding for the Former Synagogue awarded by the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism

Since cultural infrastructure expenditure is financed by the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria by a wide variety of financing instruments (e.g. subsidies, so called Bedarfszuweisungsmittel, long-term loans and/or lease financing or financing via rents, which in

turn are financed by an increase in ongoing operating subsidies granted by the city and/or the province, ...), the above table is to be viewed as binding with regard to funding and partners, but is only of limited significance with regard to periodisation.

If appropriate, please insert a table here that specifies which amounts will be spent for new cultural infrastructure to be used in the framework of the title year.

The funding of the following cultural infrastructure projects has already been secured by unanimous resolutions passed by the city and the province. (► Chapter 6, p 76)

Cultural infrastructure projects	in EUR	Plan B <sup>1)</sup> in EUR
Cathedral Square	7,400,000	5,000,000
Children.Art.Lab	12,000,000	12,000,000
Former Synagogue	4,000,000	4,000,000
LAMES at the Sonnenpark	500,000	400,000
Linking inner city/Culture District/Traisen River	750,000	500,000
St. Pölten City Museum	1,200,000	750,000
Other measures (to be defined)	2,800,000	0
Festspielhaus St. Pölten	6,850,000	6,850,000
Klangturm (tower of sounds)	500,000	500,000
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>36,000,000</b>	<b>30,000.000</b>

1 Plan B covers the possibility that St. Pölten is not nominated ECoC 2024

Organisational structure

What kind of governance and delivery structure is envisaged for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year?

## An autonomous and stable management organisation has been set up

A clear, professional and partnership-oriented structure was created as early as 2017: the **Office St. Pölten 2024** as an autonomous and stable organisation – having sole responsibility – will be in charge of implementing ECoC 2024. Both the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria are represented as strategic partners in all bodies. The organisation is linked to NÖKU, a major cultural management holding company, which guarantees stability, know-how in cultural management matters, many important services, standards and robust network of 25 cultural institutions within St. Pölten and the Culture Region.

### Governance level

The Office St. Pölten 2024 was founded in early October 2017 as a limited liability company by two strategic partners, the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria. The City of St. Pölten holds 50 % of the LLC, the share of the Province of Lower Austria is split between two strategic partners: 35 % is held by the NÖKU Holding, a major cultural management holding company, and 15 % by the Lower Austrian Tourism Board, in charge of the marketing of Lower Austria as a tourist destination. The LLC's articles of association meet both the criteria for non-profit status and the requirements for favourable treatment of donations.

If St. Pölten is nominated ECoC 2024, the Office St. Pölten 2024 will be in charge of the preparation and implementation of ECoC 2024 without any change in the partnership shares and control bodies.

### Our compass shows us the way:

#### The structure of the Office St. Pölten 2024

We navigate through the application process compass (► p 7) in hand – and we have used that same device to realign our governance structure. This new tool has enabled us to define new focal points in the structure of our organisation. This guarantees that what is outlined in our strategic guidelines is actually implemented.

### Management level

The Management Board (comprising the Operational and the Commercial Directors), the Artistic Director and the Head of European Affairs together make up the leadership team of the Office St. Pölten 2024. They are jointly responsible for all strategic decisions (► p 80). The European dimension is part of the joint responsibility of the entire team. The new position Head of European Affairs will ensure that the European dimension will be taken into account in any action envisioned by St. Pölten 2024. The Head is therefore given collective powers of attorney and assigned a key role. The number of Curators has been doubled from two to four. The reason being that our calls for artistic and cultural projects have

produced tremendous feedback whose scope and complexity demonstrate that what is needed is know-how, energy, social skills and European networks. In accordance with the programme structure, the Curators will also take charge of cross-genre projects.

### Operational level

All departments cooperate closely with a focus on projects both with each other and with the management team. Regular jour fixes and working groups concentrate on developing and implementing the projects of St. Pölten 2024.

#### 1. Communication

In light of our communication strategy with its focus on digital media we treat Marketing and Communication as one single entity and have therefore lumped all communication tasks together in the field of action (Marketing&Media, Public Relations). To facilitate the implementation of measures in the Culture Region St. Pölten & Networks fields of action, we have created the entities for the Culture Region St. Pölten and Tourism/Hospitality. This guarantees the long-term development of the Culture Region St. Pölten, the principle of radically lived hospitality and cooperation with tourism also in terms of organisation. The Sponsoring entity is in charge of cooperation with the business community in close harmony with the leadership team and Project Development.

#### 2. Production

Production is responsible for planning, organising and realising artistic and cultural projects, with its remit extending from checking the viability of specific projects and contracting artists to logistics and the realisation of the events themselves. Each of our *Hubs* will have people in charge (Venue Management), who will be responsible on site. The Production entity is a sort of interface between the Artistic Director, the Curators, the Technical Department and the Management, designed to facilitate the realisation of projects.



### 3. Technical Department

This department is responsible for all technical aspects of projects, events, exhibitions. It acts in close collaboration with Production without being subordinated to it. Its autonomy is designed to give it an independent voice in matters concerning the technical viability and realisation of projects as well as safety and security aspects. Last but not least, the department will submit artistic project demands to a reality check.

### 4. Capacity Building

Since the preselection phase we have become acutely aware of the crucial significance Capacity Building has for our project. We have therefore installed it as an entity in its own right. The driving “engine” is the <CulturalChangeCampus>, a platform and academy designed to proactively take up local and national themes and link them to perspectives from outside. Project Development is tasked with ensuring the help of cultural workers and civic activists to facilitate realisation of the submitted projects.

### 5. Audience Development

Audience Development including art and cultural education programmes is a crucial element of our bid. It is bundled together with more general Outreach in one entity to obtain maximum synergies. This department is also the interface for the ongoing, external Monitoring and Evaluation.

### 6. Ticketing

The autonomy of the ticketing system of the NÖKU Holding means independence and flexibility: pricing and the control of ticket availability will therefore be entirely in the hands of St. Pölten 2024. The remit of the Ticketing entity includes offering individual and customised information and packages in collaboration with the hotel and catering industry and with other service providers such as transport services and bicycle rental firms.

#### Strategic partnerships to complement our own structure

We increased our efforts to expand our strategic partnerships in the last year considerably. In the field of tourism, we will enter into strategic partnerships with the Austrian National Tourist Office, the Vienna Tourist Board, Tourist Board Linz and the Lower Austrian Tourism Board. Talks have already taken place in that respect with all of these

institutions during last year. We cooperate with local business in the framework provided by Plattform 2020 with its more than 200 members. Pre-projects and evaluation provide the context of collaboration with both the regional and the local scene and with schools and universities.

#### Enlarging the team

Starting as early as 2020, all departments of the ECoC team will go on stream. The team of the Office St. Pölten 2024 will be gradually enlarged by the addition of competent staff.

#### Number of staff employed

2020	20 – 22
2021	22 – 24
2022	28 – 30
2023	38 – 40
2024	48 – 52
2025	18 – 20

#### Integration of the Children.Art.Lab

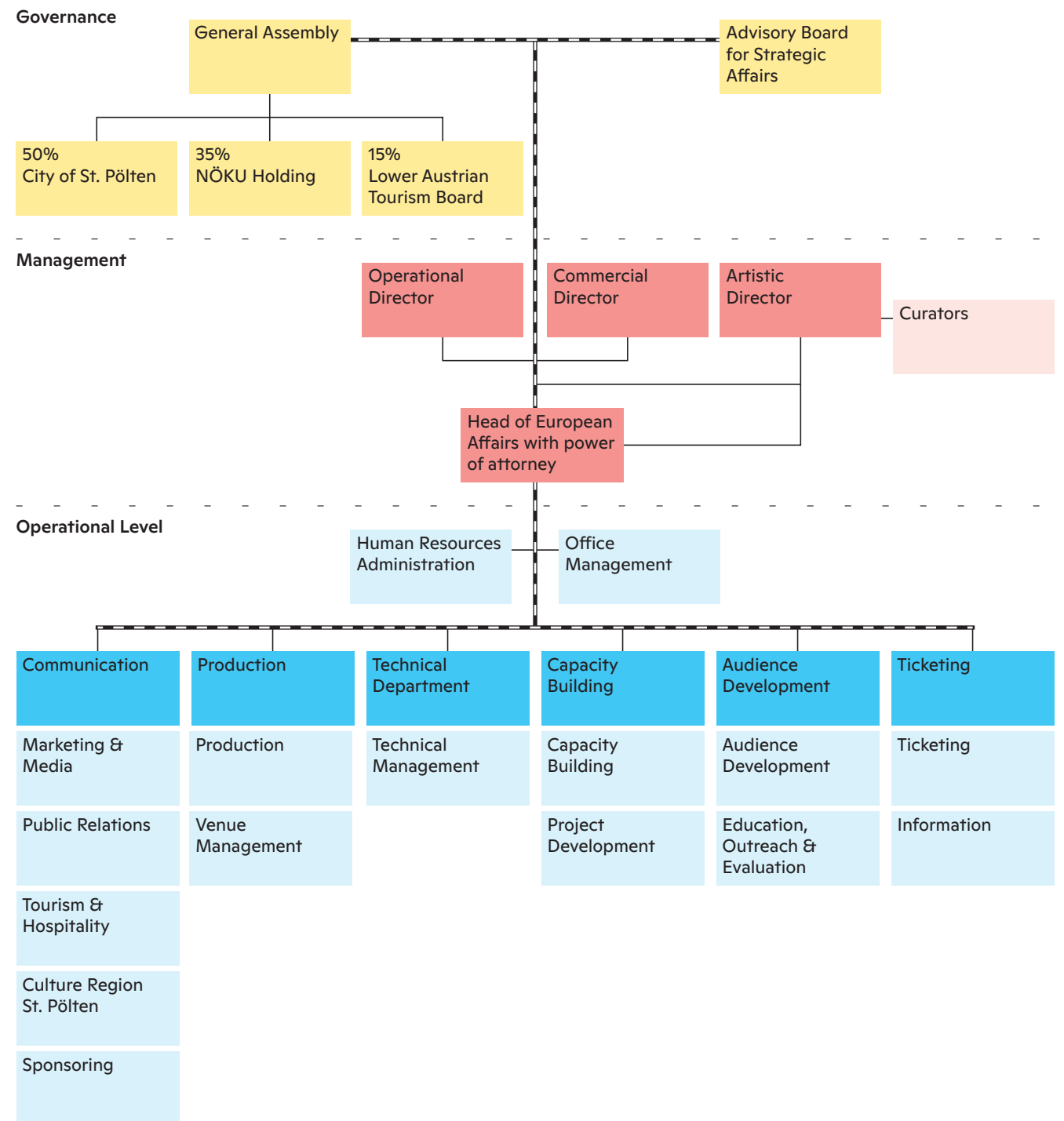
Preparation and long-term operation for the Children.Art.Lab have already gone on stream. An independent team and a separate organisational unit under their own artistic direction will be installed within the overall structure of the Office St. Pölten 2024. It will have its own venue and project management and its own production and outreach entities. Competent staff will be in charge of art and cultural education, marketing, press work, ticketing, sales, information, facility management and event services and cleaning. Even though formally independent, the teams of ECoC and of the Children.Art.Lab will be maintaining close contact regarding matters of content and organisation to achieve maximum synergies.

