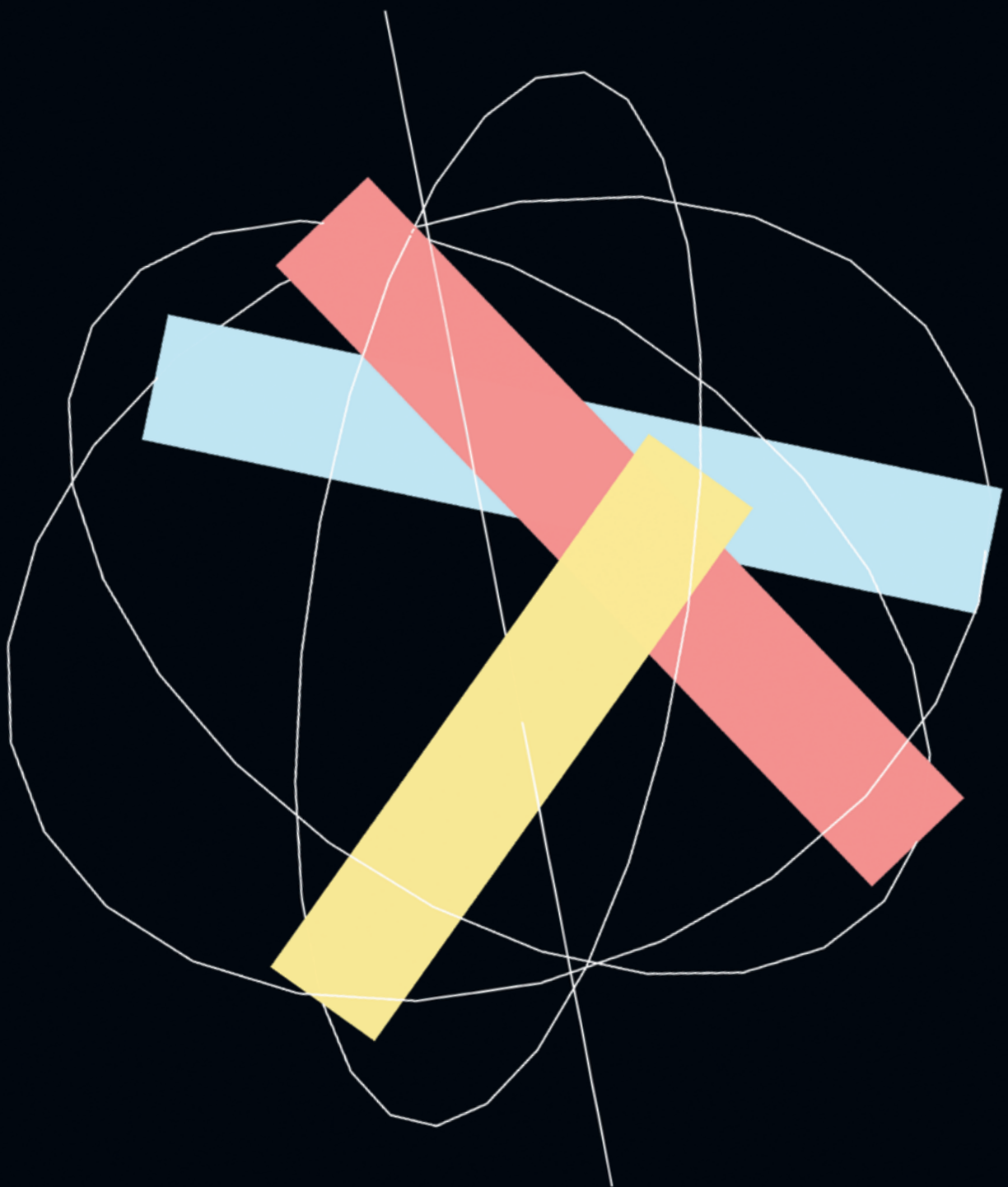
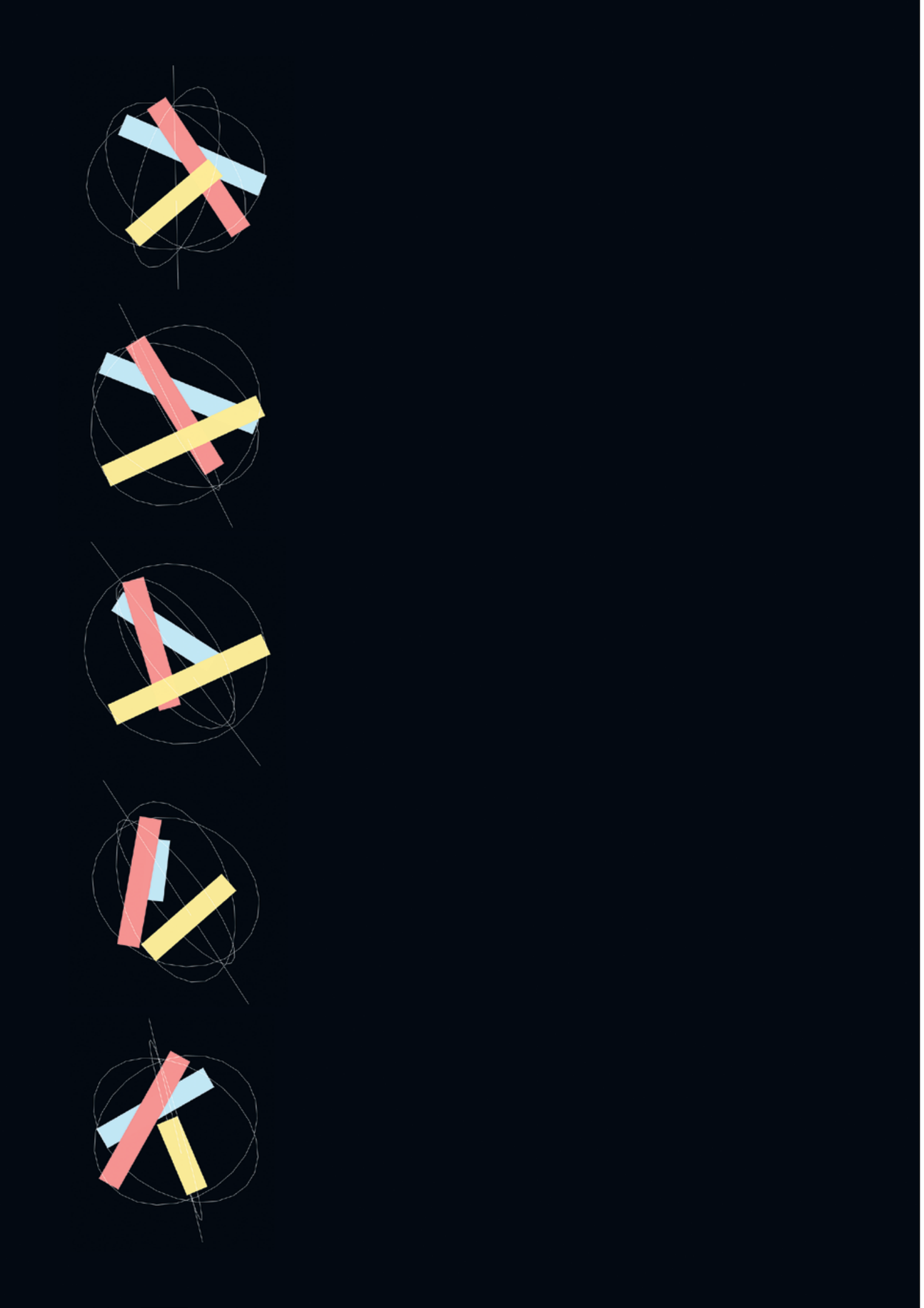
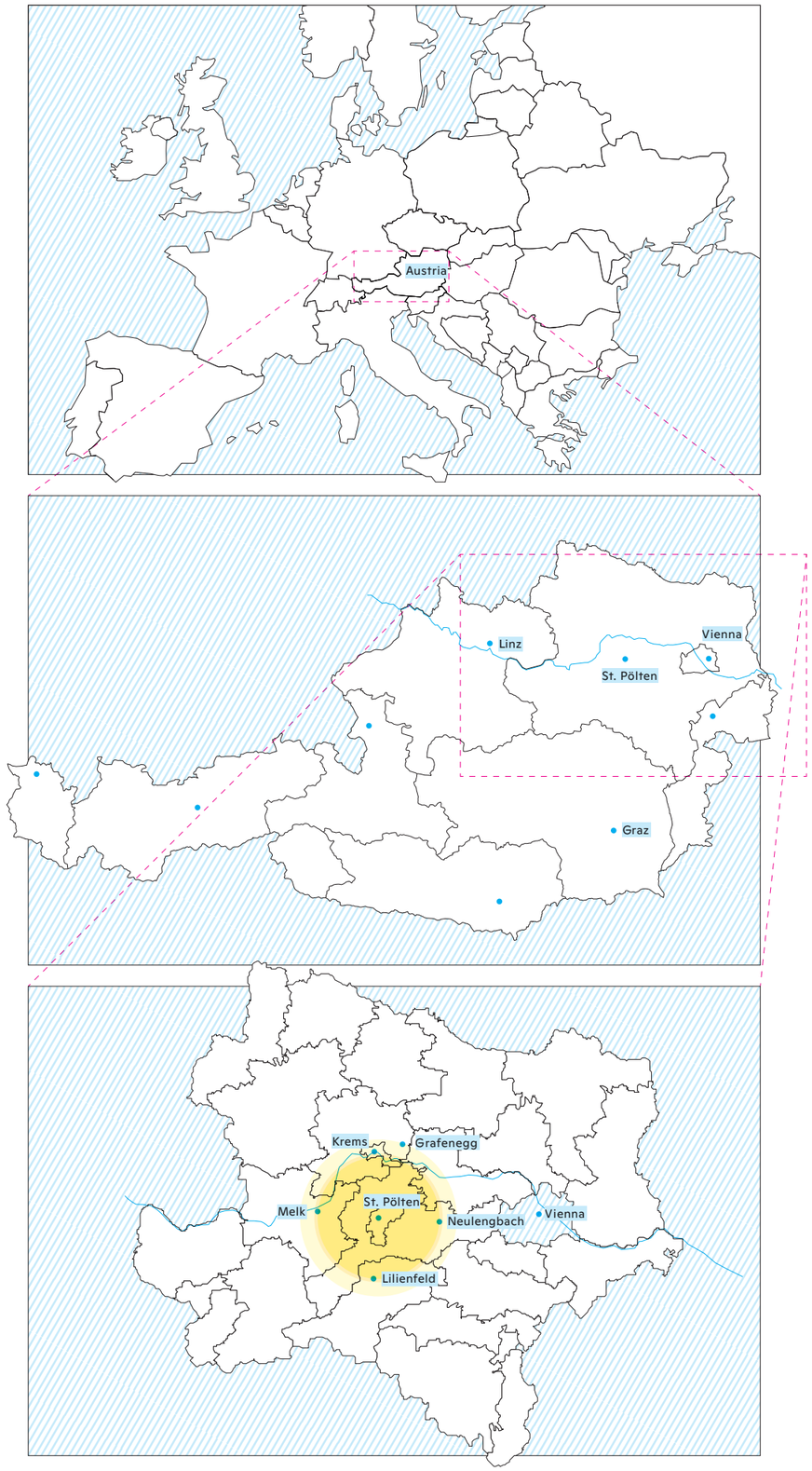
St. Pölten 2024





St. Pölten 2024



Capital of Culture Region (▶ 0 B)

01 0 Introduction

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Domplatz (Cathedral Square)



Sonnenpark and La Musique et Sun (LAMES) associations

0 Introduction

“More is possible tomorrow than you think is realistic today”

Quote from Robert Menasse

Why, of all cities, would St. Pölten – which, for some Austrians, is synonymous with all that is provincial and mediocre – apply to become European Capital of Culture 2024? This is a question we have been asked constantly. The answer: because this city has the potential, because the local population is fully committed, and because it offers ideal conditions for rescaling distances between opposites and contradictions. Our aim: to develop St. Pölten into a role model for a livable mid-sized European city in the centre of Europe!

FUTURE AND VISION

“More is possible tomorrow than you think is realistic today.” Writer Robert Menasse’s words about Europe also hold true for our application. The first initiative came in 2016, when the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART was created. A series of public events showed people’s resolve for St. Pölten and the surrounding region to apply, and the first ideas were gathered.

Data on population, economy and education prove that St. Pölten is a city at the dawn of a new future. And yet this process of change requires a clear goal, vision, and strategic framework. Therefore St. Pölten 2024 is the right project at the right time; civil society, politics and creative professionals are equally convinced of this. St. Pölten 2024 as a “project of the century” has the potential at last to position the city as the heart of an emerging, culturally rich, livable region “in the centre of Europe”, with great appeal for both business and tourism. Featuring on St. Pölten’s logo since 2004, the slogan references a commitment that the city would now like to demonstrate with confidence as European Capital of Culture 2024.

CITY AND PROVINCE

On 16 September 2017, the Governor of Lower Austria, Johanna Mikl-Leitner, and the Mayor of St. Pölten, Matthias Stadler, announced the application of St. Pölten as a joint project of the century. This is a new level of collaboration between the city and province. The relationship between Austria’s largest province and its youngest provincial capital – i.e. between the mainly agricultural, politically conservative province and the city with a social democratic tradition shaped by its workers’ culture – has been one of contradictions, resulting in untapped potential for too long. The shared objective allows us to take a broader view. We can now look beyond day-to-day politics and see the bigger picture of a Capital of Culture Region embracing St. Pölten as a role model for a livable European mid-sized city of the future!

METROPOLIS AND MID-SIZED CITY

Around the world, more people live in cities than in the countryside. While big cities tend to be in the limelight, the fact is that 60 per cent of European city dwellers inhabit mid-sized cities of under 300,000 residents. In terms of livability, added value, dynamics and appeal, these cities are particularly challenged, but they also offer ideal conditions for reacting to changes and challenges in society. Just like St. Pölten.

The aim of St. Pölten 2024 is to become a role model of a livable mid-sized European city, defining its individual urbanity beyond the nearby metropolis of Vienna. Yes, this is a big challenge, but we are determined to completely update our city and make this come true. The city has all the attributes to do so: a growing population, sound economic data, the fascinating blend of its Baroque historic centre combined with a modern cultural district, ambitious universities, lots of green space, excellent national and international public transport accessibility, and an open-minded population who have the clear determination and enthusiasm to continue on this path.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY AND FIELD OF EXPERIMENTATION

While the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy sets out the city’s long-term key objectives, St. Pölten 2024 offers the opportunity to be a creative, cross-genre field of experimentation with an international dimension. St. Pölten 2024 seeks to explore and challenge the perceived contradictions of a city on its way into the future – particularly in terms of the interplay between urban and rural space, between regional roots and international networking, between dealing with history and shaping the future, between high and subculture. This is the opportunity to try out innovative approaches and open up new perspectives!

EUROPE AT HOME

Europe, its regions and cities currently face huge challenges. Now, more than ever, there is a need for communication, interaction and discussion. While the level of the national state remains crucial for European policy, the development of the future of Europe calls for direct exchange. St. Pölten 2024 aims to rescale the distances separating the European and local or regional levels, to remeasure and, wherever possible, overcome them. The title would not only pave the way for our joint endeavour but would allow us to share our experiences and conclusions with a broad European audience.

Our bid to become European Capital of Culture is our driving force. It provides the framework for a bold, sustainable development of the city based on the cultural diversity of Europe, involvement of local citizens, and European cooperation. Thus, 32 years after the people of St. Pölten voted in a referendum to make the city the capital of Lower Austria, we want to make it a capital once again – the European Capital of Culture 2024!

Yes. We’re developing the Capital of Culture Region!

Granted, our goals may seem ambitious: developing a Capital of Culture Region; deepening the identity of a region in a Europe full of regions; creating a model of a mid-sized city near a major metropolis. The good thing is that we have an abundance of resources to draw from! Now it’s up to us to prepare the ground, unearth hidden treasures, polish the rough diamond, i.e. to build tight networks within the Capital of Culture Region and to establish St. Pölten as its cultural centre with a distinct, well-honed profile. St. Pölten shouldn’t have to settle for being the satellite of culture-hub Vienna; it should stand as an independent, self-confident city in the very heart of a region worth being and living in.

St. Pölten is in the centre of Europe in every way. It is a place right in the middle of a region that (unlike many rural areas in Europe) is not suffering from desolation but is electrified by art and culture in an extraordinary way. We need to raise awareness of that fact, first in our own minds, then in our visitors’. St. Pölten, a provincial capital with cultural flair: what we need to do is hone that profile and broadcast it far and wide. Doing so will include questioning traditional contrasts between city and country, creating new interactions or reinvigorating those that need a boost. St. Pölten 2024 is where borders blur and supposed poles merge into a unified whole.

THE BREATHING REGION

The thing that we’re still missing at the moment is a “felt region” around St. Pölten. No one – not the people living here, not outsiders – perceives the region as a unified whole. While there are emotional ties between stakeholders in the region, these should be expanded and new networks established if we’re to overcome municipal borders and political districts. After all, thinking in such categorical terms doesn’t exactly help us from a cultural or cultural tourism perspective. That is why we are defining a unique cultural region around the provincial capital, an area that boasts a diverse, contradictory and yet wonderfully complementary range of well-known art, culture brands and numerous initiatives: they include the Baroque Melk Abbey in the west, Lower Austria’s leading exhibition centre Schallaburg Castle, the Wachau world heritage region, Göttweig Abbey, the city of Krems with a focus on visual arts, and Grafenegg, which is now an international centre of classical music. Moreover, the Vienna Woods, the Dunkelsteinerwald hill country and the Trainsental and Pielachtal valleys in the Alpine foothills boast impressive landscapes and regional cultural histories. The Capital of Culture Region is developing its profile and taking shape.

The region should be a living organism, a flexible point of opportunity for content, programmes and experiences to evolve and re-energise the mutual interaction between St. Pölten and its surroundings, between city and countryside. Part of this process will consist in redefining St. Pölten’s unresolved relationship with the region.

