



City of Regensburg (Germany)

World Heritage Status of the Alternate public transportation (ÖPNV) route over the Danube

1. Problems regarding public transport as suggested by the Municipality of Regensburg

The Municipality of Regensburg suggests that the closing of the 'Steinerne Brücke' to all motorised means of transport negatively affects the vitality of the city's old town. Therefore it has planned to build a new bridge, with two possible alternatives – either a west or an east route.

ICOMOS notes that profound and public criticism from the citizens' committee *No Alternate Bridge for Regensburg* (Nein zur Ersatzbrücke für Regensburg) has not been taken into account.

2. Report by Terra nova and Eisenlauer Voith (May 2010)

Terra nova and Eisenlauer Voith propose in their report that the alternate routes would not affect the core of the World Heritage Site. But this assumption is rather ill-founded since both of the routes are closely linked to the Site. Also, it is insufficient to consider primarily the bridges' effects on *outstanding historic monuments* and *individual objects*. Furthermore, it is not sufficient to give higher importance to *original medieval substance*, and lesser to the protection of monuments which were *erected after the Thirty Year War*.

ICOMOS considers that the report has several shortcomings: it does not mention that 300 large buses would drive up and down the ramps every day. This implies an additionally restricted view – a view not only influenced by the four metre high ramps, but also by the three hundred buses a day, each of them having a height of roughly three metres.

Over and above that, the survey's evaluation of the west route completely ignores historic considerations. Regarding the east route, the report determines that the area directly involved does not contain rather important historical matter. The effects on the landscape of the Danube islands are correctly evaluated as fairly unproblematic. The combined summary and evaluation are highly contradictory: on the one hand, it is conceded that the west route, *through its proximity to the historic centre bears the larger potential to influence and compromise the central value factors of the World Heritage area*. On the other hand the summary states that the east route has practically no effect in this respect and therefore the east route represents no potential threat to the World Heritage area. Hence, it is rather astonishing and not logical that the report's conclusion reads as follows: *Nevertheless, both options are judged to be compatible with the World Heritage*.

3. Impact of the west route on the historic monuments

The discussions about an alternate route for public transport focused on the so-called east and west routes. The east alternative would cross only the northern branch of the Danube at a relatively narrow section just outside the World Heritage area. For the west route it is planned to build a diagonal crossing of the main body of the river right in the middle of the World Heritage area. The western bridge would measure 140 by 11 metres approximately, with an overhead clearance of 6.5 metres above the mean water level. The ramps would lie 4 metres above today's street level and have a length of 60 to 70 metres.

4. Topographic situation and historic development

In the course of the last 850 years, only a very few bridges have been built over the Danube in the area of the Reichsstadt Regensburg. This fact remarkably differentiates Regensburg from those cities which have also developed on both sides of their rivers and which have regularly built new bridges in order to connect the riverbanks.

Within the World Heritage Area of Regensburg, the 'Steinerne Brücke' (a historic bridge) holds a uniquely outstanding position – the construction of the west route would definitely deprive this historic bridge of its primacy. Moreover, the west alternative would require a diagonal crossing over the Danube; a fact which goes against the tradition of the other bridges being aligned orthogonally to the river.

5. Historic values in Badstraße, Holzländestraße and Brunnleiten

Badstraße consists primarily of houses built by master fishermen and ship's captains in the 17th and 18th centuries. Their authenticity qualifies the majority of these buildings as individual historic monuments. This untouched and distinctive view over the Danube to the old town of Regensburg would be considerably compromised by the planned west alternate route and its bridge. The situation is quite similar across the river in

Holzländerstraße. The historic quality of the 15th to 18th century buildings there, with three-storied houses with their noteworthy gables and eaves, is key to the ensemble.

For the construction of the west alternate route, the Municipality of Regensburg has allowed for the demolition of the 'Eiserner Steg' (a footbridge across the Danube). This is especially remarkable since the Eiserner Steg fulfils all the criteria of a historic monument.

Conclusions

ICOMOS considers that the planned west alternate route would have serious consequences on the entire World Heritage Area of Regensburg: the competition to the Steinerne Brücke would lead to a loss of the topographic and structural individual value of this bridge. In addition, the plans would have a serious effect on the intact Danube view of the old town as well as detrimental effects on many valuable historic monuments and archaeological sites. Furthermore, the diagonal arrangement of the planned west river crossing is not typical for bridges in historic environments and would, therefore, disturb the overall appearance. Over and above that, the demolition of Eiserner Steg would lead to the loss of a significant monument.

ICOMOS would further recommend that the city give consideration to a fundamental reorganisation of the bus traffic in the area of Thundorfer Strasse and Keplerstrasse and beyond towards Arnulfplatz.

ICOMOS International
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