#### Our meeting culture

Meetings, jour fixes, sessions, discussions and conferences are a routine component of everyday life at European offices of all kinds. These working sessions take up a great deal of valuable time and creative energy. Here, too, we want a change of direction. We have introduced the 24-minute meeting – according to some studies the optimum duration of conferences. There are static and dynamic forms. Sometimes meetings are convened in unusual locations. “Decision makers”, as we call them, who are appointed beforehand, will make sure that these meetings have actual results.

#### The organisation will continue to exist after the ECoC year

All staff members stand to benefit from the experiences they will have made in working for a European Capital of Culture. The Children.Art.Lab, which is part of our company, will continue to be operated on an ongoing basis by this body after 2024 and will be funded jointly by the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria on a long-term basis.





How will this structure be organised at management level?  
Please make clear who will be the person(s) having the final responsibility for global leadership of the project?

The supreme supervisory body of the Office St. Pölten 2024 is the General Assembly, which is convened twice a year. It comprises the owner representatives of the City of St. Pölten and of the Province of Lower Austria.

Responsibility for the overall control of the project rests with the Operational Director, the Commercial Director and the Artistic Director. Assisted by the Head of European Affairs, these persons constitute the leadership team of St. Pölten 2024. Within the framework staked out by the strategy- and content-related positions outlined in the two Bid Books,

the Artistic Director is free to make all programme decisions concerning content and all artistic matters. It is up to the management board to check whether the structure of the programme and the concrete projects correlate in principle with the specifications laid down in the two Bid Books and whether they can in fact be realised, funded and realistically carried out with the available human resources.

All decisions made by the Management Board concerning operational and strategic questions must be unanimous.

How will you ensure that this structure has the staff with the appropriate skills and experience to plan, manage and deliver the cultural programme for the European Capital of Culture project?

In addition to the required skills and expertise, we will bear the following points especially in mind as we recruit new staff:

- ▶ Staff members are expected to share and embody the cosmopolitan, creative spirit of St. Pölten's bid.
- ▶ Vienna has a great reservoir of highly qualified staff for St. Pölten 2024.
- ▶ During recruitment we will be aiming for a balance mixture of people who commute between Vienna and St. Pölten and residents of St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten.
- ▶ We will also be aiming for balanced quotas of 50 percent women and 50 percent men.
- ▶ In addition, the team should mirror the diversity of St. Pölten's population: we want to have people on our staff with a different first language than German and we want to have a significant number of women and representatives of the younger generation – thirty to forty – in leading positions. We have already started to work on ads for the positions we want to fill, which we will publish immediately after nomination.

We will recruit competent and efficient team players by deploying suitable recruitment and personnel development processes.

These processes will make use of the know-

how, the professional skills and the resources brought into play by one of our key partners and our part owner, the NÖKU Holding.

The Office St. Pölten 2024 is among the organisations linked to the NÖKU Holding. It is therefore entitled to make use of NÖKU's recruitment and personnel development services. Currently around 2,500 applications a year are handled by the digital, state-of-the-art recruiting tool REXX. Furthermore, St. Pölten 2024 stands to profit from NÖKU's many years of experience in the training and further education of staff.

Especially noteworthy in this context is the highly successful programme "NÖKU for Excellence", which is aimed at the training of NÖKU's own future executives in the field of cultural management. This is another weighty contribution to capacity building: highly talented young Europeans receive goal-oriented training, which leads to a "brain gain" for the city and the region.

What this means for the Office St. Pölten 2024 closer to home is that the highly experienced and highly qualified team in charge of the the Lower Austrian Provincial Exhibition, the NÖ Landesausstellung, which is again scheduled to take place in 2022 and 2026, will be available to assist us in the implementation of ECoC 2024.

How will you make sure that there is an appropriate cooperation between the local authorities and this structure including the artistic team?

Ours is by no means a one-man show. Our activities are based on unanimous resolutions passed by the relevant bodies of the City of St. Pölten, the Province of Lower Austria and the Office St. Pölten 2024. A clear structure overseen by such regularly convened bodies and working groups ensure partner-like cooperation between the Office St. Pölten 2024 and local authorities. The content of the artistic and cultural programme for St. Pölten 2024 is exempt from this, since the artistic director is independent in his/her artistic and cultural decisions. Politics is not allowed any influence whatsoever on the cultural programme.



We have created four levels of cooperation:

#### 1. Project Group St. Pölten 2024

Important operational topics are regularly discussed with the Project Group, which comprises, in addition to the Office St. Pölten 2024, representatives of the city, the province and the civil-society platform KulturhauptSTART.

#### 2. Advisory Board for Strategic Affairs

The Advisory Board is convened on a near-monthly basis and offers advice both to the owner partners and to the management team of the Office St. Pölten 2024. Its mission includes making sure that all crucial matters concerning strategy and funding are closely accorded between city and province. In the event of St. Pölten being nominated ECoC 2024, the Advisory Board, comprising at present 16 representatives of the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria, will have its scope broadened by the addition of representatives of the Republic of Austria, the European Union and the Culture Region St. Pölten.

#### 3. Mayor's Jour Fixe

Important operational and strategic issues are discussed and decided at the monthly informal Mayor's Jour Fixe. The most important decision makers of the city and the province – St. Pölten's mayor and other City Council executives and representatives of Lower Austria's Department of Art and Culture and of the NÖKU Holding – take part in this jour fixe.

#### 4. General Assembly

All key decisions concerning budget, strategy and recruitment of the managing team and the Artistic Director are made in the General Assembly, the Office St. Pölten's highest supervisory body. A two-thirds majority is required.



According to which criteria and under which arrangements have the general director and the artistic director been chosen – or will be chosen? What are – or will be – their respective profiles? When will they take up the appointment? What will be their respective fields of action?

In the event of St. Pölten winning its bid for ECoC 2024, the vacant positions in the leadership team – the Commercial, the Operational and the Artistic Director – will be advertised publicly across the EU and beyond at the end of November 2019. Please find below the advertisements we are going to use, which specify our criteria, requirements and remits.

The vacant positions will be filled on the basis of a multi-stage and transparent selection process. The decision will be taken by a competent jury comprised of the owner partners and national and European experts. In addition, the process will be monitored by an established personnel consulting company. The leadership team is expected to be available to start work by 1 July or by 1 September 2020 at the latest.

### Job advertisements

#### Commercial Director (m/f)

(to join the team at St. Pölten as soon as possible, all-in, end date 31.12.2025)

##### Your remit

- ▶ You will be part of the leadership team, alongside the Operational Director, the Artistic Director and the Head of European Affairs with powers of attorney.
- ▶ You will be in charge of all measures concerning planning, preparing and implementing the project St. Pölten 2024 and the Children.Art.Lab (including user representation in this construction project) on the basis of the current strategies as laid out in Bid Book I and II. You will do so in close collaboration with the Commercial and Artistic Directors and with the teams currently being hired.
- ▶ Based in St. Pölten, you will be in charge of and responsible for the entire commercial agenda (budgeting, comprehensive controlling, reporting, cash management, compilation of annual financial statements, monitoring of the audit and all other screenings, tax and social insurance matters, compliance with labour, contract and procurement law, support in the application for and the settlement of subsidies, etc.). You will be responsible above all for St. Pölten 2024 staying within the limits of the company's total budget and for the effective, targeted and economical use of that budget.
- ▶ You will be using the software tools of the NÖKU Holding (ERP-System RS2 and P&I) and NÖKU-standards as laid out in the organisation manual.