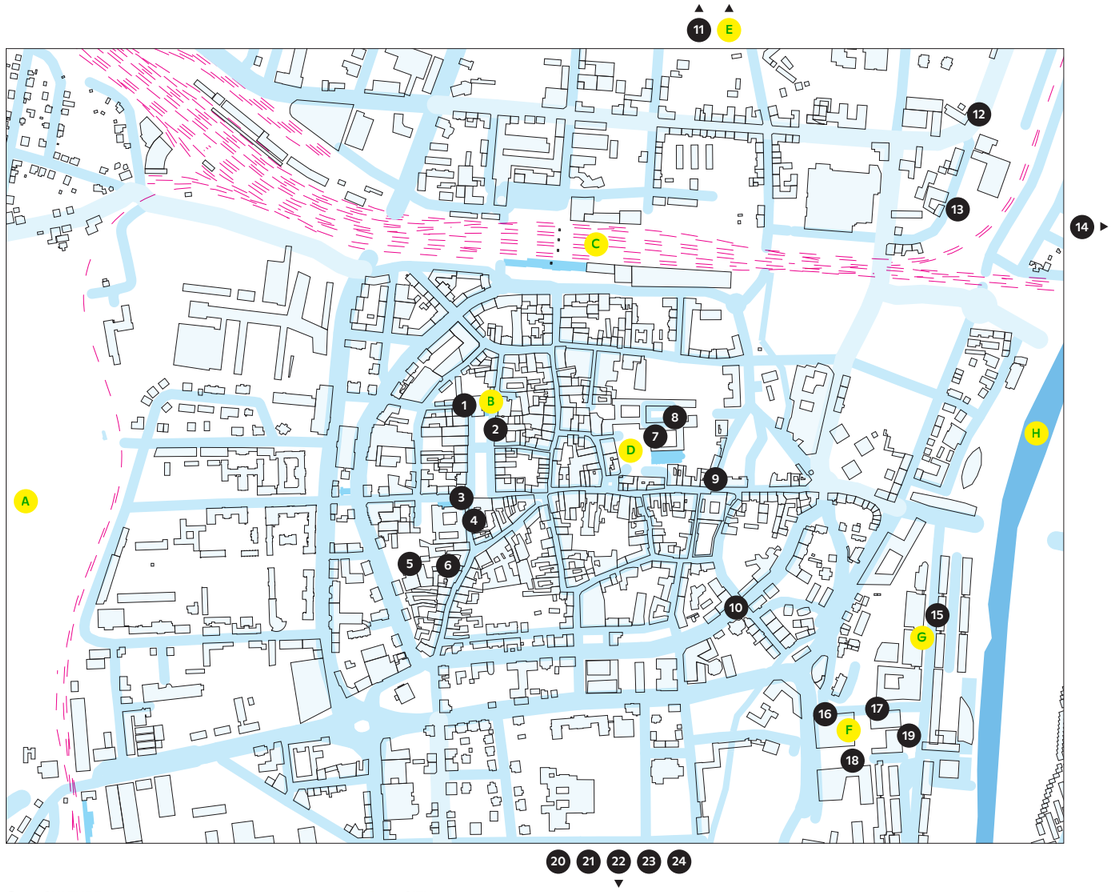
CONNECTING ST. PÖLTEN AND THE CAPITAL OF CULTURE REGION ON TWO LEVELS:

1. in terms of content and programme, with specific (socio-) cultural and artistic projects within the framework of the European Capital of Culture 2024.
2. in terms of cultural tourism, positioning the Capital of Culture Region nationally and internationally as a unique cultural region with a clear, independent identity close to metropolitan Vienna.

MANY EXCELLENT RELATIONSHIPS

Building the Capital of Culture Region on a marketing concept alone would be futile. What’s needed instead is to bring the cultural and cultural-historical identity of the area around St. Pölten to fruition as a distinct, generic region. This requires an active process of development that brings all stakeholders together. Over time, we should see a sustainable and dense network of connections between St. Pölten and the surrounding region, between actors and institutions in the fields of art, culture, tourism, transport and commerce. We’ve already kicked off this network-building process with a large number of animated discussions and events in 2018.

Our approach is genuinely European. We want to work out the special features of the region and use St. Pölten 2024 to highlight the Capital of Culture Region’s distinct profile on the European map as a super accessible cultural region with a unique, independent identity that can be experienced as such. Implementation of the Capital of Culture Region will be anchored in Lower Austria’s new tourism strategy, which is due to be launched in early 2020. Our development of the Capital of Culture Region is most radically regional, yet we also look far beyond our own backyard: we want to show Europe how the rural/urban relationship can be reinvigorated and charged with new meaning! (▸ See maps next to table of contents)



- CULTURE

01 Landestheater Niederösterreich (provincial theatre)
02 Cinema Paradiso
03 St. Pölten City Museum and Lower Austrian Documentation Centre for Modern Art
04 St. Pölten City Library
05 Bühne im Hof (music venue/cabaret)
06 KulturhauptSTART (civil society platform)
07 Dommusikverein St. Pölten (cathedral choir)
08 Diocesan museum
09 School of Philosophy and Theology
10 Former synagogue
11 St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences
12 Steppenwolf (youth centre)
13 Freiraum (youth culture centre)
14 Kulturhaus Wagram (cultural house) & Europaballett association
15 Lower Austrian Provincial Archives
16 Festspielhaus St. Pölten (festival theatre)
17 Lower Austria Provincial Library
18 Lower Austria Museum (including Haus der Geschichte and Haus der Natur)
19 Klangturm (tower of sounds)
20 School of music and arts St. Pölten
21 Former Forumkino (theatre)
22 New Design University
23 Sonnenpark & LAMES associations
24 VAZ St. Pölten (event centre) & Warehouse (club)

- CITY

A Municipal woods
B Rathausplatz (Townhall Square)
C St. Pölten Hauptbahnhof (railway station)
D Domplatz (Cathedral Square)
E Glanzstoff factory premises
F Cultural district
G Government district
H Traisen river



Historic city of St. Pölten

Worth seeing— but not visible enough

Boom, stagnation, upturn, shadowy existence: St. Pölten's history has been eventful since its beginnings. The Roman era was followed by a period of absolute calm, a slow resurrection starting in 800, the gradual development of the medieval city, which obtained a sort of town privilege in 1159, and the city's Baroque era many centuries later. It was not until industrialisation that another heyday set in. Art Nouveau left visible traces, the war its scars. St. Pölten becoming the provincial capital and Austria's accession to the EU were wake-up calls that activated the city and stepped up its pace. Now St. Pölten is biding to become candidate for the European Capital of Culture. It is full of optimism and energy, but always self-critical and aware of its flaws. At any rate, St. Pölten is used to dealing with flaws, and with criticism from outside.

St. Pölten is a young provincial capital: appointed just three decades ago, it has been the formal political centre of Lower Austria since provincial authorities moved here from Vienna in 1997. However, hardly anyone feels that St. Pölten is the country's cultural centre. This is despite the fact that a separate cultural district was created hand in hand with the government district, providing St. Pölten with many new cultural institutions and beefing up its previous mid-sized city offerings. The latter typically include a city museum, a city theatre, a city library, a few small festivals and – in St. Pölten's case – a wide network of associations (e.g. for young people and railway workers) and mainstays of blue-collar culture like decentralised cultural centres.

St. Pölten is undoubtedly an *important educational centre*, with Austria's oldest music school and universities that focus on innovation (in design and media technology, for example). More than 3,000 students roam the city, but are hardly present in "real" life; they just use the city, as do many others. All too often, St. Pölten is reduced to the role of a functional city. The fact that St. Pölten sits at the crossroads of important connections from east to west and north to south also makes it a transit point. But since every coin has two sides, we prefer to look at the other: all of this has considerable potential. And that is precisely what St. Pölten wants to boost in 2024!

CULTURAL LIFE THAT IS WORTH SEEING BUT NOT VISIBLE ENOUGH: A TOUR OF THE CITY

Any cultural tourist arriving by train has a 50:50 chance of taking the right exit from the station building: not the northern one, which leads into a residential and working district, but the southern one, where the inner-city pedestrian zone opens out to a Baroque ambience. Culture catches up with you in just a few minutes on foot, be it in the form of the *St. Pölten City Museum* or the *Landestheater Niederösterreich* (provincial theatre), *Cinema Paradiso*, the *Bühne im Hof* (music venue/cabaret), or the *St. Pölten City Library*. Bordering Domplatz (Cathedral Square), the city's historic centre and nucleus – which, admittedly, is currently mainly used as a car park – is the *Diocesan museum*.

Anyone who thinks that all roads lead to the cultural district is mistaken. Neither the cultural orientation system nor structural installations for pedestrians or cyclists and certainly no appropriate artistic design defines meaningful or even attractive paths between the historical centre and the cultural district.

If you take the route via Lederergasse, you will pass the *former synagogue*, which currently houses the *Institute for Jewish History in Austria* and its themed exhibitions. Another world suddenly opens up in the cultural district: architecturally impres-

sive cultural flagships like the *Festspielhaus St. Pölten* (festival theatre) with its enormous seating capacity, the *Provincial Library*, the *Provincial Archives* or the *Lower Austria Museum* (including *Haus der Geschichte* and *Haus der Natur*) mingle with austere office buildings in the government district to form a largely deserted "Mini-Brasilia". Created as the city became the provincial capital in the 1990s, it still feels like a bit of an alien element in town.

Here's an insider tip: the government district with over *50 public art projects* by renowned artists such as Hans Kupelwieser and Bruno Gironcoli is a hotspot for art in public space. Despite its European dimension, very few people know about it.

We get somewhat more visibility with the 77-metre-high *Klangturm* (tower of sounds), a walk-in sculpture made of glass and steel. It has become somewhat of a landmark for St. Pölten that has certainly seen better days as an innovative venue for the avant-garde of sound art. Today, St. Pölten's most prominent vacancy pragmatically serves as a lookout point, but with a wonderful view of St. Pölten and the future Capital of Culture Region! In good weather, you can make out not only the Kellergasse with its old wine cellars, but also the castles of Pottenbrunn, Viehofen, Wasserburg and Ochsenburg. Our next stop is *Sonnenpark* further south, where you'd think you were in hip Berlin rather than St. Pölten. With its self-empowered remix of art, culture (LAMES association), green and open space (Sonnenpark association), it serves as an exciting experimental ground for the independent scene.

Speaking of experiments: the entire city is home to young initiatives brimming with new ideas, such as the civil society platform *KulturhauptSTART*, *the Freiluft und Kultur association*, *or the Institute of Media Archaeology*. The city's cultural diversity is also reflected in a number of migrant-influenced associations, such as the *Alevist cultural community* with its event hall – incidentally one of the largest in St. Pölten. However, a key challenge we are facing is that the city's cultural life does not adequately reflect its ethnic, social and artistic diversity!

Cultural life in St. Pölten is of course also influenced by numerous traditional institutions such as the *Musikverein 1837 music association*, *the Dommusikverein*



Cultural district with Festspielhaus St. Pölten (festival theatre), Klangturm (tower of sounds) and Lower Austria Museum

St. Pölten cathedral choir, the St. Pölten City Choir, Europaballett, the Mozart community, a literary society, the St. Pöltner Künstlerbund artists' association in Löwenhof, or the Lower Austrian Documentation Centre for Modern Art in the City Museum, to name just a few.

Every year when the number of people in the city doubles, you know that it's *Frequency* time again. The pop music festival on the premises of the leading commercial event centre *VAZ* is literally overrun by young pop, rock and indie music fans from all over Austria and beyond. Festivals of predominantly regional importance take place throughout the year: the *Jazz im Hof* festival, the *Blätterwirbel* literature festival, a *children's and young adult book festival*, the *Baroque festival*, as well as the *Ost-West-Musik-Fest*, *Musica Sacra*, *Sonnenparkfest*, or *Höfefest*.

ST. PÖLTEN AS A CULTURAL CENTRE?

However, in a city of short distances – a characteristic that should actually be regarded as a plus – the hotspots of the cultural scene exist side by side rather than together: the small, Baroque city centre, the cultural district docked to the government district and decentralised venues of the independent scene have yet to form a coherent overall picture. The lack of structural connections is also an expression of the emotional distance that exists within the cultural scene – between the city and the province, and between institutions, players, and the independent scene.

RECHARGE ST. PÖLTEN

All this is to say that St. Pölten still has a lot of homework to do, but has the strong will to develop from the industrial city it once was into a city of education, art and culture. The potential is there, although you hardly see it at all in the city's external public perception. Vienna, Linz, Salzburg and even Krems are too close by with their diverse cultural scenes, while the idea that St. Pölten could also inspire visitors with a colourful, spirited range of artistic and cultural attractions seems too far away. This is exactly where St. Pölten 2024 wants to set new standards for the future, both with its cultural strategy and with this Bid Book!

0 D Explain the concept of the programme which would be launched if the city is designated as European Capital of Culture.

Europe at home—rescaling distances

"Europe at home – rescaling distances", a working title, encompasses a programme concept in which temporal, spatial and social distances are re-scaled and re-defined scientifically, artistically and socio-culturally using St. Pölten as a showcase model. The "Europe at home" programme approach seeks to close the perceived distance between Europe at large and the smaller-scale concept of home. It creates an opportunity to overcome detachment-inducing distance in favour of a creative, productive closeness. The distance to Europe is to be challenged, re-scaled and ultimately reduced on several fronts.

The German word *daheim* is a nebulous term for "within one's own four walls", the more neutral "home", and "homeland". For many people, the word "Europe" conjures a distant construct meaning precisely the opposite of "home". This distance stems, above all, from an individual feeling that has nothing to do with actual geographic distance. And yet the problem is not exclusive to the way Europeans feel about Europe; Lower Austrians also have trouble embracing St. Pölten as an emotional centre of the province, despite serving as its capital for 32 years. This emotional distance stands in stark contrast to the gradual acceptance of St. Pölten as a political capital over the years. St. Pölten 2024 aims to use a bold, innovative programme to renegotiate distances both within the city and in the surrounding Capital of Culture Region. Our goal is to create a visible, tangible and lived proximity.

DISTANCES DISAPPEAR, WHILE NEW ONES EMERGE

We live in a time when spatial distances can be overcome ever faster and ever more cheaply, and digital space eliminates geographical distances altogether: the world is literally becoming a village. This is countered on the other hand by a rapid increase in social distances, something we are experiencing in Europe as well. Political polarisation is on the rise, and the major crises of our time – from the financial crisis to climate change – appear far removed from people's real lives. Distance leads to alienation. Thus the drifting apart of society, the fact that many are turning away from politics or yearning for radical change, but also widespread ignorance and indifference towards the great challenges of the future are often nothing but the consequences of a process of alienation. But distance does not protect us from problems that – unlike ideas for solutions – usually know no bounds.

Closeness, on the other hand, leads to active involvement. With this in mind, St. Pölten 2024 would use the European Capital of Culture title to question spatial, temporal and social distances, to sound them out anew and put St. Pölten at the heart of Europe, where it already is at least geographically speaking.

In view of present and future challenges, our application aims for St. Pölten to become a model mid-sized European city – and to live this model. St. Pölten 2024 regards itself as a laboratory and field of experimentation set on enabling a multi-faceted future with various narratives. Questions raised serve as a starting point and challenge to be tackled both artistically and culturally. A series of non-linear and constantly-evolving process steps ("Discover", "Discuss & Experiment" and "Display") will yield diverse perspectives, create new connections and raise further points of enquiry.

RESCALING TEMPORAL DISTANCES

- How does the city's orientation towards the future compare to its history?
- How could history be made more vivid and tangible today?
- How can historical ruptures such as National Socialism and the Shoah be responsibly dealt with and never forgotten?
- How can St. Pölten 2024 address challenges of the future such as digitisation or climate change?

RESCALING SPATIAL DISTANCES

- What is the relationship between digital and physical space?
- How can urban and rural spaces meet at eye level and turn their interdependence into an advantage?
- How does a capital city reach the surrounding region emotionally?
- How can we make interactions between local, European and global levels felt and consciously deepen them?

RESCALING SOCIAL DISTANCES

- Where are the greatest social distances to be found in St. Pölten, and what are their causes?
- Does more and more specific information about the other's situation lead to more empathy?
- How do young and old people come together for an intergenerational discourse?
- How can social inclusion be lived, and not imposed?
- Where do we stand in terms of equality and justice, especially with regard to equality between men and women?

St. Pölten 2024 begins where big contexts meet the small ones, where contradictions emerge and new connections are negotiated, both in the city and the village. As a model for a mid-sized European city of the future worth living in, its success will have to be measured in terms of how these mutually influenced spheres are discovered, discussed and communicated at local, European and global levels.

In developing approaches for the future, St. Pölten 2024 always directs its gaze to places where art and culture are not (yet) sufficiently visible and palpable, where strong contrasts and contradictions can be assumed. For these are the fields where we see enormous potential.

1 Long-term Strategy



1 A Describe the cultural strategy that is in place in your city at the time of the application, including the plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title?
1 C How is the European Capital of Culture action included in this strategy?

Double success

We are leaping at the chance to combine an ambitious major project with a long-term cultural strategy for St. Pölten. Our application for the European Capital of Culture 2024 title is also a green light for working out the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy, which will be completed in the second quarter of 2019. This will enable us to set common strategic goals and define corresponding measures right from the start. Thus, the 2024 programme plays a key role in the city's long-term strategy – and the city's long-term strategy is inherent to the application. This synergy allows us to answer two questions at once.

A BRIEF LOOK INTO THE PAST

Lower Austria has impressively positioned itself as a land of art and culture over the past two decades. However, St. Pölten has so far lacked a long-term cultural strategy that integrates all of the city's art and cultural players and clearly profiles and differentiates between the individual institutions and associations in terms of content.

In 2005, the cultural administration of what is now the Department of Culture and Education of the City of St. Pölten began drawing up an initial cultural development plan with the support of St. Pölten's artists and cultural workers. However, no finished concept was decided upon, despite considerable efforts on the part of all those involved.

What is interesting is that the results of the SWOT analysis still hold today: that a dearth of pride and low level of self-confidence on the part of the population, for instance, led the city's self-perception to lag years behind – despite high cultural standards; or that the city presents itself badly, due not least to the absence of a cohesive joint presentation of the city and the province. Other projects including the creation of a design advisory board for construction projects, the improvement of funding, and the setting of priorities for children have also failed for this very reason. All of these insights are extremely relevant to the design of the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy.

HOLDING UP A MIRROR TO THE CITY

Even the first year of the application process brought a new dimension of partnership and cooperation between stakeholders from the city, province and independent scene that never existed in such intensity and quality before. A vision and strategy for the city will be developed together for the first time. This creates a new basis of trust and common objectives.

Participative formats such as the "KulturFORUM", the "KulturGESPRÄCHE in Discourse" event series, various focus groups and existing relevant strategies (e.g. the province of Lower Austria's cultural strategy) allowed us to derive significant insights, which we incorporated into our comprehensive Status Quo Analysis of St. Pölten 2018. It provides information about the character of the city, its spatial and functional dimensions as well as its areas for potential action. The Status Quo Analysis highlights St. Pölten's untapped potential and is therefore a basis and point of departure for the cultural strategy.

A LOOK AT THE CULTURAL STRATEGY FROM WITHIN

The following thematic cornerstones define the content structure for developing the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy until the second quarter of 2019, when the strategy should be passed by the municipal council. They are our guiding thread and basic framework of content.

1. The *preamble* addresses the motivation of the strategy, defines the terms "art" and "culture", and introduces the Department of Culture and Education of the City of St. Pölten with its tasks and functions.

2. The *"Challenges"* chapter covers artistic, cultural, sociocultural and general social challenges such as demographic shift, migration, the digital and technological transformation and (with an eye to Europe) the issues of subsidiarity, right-wing populism, common identity and goals. Furthermore, St. Pölten concentrates on its very own specific challenges from the Status Quo Analysis, such as how to deal with the city's structural change, aspirations and image, and the city–region problem.

3. The strategy's vision and mission as well as its *strategic guidelines* are based on
   - reinforcing St. Pölten as a historical city;
   - clearly profiling St. Pölten as the cultural centre of the Capital of Culture Region;
   - making public space visible and palpable as a stage for urban culture;
   - enhancing neighbourhood and coexistence through space for local responsibility;
   - developing St. Pölten as a centre for communicating arts and cultural competences, especially to children;
   - making St. Pölten the paragon of a mid-sized European city worth living in.