##### Your profile

- ▶ Several years of experience in senior positions in the commercial management and steering (including controlling) of a comparably complex organisation, preferably in the fields of art and culture and ideally in a European context (with German and English as working languages)
- ▶ Ideally you will have a university degree, preferably in economics (and preferably with an emphasis on controlling) and/or law, or proof of comparable professional experience and expertise
- ▶ Outstanding communicative competence, a zest for innovation and persuasion topped off by highly developed negotiating skills
- ▶ The social competence and integrative skills required for this complex, many-layered mammoth project involving highly divergent stakeholders
- ▶ Evidence of a keen interest in artistic and sociocultural processes and content
- ▶ High motivation for achieving goals and results; implementation strength and a working style in keeping with the project's international dimensions in conjunction with an entrepreneurial practical and intellectual approach and profound business knowledge
- ▶ In-depth knowledge and experience of matters concerning taxes and social insurance in the field of culture and in labour and contractual law and, ideally, also in procurement law
- ▶ Experience in the public funding system would be an advantage

We are looking forward to receiving your application including salary requirement (benchmark EUR 80,000 p.a. gross or more, depending on qualification and work experience, plus company car with private use) by 12.01.2020 at the latest, c/o Frau Miriam Angerer, MA, at [www.noeku.at/de/arbeitswelt/jobs-in-der-noku-gruppe](http://www.noeku.at/de/arbeitswelt/jobs-in-der-noku-gruppe)

#### Operational Director (m/f)

(to join the team at St. Pölten as soon as possible, all-in, end date 31.12.2025)

##### Your remit

- ▶ You will be part of the leadership team, alongside the Commercial Director, the Artistic Director and the Head of European Affairs with powers of attorney.
- ▶ You will be in charge of all measures concerning planning, preparing and implementing the project St. Pölten 2024 and the Children.Art.Lab (including user representation in this construction project) on the basis of the current strategies outlined in Bid Book I and II. You will do so in close collaboration with the Commercial and Artistic Directors and with the teams currently being hired.
- ▶ Recruiting the Artistic Directors in accordance with the predefined process aimed at the creation and specification of the artistic programmes for St. Pölten 2024 and the Children.Art.Lab on the basis of Bid Books I and II.
- ▶ Recruiting the St. Pölten 2024 and the Children.Art.Lab teams in accordance with the current organigram and staff establishment plan, while taking into consideration local talent and competence, the desired balanced gender quotas and the greatest possible diversity.
- ▶ You will be at the head of all of the company's units on the ground in St. Pölten and will have overall operational responsibility for human resources, budget and results.
- ▶ You will create optimal framework conditions for in-time planning, production and presentation of the artistic and cultural content of St. Pölten 2024 and the Children.Art.Lab and for the target-group-adequate communication and accessibility of that content.
- ▶ You will be focused in your work on the European dimension, audience development, artistic and cultural outreach programmes (especially for children), inclusion, participation, capacity building, diversity and sustainability.
- ▶ You will act as a communication hub in constant contact with all relevant stakeholders (notably the City of St. Pölten, the Province of Lower Austria, the municipalities of the Culture Region St. Pölten, the Republic of Austria and the European Union), with the media and with civil society as a whole. You will make sure that all these stakeholders take an active part in St. Pölten 2024.
- ▶ You will gain for the company as much third-party funding as possible, through such formats as sponsoring, ticket sales, EU-funding and subsidies granted by the municipalities of the Culture Region St. Pölten. You will be the company's public face in all its dealings with visitors, government agencies and business partners.

##### Your profile

- ▶ Several years of experience in senior positions in the management and steering of a comparably complex organisation, preferably in the fields of art and culture and ideally in a European context (with German and English as working languages)
- ▶ Ideally a university degree, preferably in business studies, law and/or humanities or proof of comparable professional experience and expertise
- ▶ Skills in guiding and motivating staff, outstanding communicative competence, a zest for innovation and persuasion topped off by highly developed negotiating skills and, ideally, experience in organisational development
- ▶ The social competence and integrative skills required for this complex, many-layered mammoth project involving highly divergent stakeholders
- ▶ Evidence of an in-depth understanding of and great sensitivity to artistic and sociocultural processes and content
- ▶ High motivation for achieving goals and results; implementation strength and a working style in keeping with the project's international dimensions in conjunction with an entrepreneurial practical and intellectual approach and business knowledge

We are looking forward to receiving your application including salary requirement (benchmark EUR 95,000 p.a. gross or more, depending on qualification and work experience, plus company car with private use) by 12.01.2020 at the latest, c/o Frau Miriam Angerer, MA, at [www.noeku.at/de/arbeitswelt/jobs-in-der-noku-gruppe](http://www.noeku.at/de/arbeitswelt/jobs-in-der-noku-gruppe)



## Artistic Director (m/f) St. Pölten 2024

(to join the team at St. Pölten as soon as possible, all-in, end date 31.12.2025)

### Your remit

- ▶ You will be part of the leadership team, alongside the Operational and the Commercial Directors and the Head of European Affairs with powers of attorney.
- ▶ You will be responsible for the final formulation and accentuation of the content-related programme strategy, including an integrated approach to outreach, and for the creation of the concrete artistic and sociocultural overall programme of St. Pölten 2024, based on the content of Bid Book I and II.
- ▶ You will be charged with optimally developing and positioning the City of St. Pölten as European Capital of Culture 2024, as a cultural hub and a livable, European mid-size city, and with honing that profile. You will do the same for the Culture Region St. Pölten.
- ▶ You will be in charge of recruiting curators, together with the Operational and the Commercial Directors in keeping with a predefined process. The goal is to create an innovative and efficient programme team capable of dealing with the challenges and the complexity of the task.
- ▶ You will be in charge of compiling the concrete artistic programme, which will also include a whole raft of different discourse formats, and will work with the curators in the preparatory phase (2020–2023), the implementation phase (2024) and, budgetary considerations permitting, in the debriefing phase (2025). The programme will comprise three categories of events: the European Capital of Culture's own events, co-productions involving partners and content-related cooperations.
- ▶ You will develop sustainable, many-layered outreach concepts (especially for children) together with our audience development department. This will already be part of the programming process.
- ▶ You will develop sustainable audience development strategies to make sure both of the loyalty of existing audiences and the inclusion of potentially new target groups, which will include socially marginalised groups as a matter of course.
- ▶ In programme work and in networking you will focus on values such as inclusion, empowerment, participation, capacity building, diversity, sustainability and the European dimension.
- ▶ You will act as a communication hub in constant contact with all relevant stakeholders in the fields of politics and public administration; with all kinds of cultural institutions; the local scene; the art scene; with representatives from such fields as social affairs, environment, education, research, sciences; with the media; and with civil society as a whole. You will be looking to involve these actors in the European Capital of Culture project.

- ▶ Yours will be the face of St. Pölten 2024 and its content for audiences, the media, the art community, the partner institutions and the public in an overall European context. This will include responsibility for the content of all publications.
- ▶ You will be in charge of expanding and developing the network of local, regional, supraregional and European/international partner institutions, artists, curators with an eye on the successful realisation of artistic and other cooperations, especially in the wider European context.
- ▶ You will be focused on strengthening national and European/international networking of art and culture scenes and partner institutions.
- ▶ You will assist in the initiation and acquisition of additional funding (subsidies, sponsoring, co-production funds and the like).

### Your profile

- ▶ Profound experience acquired over several years in leading positions dealing with the artistic conception, organisation and realisation of large-scale, complex cultural and artistic events and formats such as opening events, festivals, exhibitions, art in public space and the like, ideally in a European context (German and English as working languages).
- ▶ Ideally a relevant university degree and further training and/or proof of comparable experience and expertise.
- ▶ Excellent contacts with European and international artists, festivals, organisers, art institutions, sponsors and media with an eye to relevant cooperations, co-creations, co-productions and co-realisation.
- ▶ Proven expertise and solid anchoring in the relevant art and culture scenes; proven competence in presenting and promoting art formats in the area of tension between tradition and contemporary developments.
- ▶ Great implementation strength and a working style in keeping with the project's international dimensions.
- ▶ The social, communicative and integrative competence demanded by this complex and many-layered mammoth project with its many different stakeholders.
- ▶ Media affinity, confident media appearance and, ideally, familiarity with social media

We are looking forward to receiving your application including salary requirement (benchmark EUR 110,000 p.a. gross or more, depending on qualification and work experience) by 12.01.2020 at the latest, c/o Frau Miriam Angerer, MA, at [www.noeku.at/de/arbeitswelt/jobs-in-der-noku-gruppe](http://www.noeku.at/de/arbeitswelt/jobs-in-der-noku-gruppe)

## Contingency planning

Have you carried out/planned a risk assessment exercise?  
What are your planned mitigating measures?

We feel we owe it to our stated strategy of “You only need to change direction” not to tone these risks down – otherwise risk assessment would hardly be helpful.

### Enough staying power for a long-term strategy?

The experience of other ECoCs has shown that there is tendency for a certain fatigue to set in once ECoC year is over what puts the long-term goals at risk. The return to “business as usual” after a year of 365 days of culture has been known to have a demotivating effect on local cultural institutions and initiatives.

- ▶ The development of the cultural strategy “St. Pölten 2030” in close contact with Bid Book I and II and its official release both underscore the long-term orientation of and the political commitment to St. Pölten 2024.
- ▶ A significant increase in the city's subsidies for cultural matters beyond 2024 was agreed on as early as the selection phase. In addition, both the Children.Art.Lab and the Former Synagogue are guaranteed long-term post-2024 budgets.
- ▶ The programme budget for 2025 is dedicated exclusively for the transition from ECoC year 2024 to the “transformed normality”.

### Cultural Profile:

#### St. Pölten is the city of... what?

The image projected by St. Pölten is not yet readily recognisable as that of ECoC. There is the distinct danger that St Pölten's insufficiently articulated cultural profile may slow down the city's process escaping the shadow of Vienna and Linz.

- ▶ The city is set to morph into a go-to place for short distances between art genres, between large-scale institutions and small associations, between young and old, between different communities, between St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten and, above all, between local and European.
- ▶ Lower Austria's focus on its still relatively young capital and investments in cultural infrastructure such as the unique Children.Art.Lab will deliver an autonomous innovative city of culture located midway between Vienna and Linz and midway between Budapest and Munich.
- ▶ We will be using our strategic cooperations with the Vienna Tourist Board and Tourist Board Linz to invite tourists on their way to Vienna or Linz to stop off in our city in 2024, in the hope that we will be able to welcome them again as “repeat users” in St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten at a later stage.

### Audience Development:

#### How do you reach “everybody”?

Citizen's diversity is not adequately represented in the city's cultural life. There is the danger that 2024 will be unable to make any lasting difference to this state of affairs.

- ▶ Thanks to the cooperation of key actors we have already established contact with many different communities and we will continue to do so.
- ▶ Each phase of the conception and the programming of ECoC 2024 takes into consideration the interests of potential co-creators. In devising our repertoire of measures and offers care is taken that every group receives its due share with different degrees of commitment.
- ▶ Impact circles make sure that reliable information on audiences in their capacity as co-creators is constantly fed into the conception and the programming of ECoC 2024.
- ▶ The Children.Art.Lab and close collaboration with the Province's Department of Education will help us address diversity in the most heterogeneous group of all: children.

### Sustainability:

#### “Preach water, drink wine?”

Mammoth projects such as an ECoC year and international exchange use up resources and have a huge carbon footprint, from air travel to the generation of waste. What can we do to defend ourselves against the charge that our advocacy of sustainability is just a mere attitude without a real content?

- ▶ Building on the insights and foundations created by the Aahrus Sustainability Model we will be seeking to keep Co2 emissions as low as possible. In collaboration with other ECoCs and with Denmark's Worldperfect team we will continue to work on that model to ensure it represents the cutting edge of technology.
- ▶ In collaboration with the Austrian Institute of Sustainable Development we will pursue the goal of a carbon neutral ECoC. The compensation scheme required for this will involve projects by international artists, schools and universities, whose roles will be documented in St. Pölten 2024.

### Creative Industries:

#### Still early days for St. Pölten's creative industries scene

There is the danger that the great opportunities offered by a ECoC will not be used to their full extent.

- ▶ Even though we are still in the selection phase, we are already proactively involved in the SMART UP Advisory Board of St. Pölten's City Council and the local University of Applied Sciences.
- ▶ We have involved both the University of Applied Sciences and the New Design University in preprojects.
- ▶ St. Pölten 2024 will, furthermore, launch a call for start-ups which includes the offer of the temporary free use of vacant or abandoned inner-city business premises.



### Governance: Embodying the open-minded creative spirit

While the existing Office St. Pölten 2024 is a tried and proven asset, its expansion from a staff of five to more than fifty will require a great pool of suitable candidates.

- ▶ We have vacancy ads ready for publication for the positions we need to fill that are set for the recruitment of open-minded people
- ▶ The NÖKU's Recruiting Skills & Tools and external monitoring by the holding company will help us to minimise risks.
- ▶ Nearby Vienna has a large pool of highly qualified personnel that St. Pölten will draw on. However, during the recruitment process, care will be taken to achieve a balanced mix of residents of St. Pölten and the Culture Region, Viennese "commuters" and Europeans.

### Tourism: Meeting tourism demand

Our concept of radically lived hospitality is subjected to a tough reality check by the limited number of beds offered by St. Pölten's hospitality industry.

- ▶ The city's Ecopoint Wirtschaftsservice in tandem with investors is developing innovative hotel concepts
- ▶ We are going to launch a campaign to assure the quality of accommodation facilities, using the know-how of our strategic partners within the field of tourism.
- ▶ We will be coordinating our hospitality & welcome strategies with the Destination Management Organizations of the Culture Region St. Pölten and start a strategic collaboration with Vienna Tourist Board.
- ▶ In addition, the Culture Region St. Pölten and nearby cities offer plenty of accommodation.

### Region & Networks: Creating the Culture Region St. Pölten is a major undertaking

The development of the Culture Region St. Pölten harbours great potential in terms of social development, artistic-programmatic content and cultural tourism, but it does carry with it the risk that it may not be fully adopted and not actually "lived" by people.

- ▶ We have started a process involving the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria aimed at the development of the identity of the Culture Region St. Pölten.
- ▶ We have invited all relevant cultural institutions in the Culture Region St. Pölten to contribute relevant programme ideas to Bid Book II supportive of the development of a regional identity.
- ▶ We have established a regional network linking up all kinds of actors in the field of culture, such as mayors and heads of cultural institutions with an annual programme.

### Our plan B scenario

Should we fail in our bid to be nominated ECoC 2024, the City of St. Pölten and the Province of Lower Austria will nevertheless realise a joint programme in and for St. Pölten in 2024 in the fields of culture and urban development, based on the positive pro European dynamic in the population, even though with a redimensioned budget. The funding of the operational programme budget and of the cultural infrastructure list is guaranteed by resolutions already passed by the city and the province (▶ p 76). But to be honest, we would really prefer plan A.



### Marketing and Communication

▶ Could your artistic programme be summed up by a slogan? ▶ What is the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year, in particular with regard to the media strategy and the mobilisation of large audiences? This includes the use of digital communication channels.

## Our leitmotif: "Europe at Home – Rescaling Distances" Our appeal: "You only need to change direction"

The appeal "You only need to change direction!" goes out to all Europeans. With our artistic projects and our campaigns we want to urge people all over Europe to adopt new perspectives and see things in a wholly different light. We start with ourselves. It is their compactness that makes medium-sized cities like St. Pölten useful experimental labs for the future of Europe. St. Pölten 2024 has initiated a movement for European Mid-Sized Cities. Our communication campaign promotes dialogue and public discourse and encourages the identification of the alienating effects of distance – and of the way they can be overcome.

### OUR STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

#### 1. We generate stimuli to change direction

We will tune our communication channels at "human speed", which allows us to catch the attention of people on the move: ambling in the city, in the saddle of a bicycle, commuting to work on the train or walking along with the smartphone. Content determines form: into these highly fluid situations St. Pölten 2024 wants to inject impulses that trigger moments that lead to the decision to change direction.

To attract to our messages the subjective perception of residents, travellers in transit and dedicated visitors, we will be employing interventions and irritations. Using spatial, visual and aural stimuli that appear unexpectedly and seemingly out of nowhere in the city's physical reality or in virtual space, we want to revolutionise routine perception patterns en route to our audience's five senses.

People will see our appeal to <change direction> crop up on public transport display panels and in the shop windows of vacant shops. We will surprise travellers passing through St. Pölten by train with huge posters featuring #change direction. For cyclists, the message will be placed at eye level. Electronic screens in public space will display it. Anyone logging into public WLAN will receive our messages. Bus stops are ideal vehicles for interactive media. In winter we leave our messages on snow covered vehicles. Unexpected noises, creative pavement design such as lawn where there used to be concrete: all these provoke a shift in perception – and a challenge to people to stop in their tracks and have a rethink.

We focus first on the local context and make sure that as many people as possible in St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten recognise our messages and share it on social media. We then expand our community step by step, at first within a 300 km radius and then out into wider Europe. In this way, our marketing and communications strategy becomes the motor for our Movement of European Mid-Sized Cities.

#### 2. We create a European community of people in mid-sized-cities

Public becomes private and private becomes public: in our social-media campaign, our growing community will use storytelling formats to recount their stories. We will be looking to sign up as many "ambassadors" as possible to share their experience of work and life in general and the particular ideas, problems or moments of happiness that are on their mind; in short, personal stories of what it means for them to live in a mid-sized city. Generating feedback by sharing stories about what really matters to individuals will make our movement grow. We will create our own virtual network by linking up our network to those of kindred communities in other mid-sized cities, to facilitate the discussion of themes relevant to Europe as a whole. With support from our <CulturalChangeCampus> we will empower residents, community stakeholders, journalists, influencers, St. Pöltners in exile and others to tell their stories in a way designed to go viral in the virtual world.

#### 3. All our communication will be digital

Even when it is analogue it is digital as well: be it ads, posters or eatable cups – there will always be a link to the digital world.

- ▶ We will structure all texts according to the format that is used on smartphones: headline, teaser, further Information
- ▶ Every piece of content is communicated in a rhythm relating to walking or biking speed.
- ▶ All our messages can be received on the move, in transit, on the road.

#### 4. We collaborate with key workers & strategic partners

We will continue to pursue a strategy we have started in the pre-selection phase: we have contacted key workers and strategic partners in existing networks and lobbies



and have won them over to the idea of ECoC. In this way we have established partnerships that allow us to reach their communities and so a broader public. Our partners cover various communities in the fields of education social affairs, the local art scene, the business community, mobility, children's institutions, tourism, artistic and cultural institutions, other ECoCs.

## ACTIVITIES AND CAMPAIGNS

### 1. Developing the St. Pölten 2024 brand in an integrated process

We will press the reset button. Start/end of 2019 we will involve all relevant players to develop the brand "St. Pölten 2024" in an integrated process to develop the corporate identity and brand the city to the outside world. Only a holistic approach will be successful in turning around the contradictory and negative image that St. Pölten still has in many eyes.