4. The strategic guidelines are both a vision and framework for action in the cultural development of St. Pölten, to be implemented in the following *fields of action:*

   Art and culture sectors
   History, architecture and building culture, visual arts, performing arts, music and music festivals, literature, film and new media: potentialities are identified and focal points defined for each category on the basis of their significance for the city and building on what is already in place.

   Socio-cultural objectives
   Participation, diversity, neighbourhood, mediation of art, culture, science and cultural competences, focus on children, use of natural space in the city

   Structural objectives
   Promoting cooperation, honing the profile, profiling the Department of Culture and Education of the City of St. Pölten, intensifying internationality, communication and networks between stakeholders

A BRIEF LOOK INTO THE FUTURE: ALREADY FORESEEABLE FOCAL POINTS OF THE CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Department of Culture and Education's success will be measured by how well it can establish itself as an activating and coordinating political body in a complex network of artists, cultural workers and civil society actors at the intersection of education, business, tourism and social affairs. One of the main objectives consists in involving as high a proportion of the population as possible in social and cultural (educational) processes.

For this reason, a 2030 vision is being developed according to the following principles: St. Pölten's cultural policy should
- be committed to encouraging the broadest possible cultural participation and educating all social groups, especially children;
- be able to provide unrestricted access to art and culture as such, but also to sources of information about them;
- work for the common good and for "culture" as a public asset;
- strive for more reciprocity with the field of socioculture;
- mediate between social development and communal action;
- support cultural diversity as well as relevant institutions, projects and initiatives;
- promote artistic and cultural activities in civil society and the cultural scene that build on the city's identity.

Measures proposed by the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy for the implementation of this vision include
- creating a new institution for mediating art and cultural competences to children;
- increasing the culture budget (▸ 5 A);
- setting funding priorities based on the vision;
- expanding support for the "independent art scene" by continuously increasing the funding budget until 2024 and offering practical assistance in areas such as coordination, communication and the search for spaces;
- developing strategies to promote participation by people from less culturally-affiliated social strata or marginalised groups, with a focus on children;
- providing low-threshold access by removing barriers of all kinds, e.g. through education concepts for people with visual and hearing impairments, by using simplified language or adding barrier-free access wherever possible;
- cooperating with the St. Pölten Diversity Office;
- reinforcing and establishing previously underrepresented genres such as film, new media and applied arts;
- focusing on public art;
- focusing on the fields of history, contemporary history and commemoration culture.

1 B Describe plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including developing long-term links between the cultural, economic and social sectors in the candidate city.

Start-up STP 2024!

As a city of innovation, creativity and start-ups, St. Pölten is a start-up in its own right. Replete with top quality universities, convenient transport connections, existing infrastructure and decent rents, conditions are certainly ideal for a start-up ecosystem to emerge. Commissioned by the city, the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences has already worked out a concept for developing the city as a location for innovation and entrepreneurship, and the St. Pölten 2024 office is actively involved in this process.

GOOD CONDITIONS

Austria has seen Vienna and Linz in particular assert themselves as innovation and start-up locations. Although St. Pölten is smaller, it offers very good, perhaps even more start-up-friendly conditions. The supra-regional transport system offers excellent public and private transport connectivity, the necessary infrastructure is available. Moreover, St. Pölten has such fair rents compared to similarly structured cities that it almost seems best to keep it under wraps. But more than anything, it is the St. Pölten universities that create the ideal breeding ground for entrepreneurship and start-ups.

DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE STRUCTURES

Therefore, the city commissioned the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences to develop a concept that would help distinguish St. Pölten as a location for innovation, entrepreneurship and start-ups by intensifying commercial cooperation e.g. with other educational institutions. The New Design University, for instance, offers a master's degree in entrepreneurship and innovation.

The most important prerequisite for the "Create an Ecosystem" area of action is the establishment of sustainable structures. The city of St. Pölten and the University of Applied Sciences are supporting the development of this "ecosystem" with around 145,500 euros per year from 2018 to 2022. Steps include appointing a start-up coordinator and start-up ambassadors, establishing a supervisory group, setting up a start-up advisory board as an inter-divisional body, and building an expert pool. These steps are complemented by innovative event formats such as the start-up summer camp and the "St. Pölten Hackathons". Another important format is the "innovation mile" on Rathausplatz square – a collaboration between the municipal marketing's smartup initiative and the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences aimed at boosting the innovation hub St. Pölten.

CREATE SYNERGIES

We are committed to the development of this ecosystem and support the concept on several levels:

1. St. Pölten 2024 is already integrated into the overall concept
   The concept aims at a consistent use of synergies between research, development and innovation, an active start-up scene and the essential pillars of a European Capital of Culture: art and culture, education, location development and tourism.

2. St. Pölten 2024 is an active part of the ecosystem
   We participate in the Advisory Board for Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Start-ups in order to create synergies between our application process and the start-up scene and thus actively contribute to the ecosystem's development.

3. St. Pölten 2024 co-organises hackathons
   We will be holding a first hackathon together with the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences in spring 2019 and incorporating concrete application questions into the event dealing, for example, with the improvement of mobility in the Capital of Culture Region, art and culture education for children, and the labelling of local foods. Students and interested young people from all over Austria are invited to form teams to work on creative solutions in the fields of social innovation, digitisation and health/nutrition within a 48-hour time frame. The best ideas will be elaborated after the hackathon – and will ideally develop into start-ups or research projects. If the hackathon is successful, we will be holding further ones. We plan to use all results from this event as input for the remainder of the application process.

4. Collaborative university projects
   Everyday media use and the experience of content in transit are being researched as part of the "Media in Transit" project conducted jointly with the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences. Its aim is to develop specific media formats for selected regional transport connections in the Capital of Culture Region. This project is part of the artistic programme. (▸ 2)

   The first joint project with the New Design University was a one-week "Summer School" in 2018, organised under the motto "Re-Create the City". Attendees from all over Europe came up with ideas for an entirely new approach to St. Pölten. (▸ 4 C)

In a nutshell: the start-up ecosystem has just kicked off, and the St. Pölten 2024 office is right in the middle of it.

Impact & potential desirable side effects

Why wait? From the civil society's initial impetus via the decision that St. Pölten would apply for the title of European Capital of Culture 2024, through to the actual application, not a moment has been wasted. It's been a period of lots of movement and action. The city has long since started using the time to make changes, build up momentum, and create networks. Which makes us confident that we can also expect to see positive effects – and side effects – in the long term!

During this year of intensive dialogue with the local population and actors in numerous public discussion forums, focus groups, individual talks, on platforms, or at presentations, several points became increasingly clear:

- The city still has a lot of unused potential, offering great opportunities for change.
- All of the citizens and actors who have been involved in the process so far have indicated their desire for change. The enthusiasm for the St. Pölten 2024 project is enormous!
- The status of European Capital of Culture 2024 is needed in order to precipitate change as a driving force, catalyst and framework.

The greatest potential and anticipated effects:

Objectives for St. Pölten 2024	Impact on the city			
	Artistic und cultural	Social	Business	Urban development
Interaction between city and region is recharged.	Exciting new cultural and **artistic projects bring together the antipodes** of city and region.	**Encounter at eye level** and a dialogue between city and country residents prevent urban and rural living environments from drifting apart.	St. Pölten becomes an **alternative model** to the growing contrast of "attractive urban space" and "deserted rural space" in Europe.	In a rural town with a high quality of life, a new, **"non-metropolitan urbanity"** is created.
The Capital of Culture Region develops.	**Joint art and cultural projects** between the cultural institutions and initiatives of the Capital of Culture Region and St. Pölten are realised.	On the basis of the values of a Europe of regions, a sense of belonging and a **new regional identity** are created.	Communication of the **packed cultural programme** of the region attracts the attention of tourists in Europe with an affinity for culture.	St. Pölten becomes the centre of the Capital of Culture Region and thus also the **emotional and cultural capital**. Mobility increases within the region.
Art and culture serve as catalysts for transformation from an industrial city to a city of education, art and culture.	Art and culture are the **catalyst** for the transformation of the city. Artistic projects address the theme of socioeconomic change.	New art, cultural and leisure programmes, new jobs and new opportunities for coexistence increase **the effect on the region**.	St. Pölten develops into a location for creative industries and **start-ups**. Innovative companies move in, and there is a reduction in brain drain of "creative capital" to major cities like Vienna.	Socioeconomic change facilitates the use of new **spaces of possibility** such as the Glanzstoff factory premises. New neighbourhoods can evolve around former industrial sites.
Promoting inclusion: as many people as possible should have access to art and culture.	Audience development brings **content to new and much extended target groups**; barrier-free access facilities enable as many people as possible to participate in art and culture.	Access to art and culture for children, young people and social groups who are (as yet) less receptive to culture is enabled through **educational work**.	St. Pölten becomes a centre of cultural education for children, the **Children's Art Lab – House of Education of Art and Cultural Competences for Children** acts as a hub of cultural competence.	The Children's Art Lab becomes an open, low-threshold **space of encounter** in the centre of St. Pölten.
Neighbourship and coexistence are strengthened.	"Europe is not far away, it starts right here, at our home" – **St. Pölten as a space both of local responsibility and European values.**	Existing social structures, associations and their locations (e.g. "Kulturheime" and other cultural infrastructure in the districts) are **upgraded** and incorporated into artistic and cultural programmes in the city.	The opportunity to utilise vacant spaces creates new **neighbourhood and interdisciplinary networks** (business, science, society, politics and agriculture). St. Pölten becomes a laboratory and field of experimentation for a modern European circular city.	Neighbourhood work becomes a fixed element of cultural policy and urban planning in St. Pölten; the use of vacant sites is planned in a joint process by the local population, urban marketing, St. Pölten 2024 and artists.
Public space is enhanced.	**Art in public space** is given a boost, public space becomes a stage and a link between users and institutions. Open spaces are used for art and culture; high-quality standards become visible in built design.	St. Pölten develops from a place of transit into a **place to stay.** Places of encounter and consumption-free zones are created.	The enhanced city appeals to people looking for urban life. The city and region are (re-) vitalised.	The guiding concept for public space is implemented: Domplatz square becomes a **place of art and culture;** links develop between the historic city centre and the cultural/government districts; club houses in Sonnenpark are renovated.

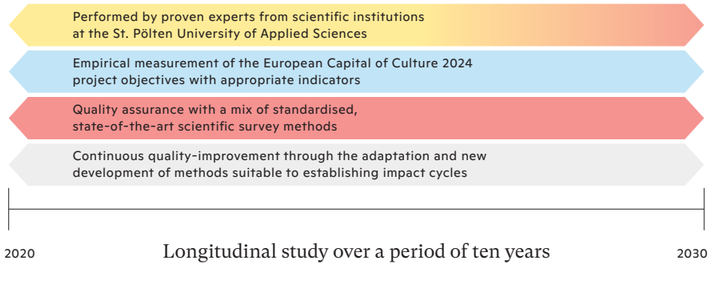
We have already started to implement several projects: the Capital of Culture Region is taking shape; the public space task group and the Domplatz task group are busy at work. Furthermore, a new institution is currently being created: the Children's Art Lab – House of Education of Art and Cultural Competences for Children is going to bring additional excellence to the city. Thus St. Pölten is not only in the heart of Europe, but also right at the heart of change.

A learning system

The education-rich city of St. Pölten has a great deal of know-how at its disposal. So why not use it for a long-term self-assessment of St. Pölten 2024 processes? That's exactly what we did, as a matter of fact: we have entrusted the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences with evaluation. The quality of our evaluation and monitoring measures is ensured through standardised, state-of-the-art, but above all innovative methods. We are working with these experts to develop suitable indicators for the empirical measurement of our project objectives.

Evaluation and monitoring are an integral part of our application: in an "experimental field and laboratory", which is what we consider ourselves to be, it is important to observe and very carefully assess which activities have a positive effect and could even be adapted by other European regions. In particular, we shall assess whether the following socio-political and cultural goals of our application are achieved:

1. St. Pölten 2024 succeeds in closing the perceived distance between Europe at large and the smaller-scale concept of home.
   Is it possible to sustainably improve our abstract understanding of Europe by dealing with the basic idea of Europe in terms of content? How can these mutually influenced spheres be discovered, discussed and communicated at local, European and global levels?
2. St. Pölten grows in confidence, changes its identity and image and becomes a city of culture.
   Is it possible to overcome clichés and bring the image of St. Pölten closer to reality – both in the population's self-perception and externally?
3. St. Pölten becomes the cultural centre of a vibrant Capital of Culture Region.
   Has it really become the palpable centre of the Capital of Culture Region? A second focal point encompasses effects of the cultural tourism strategy, its key projects, relevance and reception.
4. St. Pölten 2024 gives impetus through innovation, inspiring positive interaction between the city and countryside.
   Can further development of the city of St. Pölten also soften the contrast between urban cityscapes and increasingly depopulated rural areas and redefine the relationship between the two? Which of our high-quality initiatives and projects can be adapted by other European regions?
5. St. Pölten becomes a showpiece mid-sized, liveable European city in a metropolitan region.
   What is the decisive factor in ensuring that the inhabitants of St. Pölten feel the city is "worth living in" and that visitors perceive it as "attractive"? In what way does the European Capital of Culture programme contribute to this?
6. Providing low-threshold, diverse, widely appealing access to art and culture, with a focus on children and families.
   To what extent is it possible to increase the quantity and quality of cultural education services? Can new target groups be reached and encouraged to participate?



HOW DO WE ACTUALLY GET THERE? THE METHODS

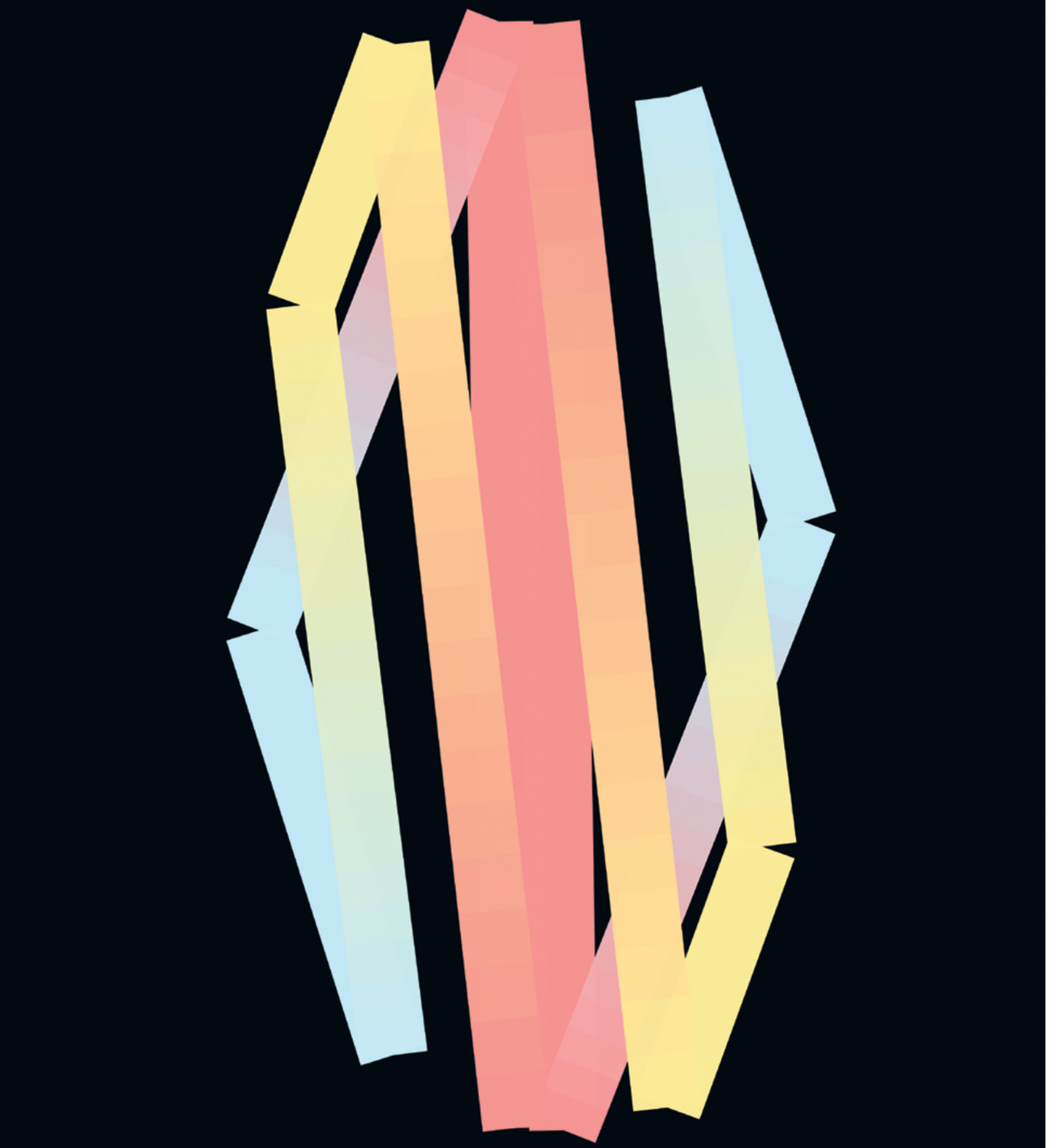
Participation and a community of learners are integral to the overall process. Besides conventional quantitative methods, which analyse data and key figures in regional and national comparisons and make developments understandable, we need further methods for our process-oriented approach. For this reason, we shall carry out an in-depth qualitative analysis of interrelationships and develop and test new approaches for an impact-oriented evaluation.

Thinking and working in *impact cycles* is key here. In terms of approach, we have opted for Appreciative Inquiry (AI)*, a method of self-evaluation, and are adapting it to our objectives. This method focuses on positive experiences and existing resources as an opportunity for the future, without ignoring existing problems and challenges. To ensure the quality and sustainability of the St. Pölten 2024 project, evaluations are closely linked to the development, implementation and communication of our measures.

Our approach aims at a holistic evaluation of effects and comprehensive quality development and thus gives us an opportunity to keep learning from the evaluation continuously. The evaluation period is the same as that of the cultural strategy, running from 2020 to 2030. St. Pölten would thus be one of the few candidate cities to assess the impact of a targeted cultural policy investment over such a period.

* Goethe-Institut e.V. (ed.) (2016): KULTUR WIRKT Mit Evaluation Außenbeziehungen nachhaltiger gestalten, Berlin: Ruksaldruck

2 Cultural and Artistic Content



Europe at home— rescaling distances

St. Pölten 2024 takes an artistic and cultural programme approach based on the leitmotif "Europe at home – rescaling distances". Our aim is to reposition the city and the emerging Capital of Culture Region in the European context. Like countless other mid-sized European cities near metropolises, St. Pölten faces the challenge of developing a clear, independent cultural profile. After all, future and innovation are not exclusive to big cities! St. Pölten 2024 wants to act as a role model and make a substantial contribution to finding solutions to current European challenges.