### 2. Developing the identity of the Culture Region St. Pölten as the basis for its strategic positioning

Our aim: the Culture Region St. Pölten being a unique living environment will assign its own place on the map of Europe as a sustainable destination with St. Pölten clearly at the centre.

1. In September 2019, a process of defining the identity of the Culture Region St. Pölten was started.
2. The Culture Region St. Pölten will be integrated into Lower Austria's new tourism strategy.
3. The regional development was officially anchored as an annex in the existing Strategy for Art and Culture of the Province of Lower Austria and adopted by the Provincial Government of Lower Austria. Our artistic and cultural programme will develop the region as a cultural network.
4. We will create an autonomous cultural tourism brand for the region followed by marketing activities

### 3. Mobilising a broad European public

#### ► Defining our target groups

OUR OWN PEOPLE	People living in St. Pölten and the Culture Region St. Pölten. Within 30 minutes by public transport and 2 hours by bike
OUR NEIGHBOURS	People living within a 300 km radius. This includes the rest of Austria, Germany, Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy
OUR WIDER EUROPEAN AUDIENCE	People interested all over Europe: e.g. in Switzerland, France, Italy, the UK, Poland, Estonia; people in mid-size cities who want to become part of our movement, such as Opava (CZ), Martin (SK), Nagykanizsa (HR), Trnava (SLO), Bozen (IT), Clichy (FR), Aarhus (DK), Leeuwarden (NL), Mons (B) and many more

#### ► Strengthening and developing strategic partnership and communications networks

We are already cooperating or plan to cooperate with local, regional and European strategic partners from different fields, using their already existing communications networks to spread our messages, for example in the formats of co-branding and co-creation

Mobility	ÖBB (Austrian Federal Railways), Verkehrsbetriebe (LUP-Busse) St. Pölten, Verkehrsverbund Ost Region (VOR), NÖVOG (NÖ Verkehrsorganisationsgesellschaft m.b.H), Bicycle rental firms
Tourism	Austrian National Tourist Office, Lower Austrian Tourism and Destination Management Organisations, St. Pölten Tourist Board, Vienna Tourist Board, Tourist Board Linz
Children	ZOOM Kindermuseum (Vienna/AT), Children's museums all over Europe, NÖ Familienland, cultural providers with high-quality children's programmes
Science	New Design University St. Pölten, University of Applied Sciences
ECoCs	Graz, Linz, Rijeka, Galway, Timișoara, Eleusis, Novi Sad, Esch-sur-Alzette, Kaunas, Veszprém, Tartu, Bodø
Economy	Our future sponsors and business partners, the Platform 2020, the Kaufmannschaft St. Pölten
Art and Culture	See Chapter 2 and 3

#### ► Building up the community's capacity with our <CulturalChangeCampus>

We link civic activists and bloggers, influencers, opinion leaders, local and international journalists to create an interdisciplinary pool of ambassadors who will work throughout St. Pölten and its environs, within a radius of 300 km and within wider Europe. We offer training in social media skills such as Instagram movies and motivate them to share whatever interests them and to talk openly about what touches their hearts.

#### ► Using the entire bandwidth of digital and analogue communication channels

Owned media	Our digital tools range from the st-poelten2024.eu website, the digital newsletter, detailed blogs and podcasts featuring artistic content to the virtual ECoC, the augmented reality app and our app stp2024, which provides visitors with information about their stay and about the ECoC programme.
Shared media	Channels such as facebook, twitter, instagram, google+ and analogue life continue to be our most important communication tools for direct communication with our community.
Earned media	Word-of-mouth, comments, forums, reviews, blogs, public relations. This entire area, which is steadily gaining in importance, will be looked after proactively in collaboration with our pool of communicators.
Paid Media	Advertising in print media, tv, radio; displays (out-of-home), direct mail, paid search. The emphasis here will be on cooperation, methods will include algorithmic targeting.

## 4. St. Pölten 2024 as a space for experience

#### ► Radically lived hospitality

Everybody is welcome! By a reassessment of the traditional roles of residents and visitors, of hosts and guests, we want to change direction. We will create preconditions that will shrink traditional distances between travellers and "travellees": we invite visitors to our home, to our table. We want to get to know them and exchange ideas with them. We want to give them personal recommendations & tips.

Our opportunities to do so will include the central homebase *MAIN STATION Europe* at home for visitors and residents, a place of encounter, interaction, enquiries, ticket purchase or simply for chilling, graduates from the School for Tourism St. Pölten invite people to their long table laden with regional specialities, specially branded hospitality tables all over the city invite visitors to meet locals and every visitor will be given a "Change Direction" set comprising a map, a WLAN password, the code for a bicycle rental, the week's programme, flower seeds to be scattered in public space.

Please describe the partnerships planned or established with media with a view to ensuring wide coverage of the event

We have already set up a close working relationship with the media during the selection phase aimed above all to promote the ideas behind ECoC. We will expand our existing relationships, e.g. with the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Corporation), the Niederösterreichische Nachrichten or the Bezirksblätter, in the future and supplement it with innovative formats.

#### ► Fair ticketing and individual packages

The NÖKU Holding has its own ticketing network. That allows STP2024 to offer its visitors the purchase of tickets without any extra charges. Barrier-free accessibility is as relevant here as it is to all other areas. In addition, we will provide a broad spread of concessions for specific groups, such as children, young people, students, apprentices, or people with disabilities or low incomes. The system allows us to offer tailored instead of on-size-fits-all packages: tickets for individual events, day passes, packages that include public transport and reductions on hotels, restaurants and bicycle rentals.

Our "You-Konfigurator" generates customised offers online for every visitor, taking into account special interests. The result comes complete with access codes for additional services. In addition, there are standard packages such as: "Dare to go out" (for the Vienna-Tourist), "Please change direction!" (for railway users in transition), "Children.Art.Lab." (families)

## Planned cooperations with media and tourism institutions in order to reach our community – a selection

OUR LOCAL AND REGIONAL PEOPLE	OUR EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
<p>► <b>Local print media</b> St. Pölten Konkret, NÖN (Lower Austrian News), Bezirksblätter, mfg, Campus Radio St. Pölten</p> <p>► <b>Local editorial offices of Austrian supraregional newspapers and magazines</b> Kurier, Kronen Zeitung, HEUTE</p> <p>► <b>Cultural magazines</b> Cultural magazines "morgen" of the Province of Lower Austria and the NÖKU Group and "Schau-fenster" of the Kultur.Region.Niederösterreich</p> <p>► <b>ORF Landesstudio Niederösterreich (TV)</b> A partnership with the NÖ Landesstudio of the ORF is already discussed with a view to ensuring the broadest possible media coverage via the channels of ORF – TV, Radio and online. The ORF is also considering to produce special programmes.</p>	<p>► Integration of St. Pölten 2024 into the marketing activities of Lower Austrian Tourism and its destinations. Communication via these channels:</p> <p>► Online: content on website <a href="http://www.niederoesterreich.at">www.niederoesterreich.at</a> in German, English, Czech, Hungarian, Slovak, Polish, social media activities, newsletter with 22,000 subscribers in Austria and Germany, e-zine articles</p> <p>► Media: supplement with around 850,000 copies in wide-reach print media in Austria and Germany (DerStandard, Presse, Kurier, Krone, Süddeutsche, etc.);</p> <p>► Public Relations: in Germany, Slovakia, Hungary and Czech Republic; annual PR events in Germany and in one of the Central and Eastern European countries</p> <p>► B2b Marketing: trade shows/events such as the ITB Berlin (2020), Ferien Messe Wien (ab 2021), River Road Show 2021, City Event Linz 2022. In addition, STP2024 will be linked to the Convention Bureau Niederösterreich and to Group Travel Lower Austria</p>
OUR NEIGHBOURS	
<p>► <b>Media in Austria</b> ORF, Development of a media plan featuring Austria's most relevant media for the field of culture (TV, print media and online).</p> <p>Through the NÖKU data network, we have access to around 650,000 addresses of people interested in culture. By cooperating with the cultural institutions of the NÖKU Group, we can reach the target group relevant to us beyond our borders via various communication channels (printed matter such as programmes, folders, mailings, newsletters, online, social media).</p>	<p>In addition, St. Pölten plans to cooperate with the Austrian National Tourist Office. There is a wide selection of possibilities in the b2b and b2c sector:</p> <p>► <b>B2B activities to notify relevant travel agency early on:</b> presentation at the atb – Tourismusfachmesse 2020, B2B workshops for instance in the Czech, Polish, Slovak and Hungarian markets</p> <p>► <b>B2C activities in select European countries</b> Participation in official campaigns with online and offline elements such as: crossmedia content cooperation, online cooperation, print cooperation, CPC publicity, Influencer Travel <a href="http://austria.info">austria.info</a>, press &amp; B2B newsletter, pressevents, etc, production of an e-zine, press releases, Programmatic-Native-Advertising, Google Ads, Direct Mailing, Influencer cooperations. Individually tailored activities such as blogger trips, press events, press activities</p>



How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?

Europe is at the heart of our outreach, our communications and our whole programme

By consistently presenting European Capital of Culture as an EU initiative we confirm in all our formats what was already clear in the selection phase – the great importance we accord to Europe. Our artistic programme *Europe at home – Rescaling Distances* is thoroughly European. Additionally to that, we will be foregrounding the values of the European Union in a raft of projects.