DISTANCE AND PROXIMITY

Our leitmotif "Europe at home – rescaling distances" is to be understood as a call to question, discuss and point out fears stoked by populists and distances experienced by individuals. At a time when societies are drifting apart, when Europe is threatened with disintegration and people are retreating behind borders, St. Pölten 2024 consciously focuses on the supposedly foreign and distant so as to reduce these distances with artistic and cultural formats. We want to show the seemingly "distant" Europe at home, encourage its discovery and discuss it. In doing so, we aim to open visitors' and inhabitants' eyes, ears and hearts to new perspectives and ways of seeing things. We want to delve into fields of tension where constructive opposites such as history and future, city and countryside, private and public, individual and society meet. We want to pique interest, curiosity, understanding and respect for those who are all too often perceived as "different" and "foreign". We want to rescale these distances, challenge and overcome them wherever possible.

The long-term goal of our St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy is to dynamically develop St. Pölten into a role model of a livable, mid-sized European city of the future. Following up on this goal and expanding it, the programme approach of St. Pölten 2024 intends to innovatively address the basic questions of community life in mid-sized European towns using St. Pölten as an example. A "creative state of emergency" should provide the framework for testing experimental artistic and (socio)cultural approaches in a visionary, creative, critical and sometimes provocative way on a small scale before potentially implementing them on a larger scale.

MEDIATION AS CORNERSTONE

In the preparatory years for St. Pölten 2024 we are already setting up discursive formats in which local and European experts discuss content and scholarly and artistic approaches to the programme with input from local cultural practitioners. Their findings will be incorporated into subsequent steps.

Interdisciplinary cooperation between independent cultural institutions and partners from business, the social sector, science and research will result in new networks and new audiences. Artistic and socio-cultural projects should not exist side by side, but enrich and develop one another in the spirit of a laboratory and experimental field.

Mediation plays a crucial role here and is the most important service for a city of the future with an educational mandate in culture. While the St. Pölten 2024 programme is basically directed at everyone, it specifically targets less culturally inclined or marginalised groups as well as children and young people in particular. A newly created Children's Art Lab – House of Education of Art and Cultural Competences for Children – aims to provide children with formative inspiration, ideas, access, and space to try things out and discuss them, particularly in the field of visual art. Adolescents will be approached with specially designed formats in schools and in their local surroundings. In short: our ultimate aim is for children and young people to take responsibility for shaping their future living environment and coexistence, in line with the motto "Create your future city". We are committed to sustainable development that goes far beyond the European Capital of Culture year.

▸ 4 C

TURN PUBLIC SPACE INTO A CITY STAGE

Public space is more than the sum of its functions – it's the city's own stage. We have already taken first steps towards harnessing this potential: in keeping with the approach that art does not serve purely aesthetic purposes, but rather plays a progressive socio-political role, our public space task group is currently developing a *guiding concept for public space*. It focuses on public space – Domplatz (Cathedral Square) and the cultural district in particular – as a place of transit, lingering, and encounter as well as artistic and cultural interventions beyond the European Capital of Culture year. Institutions and associations open their doors, leave their buildings, dismantle access barriers and invite the population and visitors to meet each other at eye level with new formats in low-threshold settings.

CREATE THE VIRTUAL EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

St. Pölten 2024 also wants to be the European Capital of Culture for anyone who cannot come to St. Pölten physically. This will require using virtual space, which annuls spatial and partly also temporal distances to bring down a massive obstacle to access: namely that of not being able to be in the right place at the right time. This would go beyond the art experience as an inimitable, sometimes irretrievable moment of encounter between art or artist and viewer, enabling new experiences and interactions. From 2020 to 2024, St. Pölten will work jointly and tirelessly with international experts and in cooperation with the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences to test and expand virtual and interactive formats.

BOOST EUROPEAN APPEAL

St. Pölten 2024 is not content to draw from what already exists; we want to create something new: putting the focus on original artistic creation of the highest quality, we shall commission in-house productions, external works and co-productions. This is the only way we can achieve our ambitious goal – to boost our appeal all over Europe and help shape the artistic and cultural landscapes of Central Europe with a programme based on specific realities of life in St. Pölten.

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

St. Pölten 2024 deliberately did not install an artistic director for the application phase. Instead, our artistic and cultural programme approaches evolved from a genuine, partly participative process. The basic concept was rooted in a thorough participatory analysis of the city, which also forms the basis for the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy. The population, artistic and scientific heads of the city and institutions in the European Capital of Culture Region, the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART, the four "Visionary Advisors" as well as numerous other stakeholders from different areas worked together in various dialogue formats to develop work fields and basic contents, which the St. Pölten 2024 office specified in the form of initial concrete programme approaches.

▶ 4

NEXT STEPS

Building on this, we will be working with an *artistic project group* in 2019 to explore the content and programme of the project in depth and – with a view to specific cooperation partners – broaden the scope of our activities across Europe. Cooperation with the artistic and scientific heads of art and cultural institutions of the city and region as well as representatives of the independent scene will be intensified in this context, and academic support from local institutions will enrich our development of interdisciplinary and socio-cultural preparatory and educational projects. These partners include: St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences (Departments of Media Technology, Digital Design, Social Inclusion), New Design University and institutions in the Research Network for Interdisciplinary Regional Studies (FIRST), whose members include the Institute for Jewish History in Austria, the Center for Migration Research (ZMF), the Institute for Realia of the Middle Ages, and the Institute of Rural History (IRH).

2019 is also the year we'll be launching preliminary projects that explore temporal, spatial and social distances with a view to St. Pölten's development. Findings will be included in the Bid Book II if St. Pölten 2024 is shortlisted for the title. The aforementioned preliminary projects will continue, however, regardless of the outcome of the European Capital of Culture 2024 competition. Together with cultural institutions, associations and scholarly cooperation partners, they serve to further develop the content of relevant issues and to test possible solutions.

In 2020, if the title of European Capital of Culture 2024 is awarded, there will be a Europe-wide call and an artistic director will be appointed to work with us on focusing and substantiating the artistic vision, and on defining our programme structure, which is outlined with examples in the following chapter.

▶ 5 B

2 B Give a general overview of the structure of your cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities/main events that will mark the year.



Discover | Discuss and Experiment | Display

BRIDGING THE GAP

The pillars of a varied art and cultural programme for St. Pölten 2024 are already being developed in close cooperation with the cultural and scientific institutions and associations in the city and region. The programme will combine traditional art genres with new hybrid art forms and sociocultural and scientific projects. Artistic, (socio-)cultural and scientific projects, exhibitions, performances, installations, actions, concerts, festivals, seminars, workshops, lectures, readings and discursive formats will take place throughout 2024, designed for as many people as possible, regardless of their age or social background.

If we are nominated for the final selection in 2019 we can build on a foundation that is already there and is based on in-depth analysis, close links between existing institutions, and the theme of bridging the gap between big Europe and little St. Pölten. This means that a very important step has been completed. Other foundations for an ambitious and innovative European Capital of Culture programme include a clear and responsible supporting structure, budgetary planning reliability, and guaranteed artistic and programmatic autonomy. Starting in 2019 we will work with an artistic project team on designing the main events for the programme year 2024 ranging from the opening to the closing programme and including a "Signature Festival" that gives a sense of identity and potentially includes all institutions and associations. This collaboration is to widen and intensify the programme structure, project outlines and European cooperation projects.

The working title for the programme concept is "Europe at home – rescaling distances". The first part, "Europe at home", reflects the aim of discovering and discussing European matters at home, while also expressing the distance between local and European matters – an opinion that is heard frequently, particularly in Austria.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF DISTANCE

To "rescale distances" is to go one step further and link the St. Pölten 2024 programme with three dimensions of distance: temporal (between history, present and future), spatial (between neighbourhood, region, Europe and the world), and social (between citizens). At a time when societies and EU member states are drifting apart, St. Pölten 2024 wants to reveal new perspectives and try out potential solutions. Consequently the debate needs to be held not just in art and cultural institutions, but should be accessible barrier-free in the public space as well as online, in the virtual space.

First, we shall present the starting situation and initiating process partners for each of the three dimensions; next, we use headings such as "Discover", "Discuss and Experiment" and "Display" to provide information on preliminary projects for 2019 and – if we win the title – information on the discourse formats scheduled for the preparatory years and the programmatic culmination in 2024, the year of the European Capital of Culture.

These terms correspond to stages that are incorporated in the development process. Sometimes they are used in parallel or repeated, so they also symbolise the non-linear development process in art and culture: "Discover", "Discuss and Experiment" and "Display". Each of these steps affects the others and creates new approaches or areas of friction. The aim is not to streamline the programme, but to change the perspectives of inhabitants and visitors by means of varied artistic and sociocultural formats and their mediation.

Rescaling temporal distances

POINT OF DEPARTURE

St. Pölten 2024 envisions a series of exhibitions and discussions, art in public space and commissioned works to enable a new experience of the city's temporal dimension within Europe. No part of St. Pölten's historical development can be explained without considering the broader European context. Shifting perspectives on history and the future and reflecting on their charged relationship to the present will encourage a far-ranging discussion about the responsibility we are facing today. At the same time, we will also be looking ahead to issues set to affect the city's future – from climate change to housing – in an interdisciplinary way and with an eye to Europe at large. What seems to be a remote possibility has actually already started to take effect.

LOCAL PROCESS PARTNERS

Center for Migration Research (ZMF), Diocesan museum, Diocese Archives St. Pölten, Donaufestival, ERLAUF REMEMBERS museum, Haus der Geschichte at the Lower Austria Museum, Institute for Jewish History in Austria, New Design University, Lower Austria Provincial Archives, Lower Austria Provincial Library, Melk Memorial Association, Stadtarchiv St. Pölten, St. Pölten City Museum, St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences

DISCOVER
2019

A CITY GUIDE OF MIGRATION HISTORY (CENTER FOR MIGRATION RESEARCH)

A preliminary project will bring to mind forgotten migration histories of St. Pölten and ask about parallels, differences, breaks and continuities with the present. Work will begin in 2019 with a focus on the urban area between the railway station and the Glanzstoff factory premises. Drawing on scholarly research and already compiled findings, development trajectories from the history of migration to the urban present will be plotted and presented on a web-based map, which will serve as a starting point for developing a city guide of migration history. Over time, it will not only be expanded to include other areas in the city but will also become a platform for collective historical work in St. Pölten: distances between the past and the present will disappear in historical documents, photographs, narratives and conversations.

DISCUSS
AND
EXPERIMENT
AS OF 2019

Starting in 2019, process partners will work together in the "Rescaling Temporal Distances Task Group" to develop perspectives on temporal dimensions. This ongoing work by the institutions will serve as a basis for discussing and identifying priorities and opportunities to collaborate in the year 2024.

EXAMPLE PROJECT

CHILDREN'S
ART LAB

"HOW DID YOU DO THAT?"

Specially curated for children, this visually-focused exhibition of contemporary art introduces youngsters to original works of art. Artists involved assume a direct, educational role; meeting the artist in person and having direct contact with them and their creative work breaks down the traditional distance between exhibition-goer and art-maker. An accompanying programme of workshops with artists gives children a chance to try out artistic techniques for themselves. Artists share insights into how their artworks are developed and made, thus visualising the creative process.

DISPLAY
2024

WHERE DOES TIME GO? A FUTURE PROJECT FROM HAUS DER GESCHICHTE AT THE LOWER AUSTRIA MUSEUM

Social and political processes are more complicated and complex today than they were in the post-war era. This makes it all the more important to give time a profile and identity – not least by telling its fascinating history. In 2024, Haus der Geschichte at the Lower Austrian Museum is holding a major exhibition on the temporal regime of modernity: How did it come about? What makes it unique? Time since the 18th century has been characterised by the decoupling of past from present, the singling out of individual stories from abstract "history", the rise of museumisation and a culture of remembrance, but also by the prospective idea of a future towards which everything is heading in a meaningful way. Can this temporal regime continue, and if so, how?

"YOU ARE THE FUTURE": A TRAINING CAMP FOR TOMORROW (IN COOPERATION WITH DONAUFESTIVAL)

"Reenactments" recreate historical events or works so as to creatively reassert their present relevance and use them to meet contemporary cultural challenges. A complement to this practice is "preenactment", which serves to open the present towards the future in a fictitious way. This happens in the form of multi-day training sessions for participating scientists, artists, and interested citizens. Likewise, in the context of St. Pölten 2024, something is being worked out today that we can use tomorrow. Trainers come from a diverse array of fields ranging from art to alternative culture and activism to science; they aim to awaken a desire to crack social and technical codes and mobilise the do-it-yourself ethos. One example: What do we need to change about the way we deal with computers today – think artificial intelligence, automation of social tasks, robotisation of war (drones, etc.) – in order to make a difference tomorrow? How can a collective desire for change be sparked by one city setting an example? How do international experts on future issues get in touch with the population of St. Pölten?

HISTORY YOU CAN TOUCH: THE ORIGINS OF THE CITY (ST. PÖLTEN CITY ARCHAEOLOGY)

Archaeological excavations have been underway at St. Pölten's Domplatz (Cathedral Square) since 2010, and they've unearthed more than just a 1,000-year-old cemetery with around 20,000 skeletons. The archaeological results, which will be completed in 2019 after almost ten years, also prove that the foundation stone for the modern city of St. Pölten was laid right here: with the first altar of the original church, which was built in the 9th century between the foundation walls of one of the largest provable private bath houses of the Roman Empire. Archaeological finds will be presented in exhibition areas that will be newly adapted for the St. Pölten 2024 programme and discussed in light of their European context. (▶ 6 B)

HOW CLOSE OR REMOTE IS NATIONAL SOCIALISM IN THE CITYSCAPE? (ST. PÖLTEN CITY MUSEUM)

The City Museum is planning an in-depth examination of St. Pölten's National Socialist history in cooperation with the city archives and museums, the diocese and the province. Other involved partners include the Institute for Jewish History in Austria and Public Art Lower Austria.

The city still bears traces of artworks created during National Socialism, and it contains many sites that remain deeply associated with the horrors of the Nazi regime. All of these are to be documented in a "topography of terror", including Europaplatz square, which, like Hammerpark, once served as a place of executions, the internment camps in Viehofen and the Glanzstoff factory premises, the destroyed synagogue, and many other places. On the other hand, St. Pölten's role in the resistance against National Socialism must also be documented and appreciated to an appropriate extent: after all, St. Pölten was the Austrian city where the fight against the Nazi regime took the bloodiest toll.

"MELK MEMORIAL" CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

The Melk Birago-Pionierkaserne barracks was the largest satellite camp of the Mauthausen concentration camp in Lower Austria between April 1944 and April 1945. Roughly 14,390 people from 20 countries were imprisoned there, more than a third of whom died.

The Melk Memorial centre of contemporary history, in cooperation with the ERLAUF REMEMBERS museum, focuses on educational and discursive formats for young people. Plans for the anniversary marking "75 Years of the End of the Second World War in Europe" in 2020 include a multi-day, international youth gathering in the towns of Erlauf and Melk in cooperation with Wannseeforum, a Berlin-based centre for cultural and political youth education. The work will be deepened in a number of workshops held in the years leading up to 2024, offering an opportunity to discuss and reflect on questions of democracy with international artists. The young participants will take artistic approaches in creating their own works of art, which will subsequently "travel" to their native countries. The collected works will then be displayed and discussed in 2024 in the context of a newly conceived exhibition at the memorial in Melk and Erlauf as part of a major European youth exchange.

Rescaling spatial distances

POINT OF DEPARTURE

In rescaling spatial distances, our aim is not so much to overcome geographical distances as to remeasure emotional and spatial connections – as clearly reflected in the motto "Europe at home". 2019 is the 30th anniversary of the fall of the "Iron Curtain", and with it the end of the high-security border that had created a huge physical distance. The social and emotional borders, however, have still not been entirely overcome. An opportunity to open up new perspectives and create closeness can be found in the artistic and cultural development of the Capital of Culture Region, which is based on intensive cooperation with neighbouring countries and the exchange with comparable regions of Europe.

INITIATING PROCESS PARTNERS

ELit – Literaturhaus Europa/European Literature Days, Europaballett St. Pölten, Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Göttweig Abbey, Grafenegg, Institute of Rural History, music schools of the city of St. Pölten and surrounding communities, Schallaburg Renaissance castle and exhibition centre, State Gallery of Lower Austria, St. Pöltener Künstlerbund artists' association, St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, Tonkünstler Orchestra

DISCOVER 2019

JOINT EXHIBITION WITH THE ST. PÖLTEN KÜNSTLERBUND AND ARTISTS FROM MID-SIZED EUROPEAN CITIES

The next meeting of the Cooperation Network of Medium-Sized European Cities will take place in St. Pölten in April 2019. Its theme is the "Cultural Diversity and Exchange as an Opportunity for Medium-Sized European Cities". The start of the meeting will be marked by the opening of a joint exhibition in the City Museum by the St. Pöltener Künstlerbund artists' association together with artists from member cities of the Cooperation Network: Clichy (FR), Heidenheim (DE), Brno (CZ), Trnava (SK), Nyíregyháza (HU), Maribor (SI), Leszno (PL) and Zadar (HR) have been asked to participate. The St. Pölten 2024 office will invite the artists involved to spend a day in a workshop atmosphere focusing on the issue of "Urbanity beyond the Metropolis", discussing it from the perspective of their own home cities as well as St. Pölten.

"MEDIA IN TRANSIT" – ST. PÖLTEN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

This project explores everyday media use and the experience of media content in transit, that is to say: during journeys across the Capital of Culture Region. The focal questions: To what extent can media formats of local design and influence become "places of encounter"; how can they raise awareness of the different aspects of regionality? How would they create regional identity and retain people "on the move" – i.e. commuters, travellers or tourists? To what extent can they be tools of "visualisation", communicating the Capital of Culture and serving as an interface between the virtual and real spaces of ideas, market and art? In 2019 the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences will initially be used as a model in order to research the media use habits of its employees and students in transit to and from St. Pölten. The second step is an artistic intervention that includes an investigation of what potential lies within the interactive and participatory involvement of commuters in the application and preparation process. Experiences gathered will be recorded in a documentary short film.

DISCUSS AND EXPERIMENT AS OF 2019

Within the context of the "Rescaling Spatial Distances Task Group", from 2019 the process partners will be working together at in-house and public events, developing new perspectives on spatial distances. Based on the continuous work of the institutions, they will be discussing focal points and potential areas of cooperation for the St. Pölten 2024 programme, and testing them out in discourse with interested members of the public.

EXAMPLE PROJECT

CHILDREN'S ART LAB

"WHERE DOES YOUR FOOD COME FROM?"

This workshop format uses the example of eating and food to show how the diversity of Europe is reflected in your own city. On the one hand, children gain an insight into where our everyday food comes from, and what "regional", "seasonal", "organic" and "carbon-neutral" mean. On the other hand, they explore the diversity of European cuisine. By shopping together at the market, cooking and eating together, children are given the competence to ask where their food comes from. Collaboration with local farms and the Lower Austrian Chamber of Agriculture is set to promote the consumption of regional products.

DISPLAY 2024

EUROPEAN LITERATURE VISITS THE CAPITAL OF CULTURE REGION

Starting in 2020, ELit – Literaturhaus Europa will be organising events in St. Pölten and the surrounding rural area under the banner "European Literature visits the Capital of Culture Region". The formats all focus on the hospitality of the region, participatory actions, encounter and exchange as well as the shared experience of Europe. In St. Pölten, for instance, there will be readings and dialogues with European authors and literati as well as events with actors from the spoken word and digital literary scenes. Apart from this, Literaturhaus Europa will have a strong visual presence throughout the Capital of Culture Region, as nomadic event formats such as readings, dialogues or encounters with European authors take place by invitation of local initiatives.