In December 2023 we want to be the venue for the European Film Awards; negotiations with the organisers are pending. With its Europe-wide appeal to the media and the public, this would in our eyes be an ideal appetiser for 2024. This will be followed only a few weeks later by the *Opening of St. Pölten 2024*, a landmark event we will celebrate with, among others, representatives of the European Union, other ECoCs and our colleagues from Tartu and Bodø and our European partners. We very much hope all will join us in St. Pölten on this unique occasion. 2024 will mark a high point in communicating our project. The EU logo will be omnipresent in all our owned, shared, earned and paid communication channels, making it abundantly clear that St. Pölten 2024 is the result of an EU initiative. No matter where you look – at the MAIN STATION Europe at Home, along the *Tracks* or at St. Pölten's railway station: the European Union will be there for all to see.

May 2024 is the date for the next elections to the European Parliament. Together with the region's youth organisation, schools and universities, St. Pölten 2024 will initiate a campaign entitled Democracy – Culture – Europe 2024: Why is voting so important? Our goal is for St. Pölten and the Culture Region to achieve the largest turnout of voters aged 30 and less in Austria.



The international two-day symposium Europaforum Wachau at Stift Göttweig will link its 2024 theme, “Art and Culture”, to the programme of St. Pölten 2024. An Erasmus+ project and youth exchange programme in collaboration with the Youth Regional Network will give the event an additional youthful and international note.

The Melina Mercouri Prize, endowed with 1.5 million euros and if awarded, will be dedicated to projects that have been especially successful and therefore be continued in 2025, projects that will have become inseparable from St. Pölten's identity in the eyes of its residents. Which projects will be in that category? We are curious to find out!

In the meantime we would like to raise the question of the impact St. Pölten 2024 is going to have on the population's attitude towards the EU. Our evaluation project Storyteller for European Culture, which concerns itself with this question, will unfold in parallel with the research project The Future of Democracy in Austria and EU. The Forum Morgen Privatstiftung's project will oversee research on the topics of democracy and the regions undertaken at the Donau Universität Krems in collaboration with universities in Berlin, Krakow, Tübingen and Graz. In addition to that, specific indicators will be monitored such as awareness of the European Union and its institutions, the media presence of topics of European and global relevance, European twinned cities and voter turnout at elections of the EU Parliament in 2024.

With our mix of measures both in the preparatory years and in 2024, Europe and the European Union should be permanently present so that in the end, St. Pölten 2024 will create definitely more awareness in the long term.

How will you mobilise your own citizens as communicators of the year to the outside world?

## Taking an active part

Our openly proclaimed strategy is to turn residents, representing our values, into communicators by letting them take an active part in St. Pölten 2024 on many different levels and inviting them to make their own contribution. Personal engagement and participation turn them into ambassadors for the whole project and all it contains: ambassadors active within their own networks and beyond, not only in their own families, communities, associations and clubs but outwards into the wider circle of their whole acquaintance: their colleagues, business partners, businesses and organisations – and, of course, our neighbours in wider Europe! Offering full support, the <CulturalChangeCampus> sets communicators on their way.

### Residents as CONTRIBUTORS to the programme of St. Pölten 2024

Already in the selection phase we have issued four open calls: more than 300 proposals have been submitted to the pool of project ideas, from which we have selected various *Stops*. We are looking forward to developing these proposals further as part of the <CulturalChangeCampus> once 2020 is upon us. In addition, we are introducing a broad range of participative artistic projects, most of which will be found in the Track *Come Closer*, rubbing shoulders with the *Statt-Orchester* and the *Community Dance*.

### Residents as STORYTELLERS

Residents recount their own, very personal stories scattered all over Europe. What makes them tick? What special significance is there in coming from St. Pölten and the Culture Region? What is life like in a typical mid-sized European city?

At the <CulturalChangeCampus> we will create an interdisciplinary pool of digital story-tellers: residents will exchange ideas with bloggers, influencers, opinion leaders, international and local journalists. In training and coaching sessions they will be taught social media skills, which will in turn allow them to spread and share the message of St Pölten 2024.

### Residents active in business as CLUB 2024 MEMBERS

Our networking and communication platform *CLUB 2024* will go live in 2020 and connect all business and sponsoring partners of St. Pölten 2024. These partners share our values and our ambition to create added value for our society and can be counted upon to use their networks to spread the spirit of our great project.

### Residents as HOSPITALITY AMBASSADORS

The staff of tourist information points, of catering and lodging establishments, tour guides, taxi drivers: these are the kind of people who will be in first and especially close contact with our visitors. To prepare for their role as ambassadors for radically lived hospitality, we will regularly be offering information events and coaching for people with a wide range of professional backgrounds. This will be done via the networks of our strategic partners and via our <CulturalChangeCampus>.

### Residents as KEY WORKERS and COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

We are enlisting the cooperation of promoters from various communities, such as the local scene, education and sports. They will be encouraged to spread the message of St. Pölten 2024 and to make sure it reaches their communities. A catalogue of available tools and of further-training and networking measures, which will be part of the <CulturalChangeCampus>, is designed to help these key workers to alert members of their communities to the agenda of St. Pölten 2024 and to inspire them to take their part.

### Residents as EVALUATORS and KULTUR CHECKER

We are planning to involve residents and guests alike in the active evaluation of the St. Pölten 2024 programme – as *Kinder-Kultur-Checker* or *Citizen Scouts*. Their special skills, enthusiasm and potential will help us to see ourselves as others see us and to change our own direction whenever we need to.



- 1 Please supply evidence of the continuous political support and commitment from the relevant authorities.

## Broad, strong support across party demarcation lines from the city and the province

Left-leaning, Social Democratic St. Pölten and the Conservative ruled Province of Lower Austria make common cause for the city's bid for European Capital of Culture 2024. Their political differences do not stop the two entities pulling in the same direction in such matters as the foundation of the Office St. Pölten 2024 and the important decision-making processes, funding and support. All resolutions were passed unanimously by the relevant authorities of the city, the province and Office St. Pölten 2024 so far.

Commitment to and support for St. Pölten 2024 by political representatives and the relevant authorities runs like a golden thread through all phases and decisions :

### The Office St. Pölten 2024 (LLC) was founded as an independent company by the city and the province.

Founded in 2017, the Office St. Pölten 2024 be solely responsible for the implementation of ECoC 2024 and will oversee the operation of the Children.Art.Lab. The City of St. Pölten holds 50 % of the LLC, while the share of the Province of Lower Austria is split between two strategic partners: 35 % is held by the NÖKU-Holding, 15 % by the Lower Austrian Tourism Board.

### The representatives of the city and the province take part in all important decision-making processes overseen by the various boards. Political influence on the cultural programme has been ruled out.

Decisions concerning infrastructure or long-term strategy elicit strong political support. The representatives of the city and the province take part both in all boards of the Office St. Pölten 2024 and in all working groups – such as the one for the development of the Culture Region St. Pölten, for the formulation of the “Guidelines for Public Space” and of the cultural infrastructure list. The same is true when it comes to formulating innovative concepts for the *Children.Art.Lab*, the *Former Synagogue* and the *Cathedral Square*.

### The relevant boards of the city and the province have unanimously voted for decisions in principle concerning funding

The city and the province have approved investment in cultural infrastructure totalling 36 million EUR (in the event of nomination) or 30 million EUR (in the event of non-nomination). This means that these plans will actually be implemented at this level. The operative programme budget has likewise been hedged by relevant decisions. Come what may, it cannot be absorbed into the cultural infrastructure budget.

### St. Pölten 2024 meets with uniform approval in City and Province – and beyond

Among St. Pölten 2024's most reliable supporters are the St. Pölten City Council (its Chief Executive Office, the departments of Finance, Law, Future Development, Business, Marketing, Culture, Education and Construction), St. Pölten City Marketing, St. Pölten Tourist Board, the departments Art and Culture, Business, Tourism and Technology, and International and European Affairs, the Education Authority of the Province of Lower Austria, the Lower Austrian Tourism Board and their affiliates in the Culture Region St. Pölten, mayors and people in charge of the tourism agenda in many municipalities of the Culture Region St. Pölten and the Lower Austrian Chamber of Agriculture.

We are in particular pleased about the future cooperation with the Austrian National Tourist Office, the Vienna Tourist Board and Tourist Board Linz, which officially market Austria, Vienna and Linz respectively all over the world. The Verkehrsverbund Ost-Region, one of the largest regional transport service providers in Eastern Austria catering for 950 million passengers a year and the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB), with a staff of 40,000 and 1.5 million passengers a day, are to become strategic partners of our application in the field of sustainable mobility of the future. Initial talks are already underway with the top management .

- 2 Please detail the state of play of the foreseen infrastructure projects detailed at pre-selection stage, including the planned timetable for the works. Please clarify the links with the European Capital of Culture project.

## Our philosophy of “abandoned places” fires up urban development

Coming face to face with their own identity is the key to developing and sharpening the cultural profile of European mid-size cities. Space is of the essence here: there are so many sites in St. Pölten with great potential, calling out for development, that the city gives the impression of being unfinished. It is this state of being unfinished, in a thoroughly positive sense, that offers a great deal of manoeuvring space for artistic productions and for as yet untried forms of co-existence and of actually living side by side. Other European mid-sized cities have similar resources of their own. This is why we want to share our experiences with them and learn from theirs.

Our strategy provides for putting centre stage anything that is unfinished in a positive sense and for transforming these sites into key features of the city. Places and infrastructure projects we invest in and link to our programme are integral to developing St. Pölten's identity and giving it a cutting edge. How will we do this? By incorporating these infrastructure projects into the programme of St. Pölten 2024, by working out long-term operating concepts and by providing budgetary guarantees for them to continue operating after 2024.