MOBILE CINEMA – CINEMA PARADISO

The first public film screenings were staged by mobile cinemas that toured the fairs and festivals of many cities and towns from the end of the 19th century. As projection rooms, they used either a special tent or existing festival halls, hotel and inn halls. Towards the end of the 1910s, these mobile cinemas were replaced by fixed cinemas in the cities, but continued to serve rural areas until the 1960s. The St. Pölten arthouse Cinema Paradiso picks up on this tradition of networking a region through the medium of film. Cinema Paradiso facilitates a spatial and thematic communication of European film culture and perspectives while also overcoming social distances within the Capital of Culture Region.

DEVELOPING A PUBLIC ORCHESTRA WITH MUSICIANS FROM THE CAPITAL OF CULTURE REGION

During the day they are doctors, civil servants, apprentices, railway employees or students. Once a week, however, they gather on the main stage of the Festspielhaus St. Pölten to play classical-repertoire works with professional musicians: the Tonkünstler Orchestra invites musically ambitious friends to rehearse challenging concert works under the guidance of specialists. Together with the music schools of the city of St. Pölten and the surrounding communities, an orchestra will be developed with up to 400 participants from St. Pölten and the region. The goal and spectacular highlight of a series of performances will be a joint final concert in 2024 on Domplatz (Cathedral Square), which will be redesigned to embrace culture. The event is set to be repeated at the same time each subsequent year.

"SPARRING PARTNERS" – KUNSTRAUM NIEDEROESTERREICH

"Sparring Partners" is a series of discussions and performance evenings staged by Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, the only Lower Austrian cultural institution which is based in the centre of Vienna. St. Pölten 2024 focuses on the terms of "Europe" and "home" to examine various controversial key concepts that currently serve both to unite and divide, but which also hold the potential to create a common identity. In the "Sparring Partners" event series, tension is transformed into a productive force in the encounter of opposing opinions or – on performance evenings, for example – by juxtaposing two artistic positions. The focus here is not on the divisive conflict but on the positive power of challenge, discussion and the collective negotiation of content.

"2024. MEASURING CHANGE" (WORKING TITLE): A LONG-TERM FILM PROJECT BY BACKYARD MANUFAKTUR FÜR FILM

St. Pölten's cultural infrastructure and art projects in public space will set in motion a profound process of change. People who make use of the city – be they local residents or visitors – will discover new opportunities to experience urban space. These processes and sequences can be visualised on film; ultimately, film stands out from other art forms because of its temporal dimension. By capturing the effects of spatial changes for users of the city over a longer period of time, and so exploring, reflecting and evaluating the relation between social and spatial dimensions, the film itself becomes an intervention.

"WHERE DOES YOUR FOOD COME FROM?" INSTITUTE OF RURAL HISTORY

The St. Pölten area is a pioneer in organic farming and its marketing. The countryside here encompasses a wide range of agricultural systems: from grassland management and forestry in the mountainous Pielachtal valley, to the extensive farmlands in the immediate surroundings of St. Pölten, through to the vineyards and orchards of the Traisental valley and the Wachau region. "Where does your food come from?" traces supply chains and networks from production through to consumers, at the same time revealing social and ecological problem areas. If the city and countryside discuss their needs on equal terms, if they recognise the benefits and strengths of their counterpart and make them their own, a new kind of cooperation could be established. This could then evolve into a common living environment without stereotypical labels. A unique experiment in an increasingly globalised and urbanised world!

Rescaling social distances

POINT OF DEPARTURE

60,000 inhabitants, over 100 nationalities, all world religions, one city. To reach all the people of St. Pölten, it is essential to know and understand their living environments. When you talk to representatives of marginalised groups or look at people in the street, in schools or on public transport and then compare them to audiences at cultural events, it quickly becomes clear that St. Pölten's cultural diversity is not sufficiently visible, and not visible everywhere. How come? How can coexistence, perhaps even conflict, be turned into togetherness? It is not uniformity we are aiming for, but diversity, equality, justice and closeness in relationships between St. Pölten's "old" and "new" citizens, between different generations, and between the poles of diverging political opinions.

LOCAL PROCESS PARTNERS

AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Niederösterreich, art and culture association LAMES, Caricature Museum Krems, civil society platform KulturhauptSTART, Donaufestival, Fest der Begegnung (festival of encounter), Festspielhaus St. Pölten, Ilse Arlt Institute for Social Inclusion Research at St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, Landestheater Niederösterreich (provincial theatre), Sonnenpark association, youth culture association Kulturfabrik

DISCOVER 2019

"COMING CLOSER" – CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM KULTURHAUPTSTART

In 2019 the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART will rescale existing social distances, developing new approaches for social inclusion in the context of art and cultural events in collaboration with institutions that work with marginalised groups (▸ 4 A B). The aim is to experiment with different practical ways of bringing marginalised groups and the majority society together in the field of culture. Events in social organisations that are organised in cooperation with cultural institutions will help people meet at eye level and reduce social distances on both sides so as to take the first, important steps together. If St. Pölten is shortlisted, the results of this strategy will be included in the Bid Book II and in a catalogue of measures accompanying the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy.

DISCUSS AND EXPERIMENT AS OF 2019

Starting in 2019, process partners will work together in the "Rescaling Social Distances Task Group" to develop new perspectives on social distance at in-house and public events. On the basis of scientific and practical sociocultural projects, they will formulate, test and reflect on new approaches and prepare for their delivery in the St. Pölten 2024 programme.

EXAMPLE PROJECT

CHILDREN'S ART LAB

"I ALREADY FEEL AT HOME HERE"

"New" St. Pölten citizens who came to St. Pölten from Vienna, Syria or elsewhere guide children to places in the city where they first felt at home here: e.g. by the swimming lake, in a square in the centre of town, or at school. This way they integrate "long-time resident" children into their new living environment and make them see the city with new eyes. An interactive format that turns integration upside down, so to speak.

DISPLAY 2024

"CHANGING PERSPECTIVES" – FESTSPIELHAUS ST. PÖLTEN AND LAMES ASSOCIATION

In 2024 the teams at Festspielhaus St. Pölten and the LAMES association will swap homes for a period that is yet to be defined. One is housed in the modern architecture of the cultural district, while the other has its home in two old association buildings in the beautiful surroundings of Sonnenpark, a park developed and cared for by the eponymous association. LAMES will work with local artists and creatives to develop a diverse and surprising programme for its interlude at the Festspielhaus, while the Festspielhaus team takes action in Sonnenpark, organises international dance performances outdoors and cozy concerts in the club house, inviting artists to experiment and live on the association's premises. This change in perspective will challenge the two institutions as well as the audience, while simultaneously revealing new types of approach.

A BIG EUROPEAN STORY – LANDESTHEATER NIEDERÖSTERREICH (PROVINCIAL THEATRE)

Removing national borders and bringing the people of Europe closer together: this vision is the starting point for a coproduction between several theatres and theatre groups from European Capitals of Culture on the occasion of the year 2024. Inspired by the Internet and TV, the serial format is a good way to accommodate the new innovative genre of a European narrative. Authors will be commissioned to write about present-day Europe and its citizens' search for cultural identity. Each participating theatre will produce one episode that can also function independently of the others. The episodes will be shown at various theatres and venues in sequence or at the same time. When put together, they will form a multilingual series with an international cast, which will be shown in a marathon performance in St. Pölten in the European Capital of Culture year of 2024.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LABS – EXPERIENCE DISTRICTS IN A NEW WAY (IN COOPERATION WITH THE CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM KULTURHAUPTSTART)

"Neighbourhood labs" aim to create and strengthen neighbourly structures in the city, initiate encounters between people without regard to their backgrounds, and dismantle barriers. In a multi-year process, they will help St. Pölteners to identify with their city and develop a shared cultural identity in addition to the existing array of diverse identities. To this end, there are plans to create specially designed mobile structures, but also to rediscover local sites and revitalise them through artistic interventions. The cultural infrastructure in the city seems particularly suitable: built in the spirit of a workers' culture, it can be reanimated as a "local supplier of culture". This will allow us to try out various approaches for tackling social challenges in the microcosm of St. Pölten's districts; we shall then adapt them with the help of European experts and finally present the resulting insights during the European Capital of Culture year and beyond.

FESTSPIELHAUS GOES GAGA

GAGA is a language of movement developed by Israeli dancer and choreographer Ohad Naharin over many years. It originates in his deep conviction of the healing, dynamic and ever-changing power of movement. "GAGA/people" is aimed at everyone, regardless of age and dancing ability, and is practised around the world. After Israel and New York, Japan and Switzerland, this life-changing dance will arrive in the foyer of the Festspielhaus and in other locations in the city, including the VOITH turbine hall: more than 100 aspiring young dancers from around the world will design an event with more than 100 amateurs for the "GAGA St. Pölten 2024" dance project. They will blend with each other in the GAGA dance – and maybe even with the audience.

"FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION – THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS!" EXHIBITION PROJECT AT THE CARICATURE MUSEUM KREMS

When it comes to political and religious caricatures, artistic freedom is under constant attack – even in Europe. The Caricature Museum Krems takes this opportunity to set artistic counterpoints and create an awareness of freedom of expression as defined by the values of the Enlightenment. Based on existing European cooperation projects (such as the "DANUBEcartoons" project), the plan is to establish cross-country collaboration on the topic of "Freedom of expression – the rights of others!" during the years of preparation. In cooperation with "AIR – ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Niederösterreich", one graphic artist and one author from different countries will work together in Krems, in pairings such as Hungary/France, Iceland/Turkey, Austria/Poland, Germany/Syria. The Caricature Museum Krems will provide scientific support for the process, which offers space for diverse discourse formats and is set to culminate in an exhibition in 2024.

2 C Explain succinctly how the cultural programme will combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?

When yesterday & tomorrow meet today

Our working title “Europe at home – rescaling distances” offers a variety of starting points. After all, it recalibrates not only the city’s relationship to Europe, but also to local cultural heritage, to its own identity and the practices of contemporary art and cultural production. St. Pölten 2024 seeks to question distances and renegotiate ostensible opposites – tradition and innovation, individual and collective, regionality and nationality, authenticity and construct, everyday culture and high culture, city and countryside – both at European and local levels.

Our project approaches intend to illustrate by way of example what an interlacing like this might look like. In line with the approach described in ▸2 A, we will continue in 2019 to develop these concepts in process-oriented task groups and in cooperation with the respective partners.

LABOUR MOVEMENT IN ST. PÖLTEN – cultural movement in the city districts

Some districts in St. Pölten have *Kulturheime* – blue collar centres that are influenced by workers’ culture and would definitely benefit from a breath of fresh air. Taking a cue from the “St. Pölten Active Days” in the 1990s, which encouraged active participation from the population, the centres will be opened to a broad public and the distinct culture of each district will be identified and brought to the fore. By involving workers’ cultural associations, district fire brigades, churches, senior citizens’ associations or even schools, both the outdated cultural centres and parish facilities or community centres can be reinvigorated and made into modern, lively (district) centres for contemporary times.

ORGAN MUSIC MEETS ELECTRONIC BEATS – from the recording studio to church and back again

Organ music has a centuries-old tradition in St. Pölten Cathedral. Its “Metzler organ” is even said to have the longest “breath” in the world. But St. Pölten also boasts an impressive number of electronic music producers of international stature. St. Pölten 2024 brings the two together – the tradition of church organ playing and innovative forms of electronic music – inspiring both genres. New pieces are created in a collaborative process, experimented with in the music studio and ultimately performed live in the cathedral.

LIVING ARCHIVES – historical music reinterpreted

Göttweig Abbey has a remarkable archive of historical music material with a collection of scores and instruments that, like the archives of the Melk and Klosterneuburg Abbeys, has been systematically processed as part of a research project and entered into a web-based database. The repertoire is further expanded by a cooperation with the Lower Austria Provincial Archives in St. Pölten. This not only makes a large number of historical works available to those interested – they can also serve as inspiration for new compositions and interpretations. Premieres in the European Capital of Culture Region and the subsequent entry of the new works into the archive are an essential part of the project.

CRAFT(WO)MANSHIP’S MAKER SPACE – the renaissance of handicraft

Traditional methods of design and production are reinterpreted with an eye to modern technical possibilities, which in turn can point the way to sustainable models of artistic practice and regional production. A cooperation with the “Design, Handicraft & Material Culture” course at the New Design University St. Pölten, now running since 2013, in tandem with the region’s artisanal handicrafts and trades, allows a search for clues, offers an opportunity to work with one’s hands and delve into old techniques while simultaneously gaining insight into current design issues.

LIFE TOMORROW – taking yesterday’s achievements to the architectural heritage of tomorrow

High quality, identity-creating buildings, especially in the city centre, will innovatively reference the existing architectural heritage. The “Building Culture” task group at the civil platform KulturhauptSTART has helped establish a design advisory board that will begin its work in 2019. Listed zones will be introduced in historically and culturally important urban areas, highlighting the need to protect architectural heritage. The following initiative also stems from a “Building Culture” task group idea: with the support of a qualified jury, the task group wants to systematically boost the quality of future architectural heritage and support construction projects in St. Pölten that can set an example in Europe. To this end, we will first identify thematic and functional areas for “life tomorrow” and then invite property developers to submit innovative projects on their own properties for approval as European Capital of Culture showcase projects. Initial talks were promising and will be intensified in 2019.

THE FUTURE IS GLAMorous – the digital accessibility of cultural heritage

As far as the future of “GLAM” (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) is concerned, there is a lot of catching up to do in two areas: first, existing collections are sometimes well-digitised, sometimes insufficiently digitised, and sometimes not digitised at all. Second, exhibition visitors are hardly ever equipped with technical “gadgets” that offer a wide range of support in communicating information and culture. The Kulturhackathon 2020 (www.openglam.at) aims to make cultural heritage digitally accessible. Participants are encouraged to experiment with data from archives and collections, to create projects, design concepts and develop prototypes.

2 D How has the city involved, or how does it plan to involve, local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme?

In discourse

Long before St. Pölten’s official bid for the European Capital of Culture 2024 title, members of the local art and culture scene began meeting regularly on the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART to campaign for St. Pölten 2024. These meetings kicked off a process with substantial input and involvement from the independent scene and public cultural institutions.

WE’RE IN THIS TOGETHER

The early days of this collaborative effort saw countless conversations, discussions and interventions in public space, but also regular, fixed-day KulturhauptSTART events at various independent and institutional venues. Experts from within and outside of the arts and culture sector, European Capital of Culture-versed representatives and interested citizens collaborated on developing a vision for St. Pölten. 2017 and 2018 featured a “Europe Forum” held as part of the “Parque del Sol” symposium of interdisciplinary art. Devoted specifically to questions and expectations of Europe, the forum focused on stimulating dialogue about the challenge of a “European Capital of Culture” between proponents of the independent scene. The number of steps St. Pölten has already taken in the run-up to our bid is shown not least by the fact that the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART put out its own publication in December 2017, in which 50 members of the city’s art and cultural scene expressed their wishes, suggestions and ideas for applying for the European Capital of Culture title. This process and the community that sprung up around it proved fertile ground for the St. Pölten 2024 office’s work.

STRONG PARTNERS

Strong partners and positive impetus are the bedrock upon which St. Pölten 2024 is built: the city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria jointly founded the St. Pölten 2024 office and each holds a 50 per cent share. The Lower Austrian Tourism Board accounts for 15 per cent of the province’s share and the other 35 per cent belongs to the NÖKU Holding – a circumstance that ensures close cooperation between ourselves and the cultural institutions of the NÖKU Group, which comprises more than 30 art and cultural institutions and brands in St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region: from the Landestheater Niederösterreich (provincial theatre) and Festspielhaus St. Pölten to the Lower Austria Museum and Kunstmeile Krems to Grafenegg and the Schallaburg Castle exhibition centre. This limited liability company also keeps us closely networked to municipal cultural institutions such as the St. Pölten City Museum and the School of music and arts St. Pölten, as well as various St. Pölten-based festivals with whom we are in constant contact. (▸5 B)

IN DISCOURSE

The participatory approach, which involves broad civic participation on the one hand and the independent and institutionalised cultural scenes on the other, has proved its worth in more than 160 personal discussions with important players in the fields of arts and culture, politics and business throughout the last year, as well as in a series of events on “Artistic Programming in Discourse”. For the first time, we succeeded in bringing around 40 artistic and scientific leaders and heads of large cultural institutions and associations in St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region together to develop artistic and cultural programme approaches for St. Pölten 2024. (▸4 A B) In 2019 we plan to continue and intensify our discursive formats with local artists and cultural practitioners and hone our programme concept in task groups. (▸2 B)

RESCALING EXPERTISE – DEVELOPING THE “INDEPENDENT SCENE”

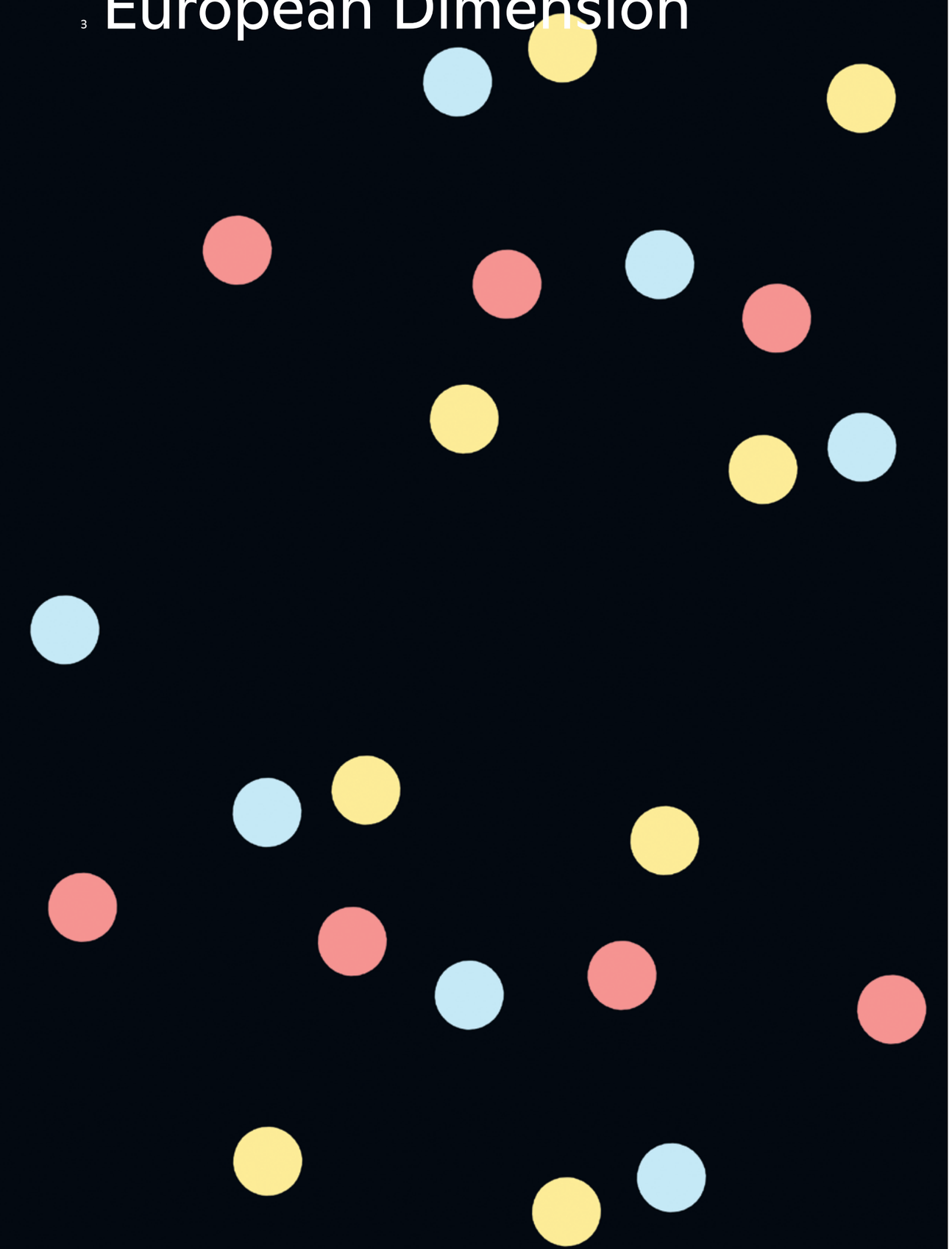
A gradual increase in funding for independent projects in the years 2020 to 2024 in the city’s cultural budget, funding priorities and preliminary projects in the context of St. Pölten 2024 should encourage a healthy further development of the independent scene and enrich the city’s cultural life. (▸1 A) Other measures already in the works include:

- Symposium
  In 2019, with support from the St. Pölten 2024 office, two important protagonists of the independent scene – the LAMES association and the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART – are planning to organise a three-day, international symposium for existing associations on the subjects of “self-organised structures” and “future spaces” in St. Pölten.
- Development process
  A parallel project in 2019 is the KulturhauptSTART-led participatory development process. The aim here is to identify key areas for future work on the one hand while also pursuing the question of the independent scene’s identity, jointly brainstorming how already established structures might be developed further.
- Renovation of the LAMES association buildings
  Embedded in Sonnenpark, the two LAMES association buildings offer a fertile breeding ground for subculture. Part of our effort to develop cultural infrastructure will be to renovate or adapt these buildings with a great deal of sensitivity, thereby reinforcing the spirit of this location while also doing it justice. (▸6 C)

CREATING SPACES OF OPPORTUNITY

Should St. Pölten win the European Capital of Culture 2024 title, the St. Pölten 2024 office will initiate a process based on a thematically structured project call starting with the appointment of the artistic director in 2020. This should open up new dimensions of European cooperation for local and regional artists and cultural institutions.