### All the city is a stage

Abandoned places are sites that have lost their original raison d'être or have otherwise fallen into disuse. They include vacant factories, car sales plots, castles, cinemas and pubs. All of them can be turned into training facilities for as yet untried forms of living together. Use of these easily accessible sites will help to reduce barriers to entry and reach a younger and ethnically significantly more diverse audience. By assigning them new functions we want to shift their perspective and pass on positive impulses. “In-between” and “abandoned” places will be given a new purpose, with all the positive effects this entails for their surroundings and for the appearance of the city at large. We deliberately invest primarily in existing buildings because we want to warn against urban spread and the disuse of green space which is on the up and up all over Europe. We will confine ourselves to just the one entirely new construction project, the *Children.Art.Lab*.

### Giving the city's cultural profile a cutting edge

- ▶ All measures are designed to give the city's cultural profile a cutting edge and to enhance its sense of identity.
- ▶ We integrate all relevant cultural players into the process of formulating the required content-related and operational concepts, with a view to strengthening their sustainability and their acceptance, thus assuring their long-term operation.
- ▶ Investments are restricted to cultural infrastructure whose operation is assured after 2024 in terms both of funding and and strategic and content-related operational concepts.
- ▶ We primarily invest in existing infrastructure. The only new construction project is an institution for children designed to empower them for the challenges they face in the future.

### EXCURSUS: Why investment as specified in the cultural infrastructure list eschews the Culture Region St. Pölten

St. Pölten is surrounded by a region – referred to in this Bid Book as the Culture Region St. Pölten – which is remarkable for its high levels of art and culture. The past has seen a great deal of investment in the cultural infrastructure of this region. All the while St. Pölten was ignored, even though the refurbishment and adaptation to present needs of many institutions was long overdue. This is why we will restrict investment to the cultural infrastructure of the provincial capital, the focal point of the Culture Region St. Pölten. The only new construction project, the competence centre *Children.Art.Lab*, is designed to have an effect that is regional and international rather than merely local.

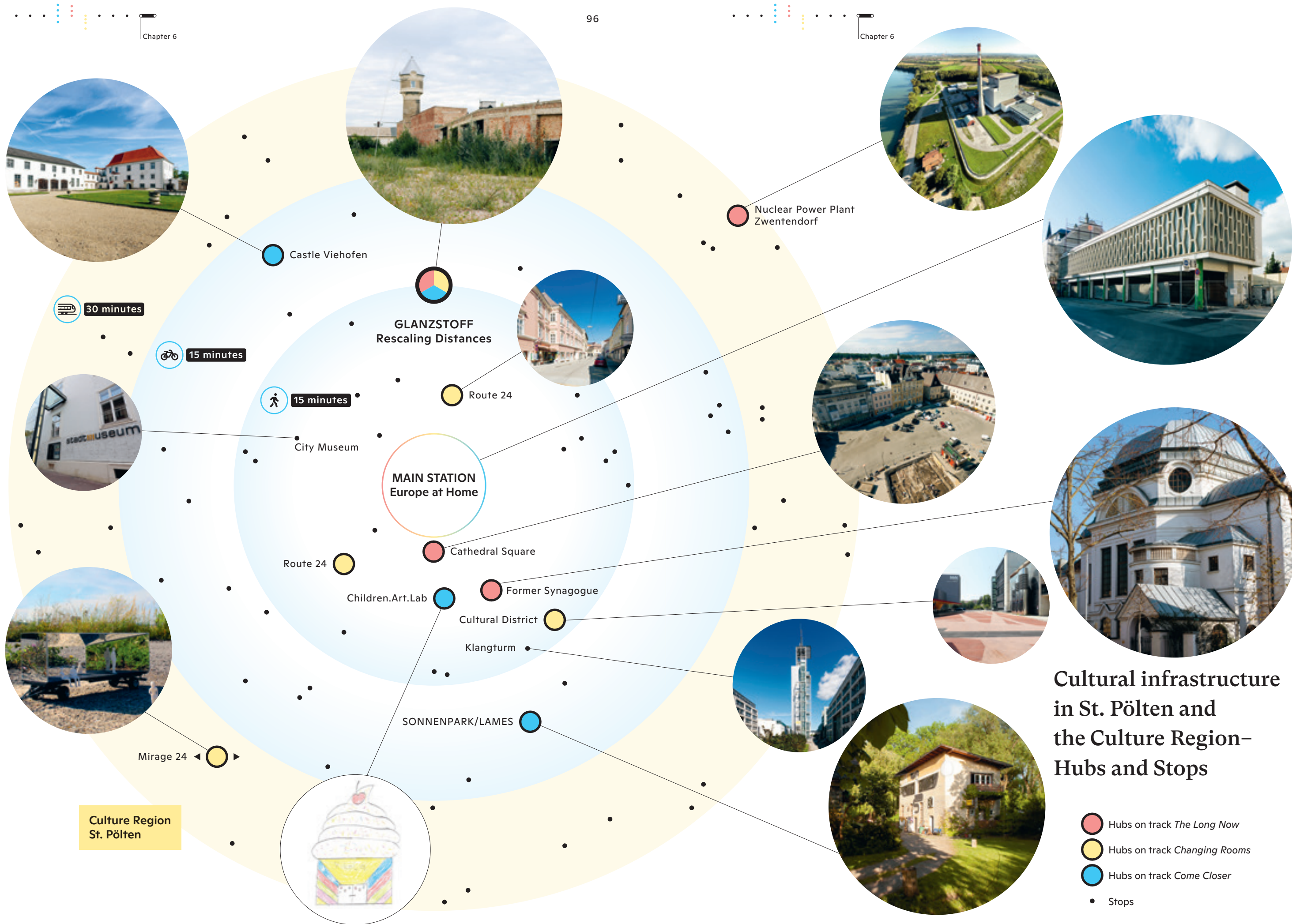


The table below outlines how everything is connected: which cultural infrastructure projects will be realised, why and how they are realised, how they are linked to the programme of St. Pölten 2024 and to the subsequent long-term strategy. (see the table showing which amount will be spent for each project ► page 76)

Why?	Vision	Time schedule	Link to Programme St. Pölten 2024	Legacy
<b>Hub Cathedral Square</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► The cradle of historical St. Pölten and focus point of European history</li> <li>► Used at present as a parking lot and twice weekly as a market place</li> <li>► One of the largest “abandoned places” in the centre of St. Pölten.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Car-free at least throughout 2024</li> <li>► Use as market place, as a place to linger and communicate, and as a platform for the presentation of historical finds and cultural events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► EU-wide call for tenders for the design of the refurbishment (2020)</li> <li>► Trial use (2023)</li> <li>► Implementation phase (until summer 2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2023)</li> </ul>	<b>HUB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Opening event</li> <li>► ECoC Art installation</li> <li>► Orchestral karaoke</li> <li>► Symphonic Mob</li> <li>► Movie at the Cathedral Square</li> <li>► Artistic light design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Has the potential to be the heart of the inner city</li> <li>► Has the potential to become car-free</li> <li>► Venue for artistic and cultural productions</li> <li>► Long-term dedication as market place</li> </ul>
<b>Hub Children.Art.Lab</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Result of the 2018 participative process and the only new cultural infrastructure project</li> <li>► An autonomous institution focused on the promotion of contemporary art and cultural competences for children</li> <li>► Accepting responsibility for the youngest members of our society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► A venue designed for children to get to know contemporary art and artists from all over Europe</li> <li>► Competence centre and networking hub for education programmes on a European level</li> <li>► Information and counselling centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► EU-wide call for architecture based on the concept formulated within a participative process (2019)</li> <li>► Establishing a Children's Advisory Board and appointment of the Artistic Director (late 2020)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<b>HUB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► 3-4 exhibitions a year</li> <li>► Workshops and Open Studio offers for children and school groups</li> <li>► Children's book library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Unleashing the educative potential of art and culture</li> <li>► Enabling children to realise how much they can contribute to shaping their environment</li> <li>► Operation in the post-2024 era guaranteed by city and province</li> </ul>
<b>Hub Former Synagogue</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► The destruction of the Jewish community by the Holocaust</li> <li>► The only former Synagogue in the German-speaking area to have been restored to its former splendour</li> <li>► Refurbishment and adaptation required as well as long-term funding of operation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Refurbishment and adaptation</li> <li>► Creating a place dedicated to history, to remembrance, to getting to know and to promoting the different Jewish cultures in Europe</li> <li>► Creating a venue for educational activities, research and installations</li> <li>► Making it accessible to the public, notably to schools</li> <li>► Close collaboration with local institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Formulation of a operating concept by a working group including the Institute for Jewish History in Austria and representatives of the city and the province (2019)</li> <li>► Establishing agreement in matters of content with the owner (2019)</li> <li>► Establishing an independent trademark and organisation (2023)</li> <li>► Planning and refurbishment (2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<b>HUB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Installations: Jahrzeit, Standpunkte</li> <li>► Science Goes Public</li> <li>► Europa Jehudit – European Festival of Jewish art and culture</li> <li>► Discourse format: European Debates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Long-term lease contract concluded with the Former Synagogue's owner (mutual waiver of termination for 40 years)</li> <li>► Guaranteeing the Synagogue's use for artistic and cultural purposes also in the post-2024 era by city and province</li> </ul>
<b>Hub SONNENPARK/LAMES</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Large, communally cultivated park in the inner city</li> <li>► Used by two associations as a testing ground for alternative forms of artistic creativity and social co-living</li> <li>► The clubhouses have been in need of restoration ever since LAMES moved in around 20 years ago</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Partial refurbishment and adaptation of the clubhouses</li> <li>► Upgrading the houses so that it can be used as a venue all year, while part of the house continues to be used by the associations for their own purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Working out different versions of the adaptation in a participative process involving the local scene and experts (2019)</li> <li>► Commissioning a static expertise and a feasibility study (2019)</li> <li>► Devising a long-term operational concept (2020)</li> <li>► Planning and implementation phase (2020–2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<b>HUB</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Social sculpture</li> <li>► Space for utopias &amp; experimentation, studios and workshops</li> <li>► Artists in Residence</li> <li>► Co-creation space</li> <li>► Club and performance programme</li> <li>► Installations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Capacity Building as the result of collaboration between European artists and the local cultural scene</li> <li>► Renovation, operation and funding are based on a long-term operational concept agreed with both city and province</li> </ul>