3 European Dimension



3 A Give a general outline of the activities foreseen in view of:
- 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;
- featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships.

Bringing together what belongs together

At a time when society threatens to drift apart, we want to reach across borders and boundaries to encourage people to come together, question processes of alienation, and experience and live common ground in diversity. Our programme strategy "Europe at home – rescaling distances" seeks to open up new horizons and points of view for our own population and for visitors alike, to overcome distances and advance the concept of Europe from the ground up. "Europe at home" is therefore a mission both to discover Europe at home and to make Europe home to everyone who lives here.

FACING CHALLENGES

Many people think of Europe as far away. Europe often comes to stand for "the other", "the foreign", particularly in the context of national political debates. Whatever works well is politically appropriated, while blame for anything that doesn't work well is quickly shifted to abstract Europe. "Everything will be better and cheaper without the EU", Brexit supporters successfully claimed. Apparently Great Britain's young people, who are clearly pro-European, misjudged the gravity of the situation and, for the most part, did not vote. The same happened in the European Parliament election of 2014, with a turnout of less than 50 percent in Austria and less than 20 percent in some neighbouring countries. Meanwhile nationalist movements in European countries and governments are on the rise, contributing to the erosion of supranational institutions and common democratic and constitutional values. Almost 30 years after the fall of the "Iron Curtain", the greatest peace project of our continent is facing existential challenges.

As European Capital of Culture 2024, St. Pölten 2024 seeks to make a substantial contribution to an innovative, dynamic Europe of the future that is shaped by the people. This involves repositioning our city in the European coordinate system with its diverse interactions, thereby setting an example for other cities to follow. Our strategy considers both bright and dark sides of our history as well as major questions of our present time: from respectful coexistence, citizen participation and the social inclusion of marginalised groups to challenges of demographic development, mobility and digitisation, to the responsible use of our natural resources and combating climate change.

EUROPEAN DIMENSIONS

The programme concept for St. Pölten 2024 envisions an engagement with Europe at the lowest possible level – one's own home – which many people perceive as diametrically opposed to the European dimension. We aim to rescale distances like these at different levels in a European context and create proximity where it is often lacking, for example between urban and rural culture, regional anchoring and international networking, high and subculture. In this spirit, the "St. Pölten 2024 experimental laboratory" should open up new ways of looking at the past, present and future, in cooperation with our European partners.

EUROPE AND THE WORLD

Europe is not an island. So it goes without saying that the programmatic approach of "rescaling distances" shouldn't end at Europe's borders or pursue a "perfect world behind walls". St. Pölten 2024 specifically strives to include non-European perspectives in the programme and contrast Eurocentric perspectives with project co-operations or invitations. The planned exchange on shared social and technical challenges of the future for cities and regions, as well as the external view of Europe, offer a variety of starting points for joint further development. Ideally, this would create a new relationship to distances, with concrete projects making our "rescaling distances" approach a reality.

DISCOVER, DISCUSS, DISPLAY

A EUROPE OF REGIONS

Division of Europe into national states is rather unproductive from a cultural point of view. Regions not only point to a longer history, but are also more intimately connected to the lives of their inhabitants than "the state". Europe has countless border regions with closer cultural ties than regions within the respective member states. In the context of developing the Capital of Culture Region, St. Pölten 2024 wants to intensify exchange: as a first step with Czech and Slovak regions close to the border with whom we already cooperate, then also with other regions that are either regarded as "best practice" examples in certain areas or show concrete analogies to St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region. New projects will make this productive, horizontal exchange of experiences and ideas palpable, while various interactions are discovered, highlighted and discussed where they are lived. In our case, St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region already enrich Europe's artistic work in a unique way given their "cultural landscape" in interaction with Vienna and the neighbouring countries. This is reflected in numerous cultural institutions – particularly the State Gallery of Lower Austria, which is set to open its doors in a spectacular new building in 2019 – but also in the fact that a number of outstanding artists have made this artistic landscape their home.

EUROPE AT HOME

"Europe at home" is a key guiding principle of our application. It means: *"Europe starts here with us and with you at home."* But "Europe at home" also means looking for traces of cultural diversity in your own city and region. In our case, this search for clues leads from Roman excavations to the epochs of building culture and artistic trends to the industrial boom, local political dynamics and economic and cultural recovery in the second half of the 20th century, without papering over the darkest chapter, the crimes of the Nazi era. Last but not least, we have manifold influences of history – be it the Ottoman sieges or the multi-ethnic state of the Habsburg Monarchy – that manifests itself in the regional cuisine in the form of Bohemian dumplings and strudels, Hungarian-inspired goulash, Turkish coffee and many international spices. And how is "Europe at home" lived in other European cities and regions? This central question could shed some light on commonalities in history and culture and encourage our engagement with the great European idea.

Key aspects of the programme vision for St. Pölten 2024 include European exchange, the promotion of mutual understanding and the building of lasting relationships. The aim is to work together in an experimental field to build artistic and socio-cultural formats within the dimensions of "Discovering", "Discussing and Experimenting" and "Displaying". Thus one of the cornerstones of St. Pölten 2024 is to include European artists as early as the application and preparation phase. Connections to our European neighbours are not established vertically at the national level and projected to the European level, but *horizontally* between *European regions, cities, institutions and citizens.* After all, national states and their languages may be different, but they all share a multifaceted cultural realm and, above all, cultural and political challenges.

In concrete terms, we are planning to cooperate with cities and regions in countries that have currently or recently prompted us to tackle the basic questions of European unification: Greece with the euro crisis, Great Britain with Brexit, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia with the question of EU enlargement. *Artist-in-residence programmes* and *project cooperations* should enable a horizontal view of other European regions, reveal new perspectives and reduce distances.

In this respect, St. Pölten 2024 also ties in with countless existing cooperations in the city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria, as well as with European art, cultural and educational institution networks. It will deepen European exchange as early as 2019. The following examples illustrate this approach:

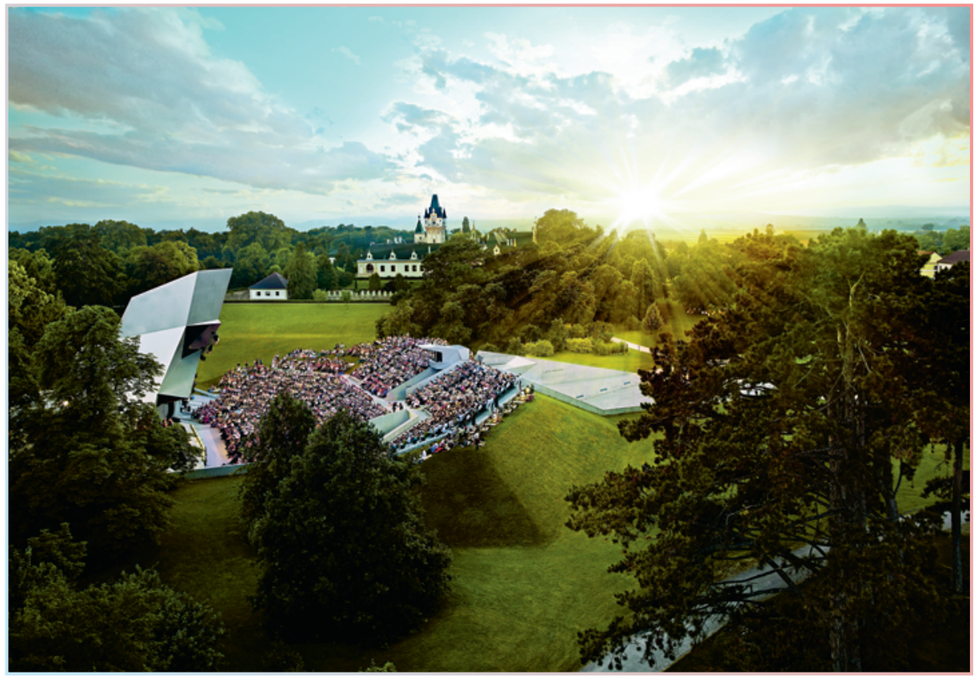
- Organising a conference for the Cooperation Network of European Medium-Sized Cities on "Cultural Diversity and Exchange as an Opportunity for European Medium-Sized Cities" in April 2019.
- Inviting artists from the European twin cities of Heidenheim (DE), Brno (CZ), Clichy (FR) to participate in an exhibition in the City Museum in April 2019. ▸ 2 B
- Organising a conference for the Working Community of the Danubian Countries, currently chaired by Lower Austria, on the subject of cultural regions in April 2019.
- Intensifying existing European cooperation between local and regional cultural institutions, e.g. St. Pölten's Europaballett, European Literature Days, or formats at the Landestheater Niederösterreich (provincial theatre) including "Home Visit Europe" by the theatre group Rimini Protokoll.
- Further European networking of the local independent scene through the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART and two symposia by the art and culture association "La Musique et Sun" (LAMES).
- European networks at the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences, in particular in the fields of virtual reality and media art, as well as the New Design University with its focus on design and creativity.
- Cooperation between the Kino im Kesselhaus cinema in Krems and Cinema Paradiso in St. Pölten, both of which are members of the Europa Cinemas film theatre network promoting European cinema.
- Intensive efforts on the part of NÖKU Holding to bring the "European Film Awards" to St. Pölten in December 2023.

GETTING STARTED

We want to set off on our "Europe at home" experimental discovery voyage as early as 2019: with exhibitions in public space and museums, through discourse formats combined with documentary films, with a series of reports in the "St. Pölten Konkret" city newspaper, which is sent to all households in St. Pölten, but also through formats for schools and tailor-made projects for the future including the Children's Art Lab – House of Education of Art and Cultural Competences for Children. ▸ 2 B

Our discovery voyage includes the following projects:

- 30-year anniversary of the opening of the "Iron Curtain"
  The "Iron Curtain" ran 400 kilometres along Lower Austria's border until 1989. Prospects shifted with its opening, setting in motion a process of neighbourly rapprochement that continues to this day. 2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the opening of the "Iron Curtain" – an occasion that Lower Austria will be celebrating with a number of formats. St. Pölten 2024 takes the anniversary and numerous regional and cultural points of reference as an opportunity to not only look into the past in the context of the application, but also to work on shaping the near future.
- "Magic Mountain for Europe"
  From 2021 onwards, we will also be analysing, discussing and presenting current problems and possible solutions in a preparatory format for young Europeans in the Capital of Culture Region. Called "Magic Mountain for Europe" and based on the secluded world of the sanatorium Thomas Mann described in his renowned *Bildungsroman* 100 years ago, this "summer school" focuses on Europe as a shared subject of investigation. Housed in the unique atmosphere of Grafenegg Castle, which also serves as a summer residence for the European Union Youth Orchestra, 60 to 80 young artists and scholars will spend a week working on approaches to the "treatment and healing" of the European idea. The years 2021, 2022 and 2023 will see current, fundamental questions of European unification dealt with in discussions and experiments with new, interdisciplinary methods. Results will be presented in St. Pölten and online. This format will be designed in depth in 2019 and presented in Bid Book II, should St. Pölten be shortlisted for the European Capital of Culture 2024 title.



Grafenegg

3 B Can you explain your overall strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?

Come together

Let's be honest, the number of traffic jams caused by coaches with international registration numbers on the borders of St. Pölten is … well, manageable. Apart from its varied cooperation projects and networks, the city plays a supporting role on the international stage, maybe even the role of a non-speaking extra. For now, that is, because St. Pölten is absolutely determined to change this. St. Pölten 2024 will create perfect conditions for drawing visitors to the city even from outside Austria. And we have a convincing plan.

1. We want to combine convincing content with an innovative programme delivery.

St. Pölten 2024 is facing up to the challenges that Europe is currently confronting. We see ourselves as a laboratory and cross-disciplinary testing ground. Key questions for Europe will be renegotiated on a small scale and examined for correlations between distances stoked by populists and fears experienced by individuals. We have therefore aimed our programme not just at the citizens of St. Pölten, but also at people from Europe and beyond. After all, as our contemporaries they are equally affected by current challenges. St. Pölten 2024 cannot promise to provide solutions, but it can provide new perspectives, experiments, discussions and experiences that turn visitors into people who take action.

2. We want to use existing international networks and create one of our own.

We are not planning to disseminate our content and offers on our own. We need to "connect", as we already do at every level of St. Pölten 2024. We rely on tried and tested networks of cooperation partners, some of whom demonstrated their capacity and efficiency in the context of two previous European Capitals of Culture, Graz 2003 and Linz 2009. Furthermore, we aim to organise and take part in specific European conferences and symposia on culture so as to communicate St. Pölten 2024.

AUSTRIAN NATIONAL TOURIST OFFICE
The national tourism organisation has positioned Austria as the "cultural centre of Europe" and promises the opportunity for individual growth through inspiring cultural experiences. This content agrees to a large extent with that of St. Pölten 2024, so this is the ideal starting point for collaboration with the Austrian National Tourist Office. The first important discussions have already taken place. The parties expressed their firm intention to work together on strategy and operations if our bid is successful.

LOWER AUSTRIAN TOURISM BOARD
Strategic and operational cooperation is already in place with the Lower Austrian Tourism Board, quite apart from the corporate relationship that exists because the tourist board has a 15 percent stake in the St. Pölten 2024 office (NÖ Kulturlandeshauptstadt St. Pölten GmbH). Developing the Capital of Culture Region, for example, will be part of the tourism strategy of the province of Lower Austria, which in turn is created in collaboration with the St. Pölten 2024 office. This strategy will provide the basis for addressing countries and regions where most visitors of St. Pölten and Lower Austria come from, i.e. Southern Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and, in future, Poland.

In line with our marketing and communication strategy, "St. Pölten exists, surprises, experiments and thrills" (▸ 5 B), we shall cooperate with the Lower Austrian Tourism Board in taking communication measures such as trips for journalists and bloggers. The first promotion event to be scheduled is a river road show, with interested travel organisers and journalists journeying down the Rhine and the Danube by boat from Cologne to the Wachau region, and then by bus to St. Pölten – which is where we shall finally present St. Pölten 2024!

AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM
The Austrian Cultural Forum comprises 29 cultural institutes in 27 countries around the world. Subordinated to the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BMEIA), the cultural institutes are tasked with promoting cultural and scientific dialogue between artists and scientists in the respective host country and Austria.

We want to use the excellent connections of the Austrian Cultural Forum to collaborate with its branches and present our events and artistic programmes on site – for example in countries that will be home to the European Capital of Culture in the years before 2024, such as Croatia in 2020 and Serbia in 2021.

3. We want to attract international attention with innovative communication methods.

The St. Pölten 2024 office and the cultural institutions in St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region intend to initiate targeted co-productions with European partners starting in 2019. They will take place not just in St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region, but also in the domains of our partners in Europe, preferably in current or future European Capitals of Culture. This will enable us to develop a network of associated European cultural institutions and draw international attention to our project.

St. Pölten 2024 also wants to surprise and experiment, and we shall demonstrate this by addressing potential visitors with innovative communication methods such as the "Virtual European Capital of Culture" project.

▸ 5 D

3 C To what extent do you plan to develop links between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

Right in the middle of Europe

We want to sound out distances, rescale them – and also overcome them! Consequently, our artistic programme is created entirely with this in mind, and is built to offer a suitable framework for programmatic links with former, current and future European Capitals of Culture. Now that the foundations for St. Pölten 2024 have been laid at the levels of politics, cultural infrastructure, programming and public participation, we want to use 2019 specifically to strengthen our ties to other European Capitals of Culture.

IN DIALOGUE
The "European dimension" – i.e. promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and better mutual understanding between European citizens – is a key part of our European Capital of Culture concept. Strategies towards these objectives can ideally be tested between cities that have already been awarded the title of European Capital of Culture. In so doing, St. Pölten 2024 follows the process-oriented steps of its artistic programme strategy: "Discovering", "Discussing and Experimenting", "Displaying". The aim is to get to know and understand what "Europe at home" looks like and what it means from the perspective of other European cities. With other European Capitals of Culture in particular we want to challenge and continue to contribute to the overall European discourse.

St. Pölten 2024 will actively shape its role as representative of European Capitals of Culture, organising everything from reciprocal discourse formats to artist cooperations and travelling exhibition formats. Transnational marketing cooperations which are also focused on a well-orchestrated takeover of the title from a Hungarian city and its subsequent transfer to German and Slovenian cities should create better visibility and enhance the appeal of the title.

The planned "Virtual Capital of Culture" format will enable a digital experience of our artistic programme through moving image coverage, podcasts, and discussion formats recorded or broadcasted live. We want to set up a small but excellent editorial department and seek out cooperations with cities that will also be carrying the European Capital of Culture title, either in the same year or at some point in the future. Our motto: "European Capital of Culture on the go"!