Why?	Vision	Time schedule	Link to Programme St. Pölten 2024	Legacy
<b>Linking the inner city to the Cultural and Government District and the Traisen river</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Upgrading the link between two key city quarters and the recreational area on the banks of the Traisen river and shortening the effective distances between them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Revitalising the Cultural District as a venue for art and culture for residents and visitors</li> <li>► Revitalising the underused lanes along the connecting route and upgrade the walkway system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Setting up a working group involving all relevant institutions (2019–2020)</li> <li>► Joint search for planners (2019–2020)</li> <li>► Implementation phase (until 2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<b>Establishing a connection to the HUB Cultural District</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Opening event</li> <li>► Concerts and performances</li> <li>► Public art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Upgrading the quality of stopovers in urban public space</li> <li>► Integrating the Cultural District into the spatial context of the inner city</li> </ul>
<b>Stop St. Pölten City Museum</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Need for state-of-the-art exhibition venues</li> <li>► The museum is the city's memory of history</li> <li>► Need for an archaeological department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Creation of state-of-the-art exhibition and work areas</li> <li>► Presentation of the original finds made during excavations at the Cathedral Square, which make it necessary to rewrite the city's history</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Assessment of the technical improvement potential of the museum</li> <li>► Working out a concept for the new archaeological department (until 2020)</li> <li>► Completion of all work (2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Exhibition: St. Pölten and its Environs in the National Socialist Era</li> <li>► Presentation of the archaeological finds made at the Cathedral Square</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Ongoing scientific analysis of the archaeological excavations at the Cathedral Square in the post-2024 era</li> </ul>
<b>Stop Festspielhaus St. Pölten</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► St. Pölten's largest dance, theatre and music venue</li> <li>► Need for state-of-the-art stage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Automation of the stage equipment</li> <li>► Comprehensive barrier-free adaptation of the entrance, foyer and box office areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Implementation of adaptive measures (2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<b>linked to HUB Cultural District</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Community Dance Days</li> <li>► Stadt-Orchestra</li> <li>► Are at home/ Are in the garden/ Are at the beach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Improving accessibility</li> <li>► Increasing the venue's competitiveness in the fields of dance and theater</li> </ul>
<b>Stop Klangturm (tower of sounds)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► A marginal existence as a viewing tower</li> <li>► St. Pölten star-quality vacancy – silent for years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Maintenance measures</li> <li>► Revitalisation through temporary/seasonal use as a venue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Testing the tower as a venue for artistic events (from 2021)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<b>linked to HUB Cultural District</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Opening event ECoC</li> <li>► Voice and Vote</li> <li>► Radio networks</li> <li>► Radical Radio Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Seasonal utilisation in the post-2024 era – depending on previous experience</li> </ul>
<b>Privately owned venues</b>				
Why?	Vision	Time schedule	Link to Programme St. Pölten 2024	Legacy
<b>MAIN STATION Wesely house</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► 1960s brutalism Architecture (former car dealership)</li> <li>► Inner-city vacancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Use as homebase and welcome centre for St. Pölten 2024 – information point, central box office, meeting point, round-the-year venue for interdisciplinary artistic interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Agreement about use already reached with the owner</li> <li>► Adaptation phase (2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<b>MAIN STATION Europe at home</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Homebase and first port of call for all visitors, venue for events and exhibitions</li> <li>► Virtual European Capital of Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Usage may lead to new visions for the long-term utilisation</li> </ul>
<b>Hub Castle Viehofen</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► 1130: first recorded mention</li> <li>► Vacancy</li> <li>► View of the Culture Region St. Pölten</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► The castle and its open areas are used as venues for productions in 2024</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Agreement about use already reached with the owners</li> <li>► Adaptation phase (2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► One-to-One Performances</li> <li>► Luxury for the others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Long-term usage by the owners</li> </ul>
<b>GLANZSTOFF Factory premises</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Industrial architecture with landmark status</li> <li>► Part of a large scale area earmarked for urban development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Used for exhibitions and festival-like formats in the fields of performance, media art and installation and for discursive formats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Agreement about use already reached with the owner</li> <li>► Adaptation phase (2023)</li> <li>► Opening (2024)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Main exhibition Resacling Distances</li> <li>► Who needs Europe?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► May lead to a long-term development of the entire premises</li> <li>► A collaboration in the post-2025 era is conceivable</li> </ul>







Add any further information which you deem useful in relation with your application.

What does it actually mean to come from and live in St. Pölten – or to move away from St. Pölten? A native, who has been feeling the pulse of the city and its diverse inhabitants for years, tells us about his home in Europe. Johannes Reichl, born in 1974, is a true St. Pöltner, who already intensively dealt with his hometown during his studies. Since then, as a journalist and author, he has felt her pulse at regular intervals.



## Who we are? – Europe!



When I was born in St. Pölten, in 1974, the city was somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Neither fish nor flesh. Not a small town, but certainly no metropolis either. It was simply an indefinable somewhere, whose factory chimneys were spewing the smell of rotten eggs, which during thermal inversion periods made its way right into our living room. A place where the waters of the Traisen river tributaries were dotted with balls of foam.

In the days of our youth the city was if not hateful in our eyes then at least suspect. It was no *Heimat* to cast a spell on us and it certainly never inspired anything resembling “patriotism”. Many of us moved away – and who could blame them? Things here were stagnant, ossified – there was a general lack of fresh air and everything was so radically different in nearby ... Vienna! It was of course completely absurd to pit a city of 50,000 souls on the banks of the Traisen River against the former imperial capital of the k&k Monarchy, with its then 1.6 million inhabitants, but this is what people did. As a foil for nearby, glamorous Vienna, St. Pölten seemed to be the incarnation of everything provincial, boring, hopeless, ugly, backward. This was of course hardly conducive to our developing any kind of healthy self-esteem – and what was even worse: we ourselves were complicit in making that comparison by bringing it up again and again. It was painful, but we couldn’t help it. And with all this self-pitying railing against the city’s alleged weakness we entirely overlooked the strong points which were no less part of its character: the closeness – spatial and emotional, the mix of intimacy and anonymity, the general willingness to accept the otherness of others, baroque galore, the abundance of green spaces and, well, the city’s urbanity, which may run below its surface but is there if you look for it.

We did a lot better when St. Pölten became the capital of Lower Austria in the mid-80s. This move was designed to usher in St. Pölten’s emancipation from Vienna, a city that had, for as long as memory goes back, siphoned off its rural sister’s knowhow. This led to a long overdue phase of self-reflection, which ended up putting one thing centre stage: our history, which is at the same time the history of Europe, with stories about the Romans, the founders of monasteries and baroque



church princes rubbing along with tales about peasant uprisings, the French occupation, the plague, the fires; about the Industrial Revolution and the years of rapid industrial expansion; about the escalation of ideologically motivated tensions, civil war and the slide into fascism and dictatorship; to mad wars that brought out our capacity for heroism but laid bare our darkest side, and ended in the destruction of the city’s Jewish community, the execution of resistance fighters in the Hammerpark and lost loved ones in almost every family; about the Russian occupation and the *Wirtschaftswunder*, which attracted – and required – the first migrant labourers, who in St. Pölten mostly came from Turkey; and about the gradual genesis of the capital and the advent of refugees from former Yugoslavia who have found a new home here.

This makes our bid to be nominated European Capital of Culture the logical next step on the road we have chosen to travel: the emancipated European mid-size city stepping out from underneath the shadows and claiming due recognition as a place of innovation, transformation and networking and as an experimental lab where Europe’s great questions are tackled, rescaled to match the capacity of a city the size of St. Pölten. Europe itself functions as a framework of reference that opens up new perspectives and that is indeed – as the Selection Phase has made us see – the prime agent causing distances to be rescaled. City and countryside; civil society and the St. Pölten of officialdom; natives and migrants; business and culture; the city and its environs: all are tasked with finding common ground.

Today we have had our fill of looking at our shoes. Today we believe in ourselves. Today our eyes are on the horizon taking in other St. Pöltens all over Europe, ticking the way we tick, looking back on histories like our history, confronted with the challenges we are facing. We are not alone. We are like you and you are like us. Looking into our mirror, all visitors to St. Pölten will learn something about themselves. As citizens. As human beings. As Europeans. And they will perhaps be reminded that “Europe is not a word, it’s a state of mind!”

Europe is us.



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City of St. Pölten

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**Map mid-sized cities (p 2)**  
GeoMagis St. Pölten, Michael Bauer International GmbH

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What will YOU do  
TOMORROW  
in NEXT SPACE?