GET YOURSELF CONNECTED
Reciprocal visits – by the respective application teams, representatives of the city and province, stakeholders from cultural institutions and the independent scene, as well as students – promote mutual understanding: What challenges do other European Capitals of Culture face? What priorities are they setting? What can we derive from this for St. Pölten 2024? We can use this information to develop tailor-made projects that should prepare the ground for a fruitful connection between European Capitals of Culture.

We started networking with former and future European Capitals of Culture as early as 2017, when representatives of the city of St. Pölten visited Aarhus. Since then, we have been exchanging ideas and experiences with European Capitals of Culture and discussing challenges of the application and implementation phases. We consider it equally important to network with partner cities that regard their challenges and situation as similar to those facing St. Pölten: in the transformation of an industrial and workers' city into a city of education, art and culture; in questions of dealing with industrial heritage, diversity and inclusion in society as well as the participation of the independent scene; and as far as the education of children in art and culture is concerned.

These considerations have formed the basis for our lively exchange with *Plzeň 2015* since the beginning of 2018. St. Pölten and Plzeň share not only a similarly central location in Europe, but also their transformation from an industrial to a cultural city. We also keep close ties with the two Austrian cities that have already carried the European Capital of Culture title – *Linz 2009* and *Graz 2003* – and regularly exchange information on various topics from

developing the tourism sector and integration of the independent scene to noticeable long-term effects. In 2018 we also visited German candidate cities for 2025 (Chemnitz, Dresden, Magdeburg and Nuremberg) in order to establish initial contacts and explore opportunities for cooperation.

We are seeking out deep, programmatic ties to candidate cities in our partner countries for the European Capital of Culture 2024 – namely Tartu, Narva, Banja Luka, Mostar and Bodø. Such ties begin with the mutual inclusion of respective thematic focal points and extend to joint, nomadic art projects. If St. Pölten 2024 is shortlisted, we will immediately make contact with countries that, like Austria, constitute a European Capital of Culture in 2024.

What's more, the province of Lower Austria with the NÖKU Group and the city of St. Pölten itself maintain various connections with future European Capitals of Culture: Schallaburg Castle, exhibition centre for the province of Lower Austria, is in contact with Novi Sad; the Caricature Museum Krems realises projects together with Plovdiv, and the St. Pölten Europaballett, which also sees itself as an ambassador for unifying cultural diversity and inclusion, cooperates with Rijeka.

St. Pölten will set up a *European task group* in 2019 to coordinate European cooperation and promote it in a targeted way. This task group will coordinate the European networks of St. Pölten's cultural institutions and European Capital of Culture Region, establish ties, pass on contacts and support us in planning visits to other European Capitals of Culture through existing networks.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

"Right in the middle of Europe" means not only looking north and west, but also forging links with countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Consequently, our projects clearly focus on those countries in particular.

- "Re-Create the City" summer school
  In 2018, we worked with the New Design University to organise a summer school and accommodate invited students from cities in Central and Eastern Europe such as Novi Sad, Prague, Wrocław and Dresden. Based on the working motto "Re-Create the City", participants developed ideas for St. Pölten's public space and gave us fresh perspectives on the city. This pilot project is to be continued.

- 30-year-anniversary of the fall of the "Iron Curtain"
  To mark the anniversary in 2019, we will be initiating an exchange between St. Pölten's independent scene and that of the European Capital of Culture 2015, Plzeň, so as to intensify our connection beyond national borders.

- Conference for the Working Community of the Danubian Countries of Europe
  We are working with the Provincial Government of Lower Austria, Department of Arts and Culture, to organise a conference for the Working Community of The Danubian Countries of Europe. Centred on the topic of networking between European Capitals of Culture in the Danube Region, the conference will take place in St. Pölten in April 2019. Representatives from Plovdiv, Timișoara, Novi Sad, Pécs and Rijeka will be invited to discuss opportunities and challenges for cooperation and the further development of joint projects.

- Job Shadowing
  This exchange programme was launched by an informal network of European Capitals of Culture under the aegis of Novi Sad 2021. St. Pölten 2024 with the NÖKU Group is also part of this network along with Plzeň 2015, Wrocław 2016, Rijeka 2020 and Debrecen 2023. As part of the Job Shadowing programme, a curator from Novi Sad visited Lower Austria for two weeks in 2018 in order to become acquainted with the working methods, structures, standards and colleagues in a partner city or region using the example of the Kunsthalle Krems.

- Exhibition "Up the River Danube!"
  Schallaburg, which belongs to the NÖKU Group and is located in the European Capital of Culture Region, will host the "Up the River Danube!" exhibition in 2020 and include the St. Pölten 2024 project in its communications. The exhibition follows the great European river from the Danube delta to the source of the Danube in Germany. While the exhibition focus is on the south-eastern European Danube countries (especially Hungary, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria) the treatment of historical, economic and ecological themes is not based on contemporary national borders.

All this is to say that the "European dimension" is the foundation, the driving force, and the reason why we always look at all programmatic considerations from a "European" perspective. It isn't just that we're "right in the middle of Europe"; Europe has long since become the centre around which St. Pölten 2024 revolves.

4 Outreach

4 A Explain 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.
4 B Explain how you intend to create opportunities for participation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.

Reaching out to the people!

Ever since its inception, civil society has played a strong part in shaping the St. Pölten 2024 project, participation being a fundamental aspect of the process. There is great enthusiasm amongst the large number of people who are already involved – so much so that the question should actually be: how to involve the application in civil society? But seriously: 2016 saw the launch of regular meetings for citizens and the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART. Thus the foundations for the application were laid even before the St. Pölten 2024 office was set up, and before the political resolution was adopted. Within this process, we deliberately do not view marginalised groups of the population as isolated. Instead, we aim to rescale social distances, give these groups more visibility in majority society and make them an integral part of society. Most importantly, the involvement of experts from the population does not end with the submission of the first application documents, nor does it end in 2024. There will be a follow-up of bottom-up, so to speak.

LOCAL EXPERTS

From the outset, our aspiration was to involve the local population in the application process on a broad basis and from the bottom up, rather than present them with a fait accompli. In doing so, our aim is not only to make use of local experts' knowledge, but also to increase significantly the quality and sustainability of our application. However, participation only creates multiple benefits if it is implemented professionally. For this reason, we commissioned experts for our public formats who supported us in conception and implementation. The results of this process now form the substantial basis both of our application and the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy.

LAUNCH

At the public launch of the application in December 2017 one could already sense the enthusiasm that has continued through the entire process to date. St. Pölten's Bühne im Hof venue was bursting at the seams with 360 people attending, while others had to be content with following a livestream. Highlights included the presentation of a publication accompanying the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART. Containing over 50 statements and sketches, it visualises the local residents' extensive expertise, their ideas, visions and wishes.

DIALOGUE AT THE KULTURFORUM

In 2018, the topics of "Status-Quo Analysis of St. Pölten 2018", "St. Pölten 2030 Cultural Strategy", and "St. Pölten Capital of Culture 2024" were in the focus of three evenings of the KulturFORUM public dialogue format. We reported on the status quo and the timetable of the application. Above all, however, we held working discussions with citizens, ascertained needs and gathered important inputs for the application. At the last forum, participants were given the opportunity to express their preferences for the contents of the application concept using interactive voting tools. For each KulturFORUM we had chosen special locations in reference to the ideas of our application: an abandoned shopping centre, a disused industrial warehouse, and the foyer of the Festspielhaus St. Pölten festival theatre, which had never been used in this way before. They each included curated artistic programmes and ended with an enjoyable gathering. A positive effect was that discussions about the European Capital of Culture 2024 were followed up with lots of enthusiasm: cultural managers talked with representatives of the independent scene, artistic directors with business representatives, and all of them talked with us, the St. Pölten 2024 office.

THE KULTURJOURNAL FOR IN-DEPTH INFORMATION

In 2018, to prepare for and follow up on our KulturFORUM events, we sent the KulturJOURNAL magazine out to 35,000 households in St. Pölten, providing in-depth information about the background, motifs and goals of the application. A third issue, based on key aspects of the first Bid Book, is set to come out in March 2019. All KulturJOURNAL issues can also be found online on our website, in German and English.

A KULTURTOUR OF ST. PÖLTEN

We also sent two converted cargo bikes on a KulturTOUR of the city, calling at a large number of events and stopping in public places. Citizens thus had the opportunity for a face-to-face discussion and to propose their ideas (by postcard).

A STRONG MEDIA PRESENCE

Thanks to our strong media presence in newspapers, online, on the radio as well as on regional and national television, we managed to reach a wide audience. Our social media channels offer up-to-date reports about our activities and provide culture tips. Our website is also largely available in English. It serves, on the one hand, to make the application process transparent while presenting all related events in chronological order, for example by summarising KulturFORUM events. On the other hand, the website provides the opportunity to make direct, non-binding and anonymous submissions putting forward opinions and ideas about the bid to become European Capital of Culture 2024, and so enter into dialogue with us.

EXPERT KNOW-HOW

Apart from citizens' know-how, we also benefit from the expertise of numerous professionals. A lively exchange occurred within the context of workshops, focus groups, talks, and numerous individual interviews. This exchange served as a basis for countless concrete proposals for collaborations and projects.

▸ 2

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

To date, we have had over 160 extensive personal conversations with key actors from the fields of art and culture, education, politics, business, tourism, the social sector, mobility, ecology, the Church as well as science and research. These formed the basis for a status-quo analysis and for an expanding, multidisciplinary network that has already yielded concrete projects.

"IN DISCOURSE"

"In Discourse" is a dialogue format that took place four times. Subjects discussed include "Business & Tourism", "Diversity" and "Artistic Programming". For the latter dialogue, we managed for the first time to bring together 40 artistic and scientific directors as well as managers from St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region to collaborate on the artistic and cultural programme in one place. We also invited the mayors of approximately 80 municipalities in the Capital of Culture Region to create a joint platform. Following a themed keynote speech – delivered, for example, by the director of tourism for Linz 09, or the managing director of the Allianz Cultural Foundation – we continued to work in individual sessions establishing needs and suggesting solutions. We plan in any case to carry on with the "In Discourse" format.

BOTTOM-UP NETWORKING

The invitation to exchange does not come only from our side. Over the past year we have presented the European Capital of Culture 2024 project and our application process at many events, promoting exchange and networking on the ground. Examples include the Sonnenpark festival, Europe Day, and the "SMARTUP St. Pölten" research project.

BREAKING OUT OF THE BUBBLE

What we still have to improve on – and so view as a big challenge for the future – is the involvement of people who are less receptive to culture, as well as people from marginalised groups. St. Pölten's diversity has not been fully reflected in our participation process so far.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

In collaboration with key actors from the fields of participation, diversity, religion and social work, the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART has therefore developed a dossier on the theme of "Involvement and participation of marginalised groups (in culture production)". We at St. Pölten 2024 define marginalised groups as population groups who, due to economic, social, cultural and/or physical norms as well as sexual orientation/identity, are structurally limited in their everyday actions and are therefore discriminated against to a certain extent. This includes, for example, older people, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, ethnic and religious minorities as well as LGBTI persons. Women also still face massive discrimination in society.

Building on this analysis, we would like to place our focus on the following key objectives:

▸ 1. We want to strengthen involvement in public life!
▸ 2. We want to remove structural barriers!

SENSITISING AND INCLUDING INSTEAD OF SUPPLEMENTING

Citizens from over 100 nations live in St. Pölten. This diversity is reflected in the city's age structure, but is often missing in its cultural institutions and cultural life. Various access barriers and structures ensure that the range of programmes, audience and personnel in cultural sectors remain largely homogenous. How can we seize the opportunity of St. Pölten 2024 to actively integrate the qualities of a diverse society into art and cultural life?

Inclusion is more than supplementing individual contents or spaces. The overall structure of cultural coexistence must be designed with sensitivity to discrimination. In light of the existing imbalance between aspiration and practice, we would like to explore new avenues and find new solutions together with the Diversity Office, an administrative agency for diversity management run by the City of St. Pölten. After all, St. Pölten 2024 aims to ensure accessible information for as many people as possible, and to facilitate their involvement and participation in art and culture as well as in social life in general.

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY
Equality between woman* and man* is a fundamental value of the European Union. In our own structures, such as the advisory board, this is not yet the case. Apart from keeping up transparent selection procedures, our goal therefore is to achieve a 50 percent share of women*, should St. Pölten be awarded the title of European Capital of Culture 2024, meaning that our team would be expanded.

▸ 5 B

CONTINUING AND
STRENGTHENING THE DIALOGUE
Thanks to the great popularity of our dialogue formats, we are planning to hold further public dialogue formats in 2019 on a variety of themes, such as cultural mediation and diversity. True to our motto "Europe at home", our aim is to address big themes on a smaller scale as well, to mobilise and sensitise people in their cultural life, to explore and exchange opinions and ultimately find "new allies". An artistic contribution as well as a get-together that promotes networking and exchange are set to round off the evenings.

DESIGNING AND PROVIDING ACCESS
TO PUBLIC SPACE TOGETHER
On our initiative, a public space task group was set up in order to ensure a positive development of St. Pölten's public space. In two public city forums the needs of as many users as possible are discussed, forming the basis for a *guiding concept for public space*. It is important to envisage the city centre and the government district (including the cultural district) linked up and barrier-free. The existing signage system should be improved and consumption-free zones created.

EMBEDDING ART IN PUBLIC SPACE
Although public art has been established in Lower Austria for a long time, our aim is to attach far greater importance to it in St. Pölten and in the Capital of Culture Region. This includes barrier-free access to interventions in public space and exhibitions in open-air galleries. To explore and visualise St. Pölten's broad range of cultural identities, a photo project is being developed in collaboration with the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART.

TAKING THE FIRST
STEP TOGETHER
In cooperation with the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART, the Friends of Culture St. Pölten association and relevant social institutions, the intention is to develop a system by 2024 that facilitates access to cultural events and sites for marginalised groups. People who are unable to participate in public life due to their specific life circumstances are thus taken by the hand, so to speak, to make their first steps with us.

FREE CULTURE TICKETS
Nowadays, many people can no longer afford to visit cultural venues. This is where the "Hunger for Art and Culture" action comes in. Established in 2003, it offers a "Culture Passport", which provides people on low incomes with free admission to numerous cultural institutions throughout Austria. We are planning greater incorporation of this action into our ticketing concept.

ESTABLISHING NEIGHBOURLY
RELATIONS
St. Pölten has eleven neighbourhoods, each of which has its own identity. Through projects that overcome social and spatial barriers we aim to promote neighbourhood work and establish it as a particular field of interest. One option currently under discussion proposes the reactivation of the *Kulturheime* that can be found in a number of neighbourhoods. (▸ 6 B) These small event centres, utilised more or less intensively, could be put to use again in cooperation with youth centres, retirement homes or the Diversity Office. A further project could be a mobile intervention, which would tour the neighbourhoods encouraging exchange and encounters in a low-threshold way. Together with the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART and associations, it is intended to be open to, and used by, a wide range of social strata.

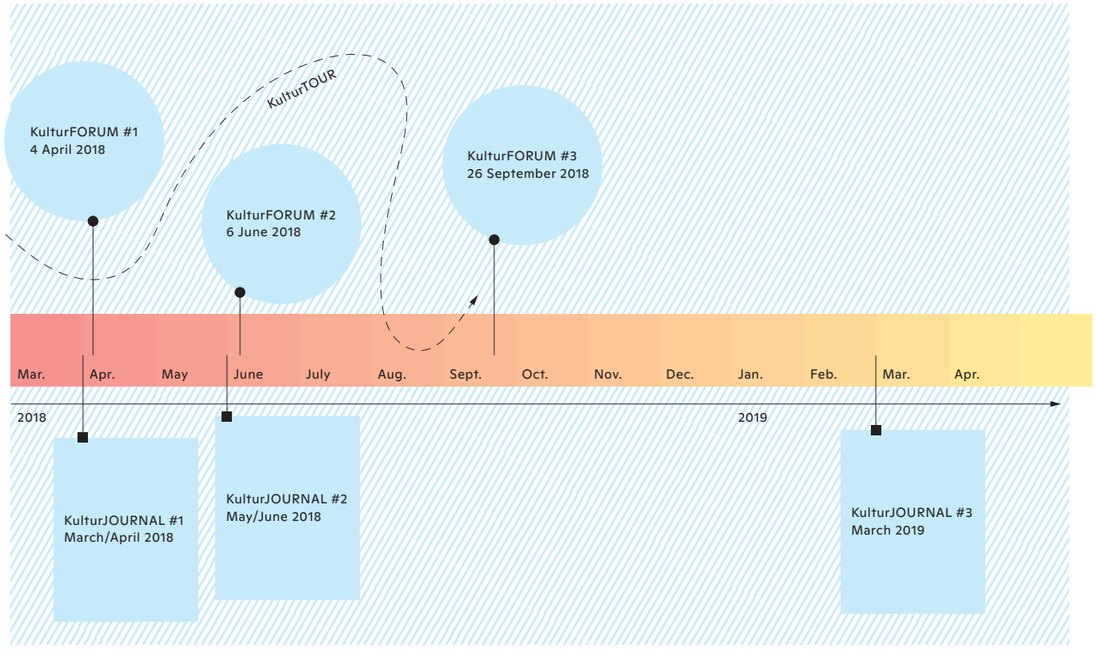
In line with our concept of serving as a model, we would like to set an example for how to involve as broad a community as possible in a process – both in St. Pölten and in the Capital of Culture Region. That is why our entire application, and St. Pölten as a potential European Capital of Culture, stands on a strong and broad foundation, built on the enthusiasm of our committed population, politicians and cultural actors!



Dialogue at the KulturFORUM#2



University of Applied Sciences



4 C Explain your overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

Thinking big, particularly for the little ones

The earlier one comes into contact with art and culture and develops a love of it, the greater their chance of becoming a self-conscious enthusiast for art and culture later on. This is why we at St. Pölten 2024 are already making a start with the "little ones" by setting up the Children's Art Lab, which, as a central location for experiencing and mediating art and cultural competences, is intended to have an impact far beyond the city. We shall continue firmly along this path by running joint projects with school pupils and the local institutions of higher education, and by focussing on education based on "lifelong learning" for everyone.

INSTILLING ENTHUSIASM FOR CULTURE IN CHILDREN

CLOSING THE GAP

One fundamental finding of our participatory process was that there is a great demand for art, cultural and education programmes in St. Pölten, particularly for children and families. As a result, we carried out an in-depth analysis of art and cultural offerings for children in St. Pölten and Lower Austria. We discovered that only few institutions focus entirely on art education and cultural competences for children, and that children and adolescents are often mistakenly regarded as one target group. We observed pronounced differences in the quality of cultural education. Further to this, there is no central information centre for art and education programmes for children.

We want to close these gaps and create a new, innovative institution exclusively for children. We were able to get two renowned experts in this area on board to help us develop our initial concept: Elisabeth Menasse, director of ZOOM Children's Museum Vienna, and Claudia Haas, an experienced consultant for (children's) cultural institutions.

DEVELOPING A NEW INSTITUTION: CHILDREN'S ART LAB – HOUSE OF ART EDUCATION AND CULTURAL COMPETENCES FOR CHILDREN

▸ *We want to create a site of experience, art education and cultural competences for children!*

The Children's Art Lab will enable children to work hands-on and directly with artists, designers and urban planners. While the approach is interdisciplinary, the focus is on visual art. Children will acquire cultural competences in a playful way – in exhibitions, workshops, or lectures. The aim is firstly to facilitate formative experiences through investigation of art. Secondly, we want to enhance self-esteem in early childhood and encourage lifelong curiosity.

▸ *We want to position the Children's Art Lab as a competence centre and network hub for children's education programmes with a supra-regional impact!*

The aim is to make the Children's Art Lab a driving force and catalyst for increasing the quality of cultural and educational programmes for children throughout Lower Austria, offering, for example, expert symposia or training programmes. The networking of regional, supra-regional and international art, cultural and educational institutions would create an interdisciplinary education cluster of a European dimension.

▸ *The Children's Art Lab would establish a central information and contact point for children's cultural programmes in Lower Austria!*

In addition, all information would be pooled and made available via a user-friendly, barrier-free, central website with tailor-made services.

▸ *We want to build an architectural landmark in central St. Pölten that creates a sense of identity!*

The building and outdoor area of the Children's Art Lab would meet the highest architectural demands and become an open, low-threshold space of encounter without social or spatial barriers. In addition to this, we aim to build a network of design playgrounds. These would be created by designers or artists, critically monitored by an advisory board of children, and sponsored by a future-oriented company. (▸5 A VII)

These measures are aimed at making St. Pölten a showcase model for children's culture, with children taking on responsibility for shaping coexistence and their future living environment, true to the motto "Create your future city". That is why we want a children's advisory board to accompany the concept and building phases at all times so as to involve the children as active co-creators and decision makers rather than mere recipients of the new offer. The processual character is given priority once again: the interdisciplinary laboratory offers the opportunity to try things out and experiment, thus paving the way to art and culture. This is how we aim to familiarise even children from less culturally sensitive segments of the population with art and culture. After all, early practice makes the master!

▸ 6 B I, 6 C

INSTILLING ENTHUSIASM FOR CULTURE IN YOUNG PEOPLE

So far, we have not been able to involve a satisfactory number of school pupils or students from St. Pölten in the application process, but we have now taken steps to do so.

INVOLVING SCHOOLS

A procedural plan was drawn up together with Lower Austria's director of education: in 2019, as a first step, we will implement a pilot project with a *secondary school* in St. Pölten. Within the context of subjects such as art, German, history and politics, our aim is to use discussions with pupils as the basis on which to develop projects that will bring them into closer contact with culture. Experiences made during this process will serve as a prototype for our approach in a further seven schools – including in the Capital of Culture Region – from 2020 onwards. This is intended to continue in a long-term collaboration.

The *School of music and arts St. Pölten* is Austria's oldest and Lower Austria's largest music school. A future project-related collaboration between this institution and St. Pölten 2024 is an important cornerstone for the involvement of school pupils. Within the context of Lower Austria's free-of-charge *"Aktion Landeshauptstadt"*, around 23,000 pupils a year get to know their provincial capital. St. Pölten 2024 is already being referenced in the scheme. We are in talks with the organisers to convey additional content in the future and – should the city be awarded the title – to focus the scheme on the theme of European Capital of Culture 2024.

INVOLVING UNIVERSITIES

With over 3,000 students at three (soon to be four) institutions of higher education, St. Pölten is an important location for education. The city benefits from this diversity in sociocultural terms, above all. The links between (urban) culture and higher education institutions are set to be further consolidated in the future. Hence St. Pölten 2024 has already begun during the application process to collaborate with colleges and universities both in terms of content and projects.

▸ In the summer of 2018, a one-week "Summer School" was staged as an initial joint project with the *New Design University*. Under the motto "Re-Create the City" participants developed ideas for the St. Pölten 2024 project. Students from selected universities focusing on design from previous or future European Capitals of Culture in Central and Eastern Europe were also invited. The "Summer School" format is set to be further developed and jointly implemented again in 2019.

▸ There also exists intensive cooperation with the *St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences*. Firstly, we will be collaborating closely on the theme of "Creative Industries" (▸1 B) to develop and implement an evaluation concept together (▸1 E). Secondly, we are working closely together at a project-related level, for example on the "Media in Transit" project (▸2). The application also feeds constantly into the curriculum: during the summer term of 2018, students at the Department of Media & Digital Technologies designed storyboards for fictional application videos for the European Capital of Culture 2024.

INSTILLING ENTHUSIASM FOR CULTURE IN EVERYONE

The tools of St. Pölten 2024 for cultural education are aimed at facilitating *lifelong learning for as many people as possible*, regardless of their age or social background. Based on the guiding principles of the NÖKU Group, the core of the educational work lies in artistic and scientific content. Likewise, the focus of the St. Pölten 2024 agenda is developed and implemented by artistic and scientific directors.

Particular importance is attached to cultural educators and their involvement in programming and conception as early on as possible. We want them to develop an awareness of the diversity and life realities of our audiences and to be able to respond in their educational work. These cultural education methods are based on the principle: nothing ventured, nothing gained! Taking risks with content and the possibility of failure are inherent elements of the process. New cultural educational concepts for public space also allow us to reach out to and involve marginalised groups and groups that are less receptive to culture.

5 Management

Got our motor running

For all the open processes, development opportunities and requirements, this is where we get to take a deep breath: all of the relevant authorities in the city and province have assumed responsibility. This means we already have the greatest possible planning security for the operating programme- and cultural infrastructure budgets. In other words, we are all set from a financial standpoint.

CREATE VALUE
The city's cultural budget

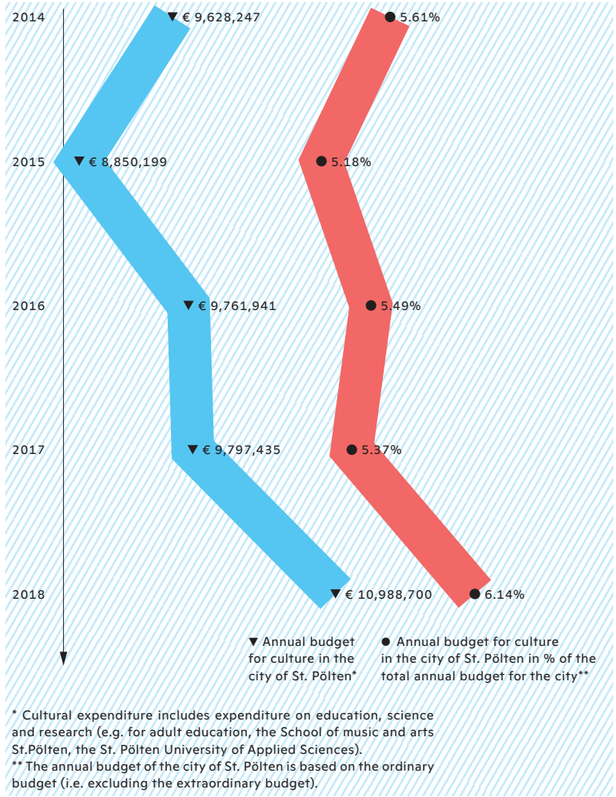
5 A I What has been the annual budget for culture in the city over the last five years (excluding expenditure for the present European Capital of Culture application)?

As the 2018 budget figures clearly show, the city's cultural spending is literally seeing "the dawn of a new era". They demonstrate a clear political will to focus even more strongly on art, culture and education, and to raise the city's profile in this regard. As a further powerful sign of the cooperation between the city and province as partners, St. Pölten has entered into a new, unlimited sponsorship agreement and will contribute one-third of funding (approximately 1.5 million euros per year) to the Landestheater Niederösterreich (provincial theatre) from 2018 onwards.

The province of Lower Austria regularly supports St. Pölten's art and culture scene with at least 19,900,000 euros per year (actual value 2017). This includes in particular the Festspielhaus St. Pölten (festival theatre) with its residency for the Tonkünstler Orchestra, as well as the Bühne im Hof (music venue/cabaret), the Landestheater Niederösterreich (provincial theatre), the Lower Austria Museum with Haus der Geschichte and Haus der Natur, as well as numerous other cultural institutions and initiatives.

5 A II In case the city is planning to use funds from its annual budget for culture to finance the European Capital of Culture project, please indicate this amount starting from the year of submission of the bid until the European Capital of Culture year.

There are no plans to do that. The city of St. Pölten's share in financing the European Capital of Culture 2024 project – in terms of the operating expenditure as well as the capital expenditure for cultural and other infrastructure – comes from a separate budget allocated by the city.



5 A III Which amount of the overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the European Capital of Culture year (in euros and in % of the overall annual budget)?

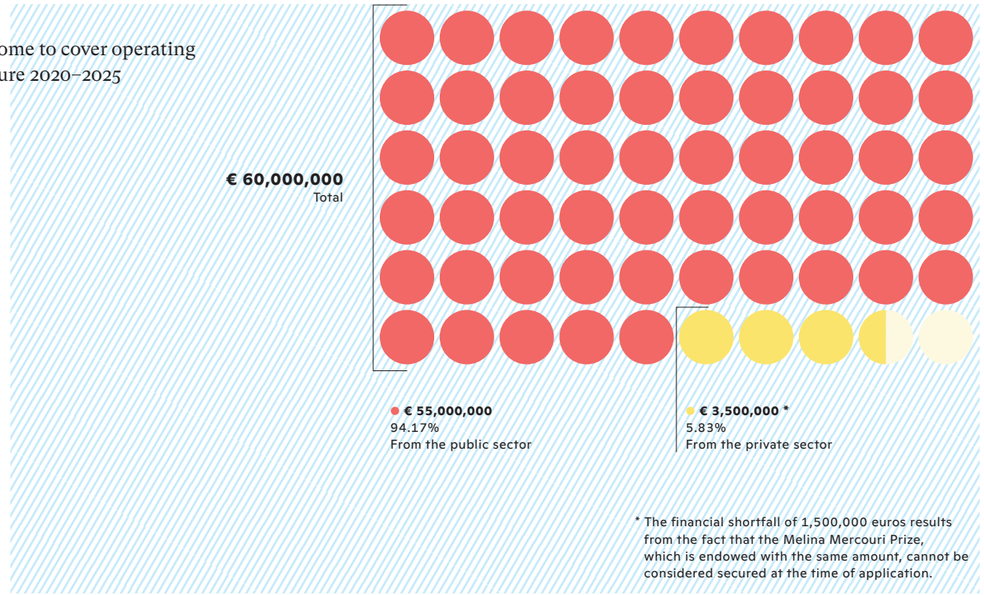
The city of St. Pölten plans to increase the annual cultural expenditure after the European Capital of Culture title year, i.e. from 2025 onwards, by around 2,930,000 euros, so that it will amount to at least 13,918,700 euros in total (based on the current level of expenditure according to the 2018 budget). This will bring the percentage of cultural expenditure in the total budget for the city of St. Pölten (ordinary budget based on the approved 2018 budget of 179,008,100 euros) to 7.78 percent, increasing cultural expenditure by at least 1.64 percentage points in 2025 from 6.14 percent of the total 2018 budget. The concrete steps are currently being fine-tuned. Fortunately, it has also been agreed with the city of St. Pölten that these increases should already be made gradually from 2020 onwards.

SECURED FUNDING

Operating budget for the title year

5 A IV Income to cover operating expenditure: Please explain the overall operating budget (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside to cover operational expenditure). The budget shall cover the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for the legacy activities.

Total income to cover operating expenditure 2020–2025

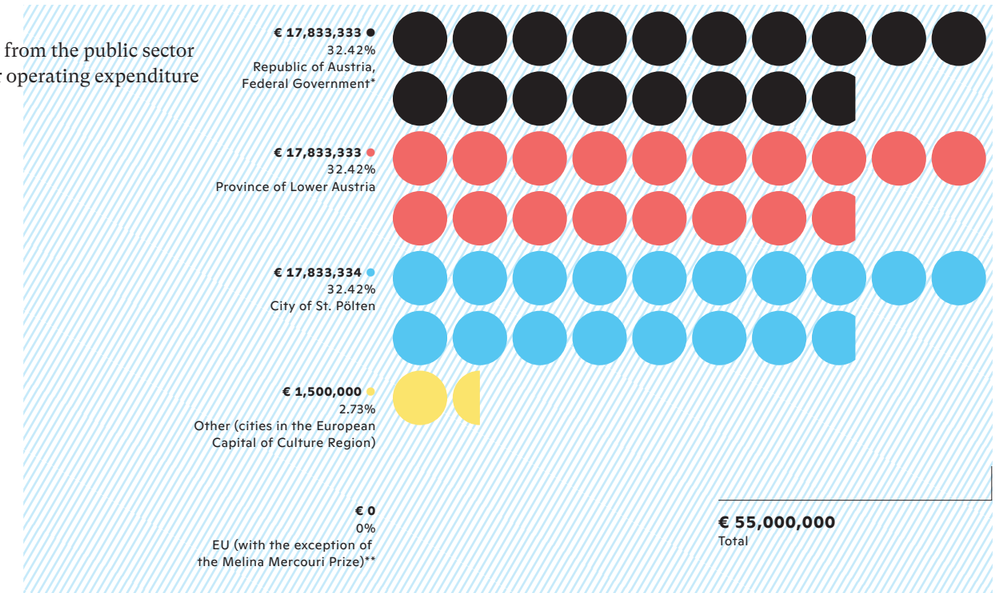


WE'RE ALL SET!

Income from the public sector

5 A V What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure?

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure



* The aim is to obtain a third of the funds from the Republic of Austria.
** No serious figure can be given here at present, as the EU has yet to decide on the budgets/financial framework and the (new) funding programmes for the period of 2021 to 2027. (▶ 5 A XI)

5 A VI 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?

Preparations are already far advanced on this point in particular, even close to completion. Both the operating expenditures budget and the cultural infrastructure budget have been fully coordinated with the relevant representatives of the city and province, and funding contributions from the city and province have been clarified. Only the financial contribution of the Federal Republic remains to be negotiated.

COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE CITY

In its *unanimous resolution* of 25 September 2017, the *municipal council of the city of St. Pölten* decided the following (summary):

An operating budget for the years 2020 to 2025 of approximately 60 million euros has been approved. The aim is for funding to be borne in equal parts by the city, province and Federal Government. The city's investments for construction and infrastructure measures are roughly estimated at 50–60 million euros. All departments of the municipal administration and municipal enterprises must offer their cooperation in achieving the objectives. In the interests of the desired sustainability, a significant long-term increase in the culture budget must be provided for the period after 2024.

Moreover, the *municipal council of the city of St. Pölten* has *unanimously* passed the following resolutions on 26 November 2018 (summary): The definitive application for the European Capital of Culture 2024 title has been approved on the basis of the present Bid Book. The city of St. Pölten will contribute 17,833,000 euros to the 60-million-euro operating programme budget for the years 2020 to 2025. Total costs for cultural infrastructure are estimated at 20,990,000 euros, co-financed by the city of St. Pölten with 8,245,000 euros. General infrastructure investments will continue to be financed from a special-purpose fund, and from the investment budget as of 2020.

THE PROVINCE IS ROLLING UP ITS SLEEVES AS WELL

The *Provincial Government of Lower Austria unanimously* decided the following at its meeting on 19 September 2017: *"The provincial capital of St. Pölten will apply for the title of European Capital of Culture in close coordination and in equal partnership with the province of Lower Austria."* The explanatory memorandum accompanying this decision estimates the required programme budget at 62 million euros net, which includes the application phase. The aim is for the partners – i.e. the Federal Government, the province of Lower Austria and the city of St. Pölten – to contribute to the programme budget in equal shares.

The city and province have specifically agreed that any further detailed budget and financing decisions on the operational programme budget and on the infrastructure investment budget will be taken by the relevant bodies by June 2019 at the latest.

NON-BINDING TALKS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

Within the framework of the workshop series preceding the application for the European Capital of Culture 2024 title, there have been non-bindings talks with the Republic of Austria (as represented by the Federal Chancellery of Austria – Section II Arts and Culture, Division II/10 European and International Cultural Policy) to the effect that three-party joint financing of the operative programme budget might be sought between the city of St. Pölten, the province of Lower Austria and the Republic of Austria (as actually implemented in Graz 2003 and Linz 2009).

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT MONEY

Income from the private sector

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

St. Pölten 2024 advocates a new – process-based – understanding of sponsoring. We want to distance ourselves significantly or even do away with one-dimensional deals that promise clicks for money or make donations dependent on the size of affixed logos. Instead, we invite companies from St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region to participate in the St. Pölten 2024 project substantially and in terms of content, such that pure sponsors become partners and ambassadors. In the course of this process, we are introducing a new approach in the form of a new, third sponsorship level: time. We shall ask companies to contribute time: time to listen, time to actively develop a project together, and working hours contributed by employees and experts.

Naturally, the ultimate aim is also to obtain financial resources to increase the financial margin. However, the many committed companies should also become aware of their social responsibility and, together with us, implement projects that offer added value for the population, the company and its employees as well as for the European Capital of Culture 2024 project.

We categorise companies able to support the objectives of our application according to the levels of their involvement as *key partners*, *partners*, *project and programme partners*. The most exciting partners for us in preparing our application for the European Capital of Culture 2024 are those with whom we want to implement concrete projects tailored to the objectives of our application. The following examples are intended to illustrate our project:

1. Provide innovative impetus for positive interaction between the city and province
   We are looking for a company whose staff canteen we can develop into an innovative model of a canteen. This canteen will no longer serve only to satisfy the basic needs of food intake, but will also offer healthy organic food directly from regional producers, transported in a CO_2-neutral way and largely vegetarian. As a meeting place, it should contribute to a positive working climate, higher employee satisfaction and stronger identification with the company.

2. Joint development of the Capital of Culture Region
   We are looking for mobility partners who can help improve access to to the Capital of Culture Region. Initial discussions with the Eastern Regional Transport Association VOR about a

special “culture region ticket” have been promising. We intend to invite other mobility providers – including regional railways (NÖVOG and ÖBB), bus lines (Wieselbus/VOR) and bicycle hire companies (nextbike) – to cooperate.

3. Aspiring to include: providing low-threshold, diverse and broadly effective access to art and culture
We aim to make artistic and cultural content an integral part of seminars, meetings, congresses and events, and to enrich them with cultural stimuli and interventions. A seminar on “change management”, for example, can be held in cooperation with the Haus der Geschichte in analogy to a historical period of upheaval. We will establish an interface between art and cultural institutions, companies and advanced education facilities.

4. Positioning St. Pölten more firmly at the heart of Europe
We want to define projects with companies that are active in Central European countries (CEE) and with whom we can work together on diversity, exchange of experience, and stimuli for society. For example, we are planning artist-in-residence programmes or – as part of our cooperation with the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences or the New Design University – inviting students from former or future capitals of culture. Our first project in this regard took place in 2018 in the form of a one-week “Summer School”. Participants developed ideas for St. Pölten 2024 true to the motto “Re-Create the City”.

5. Cultural enhancement of public space

▸ Permanent and temporary patronages in public space
We will invite companies whose (co-owned) properties comprise local recreation areas to join us in enlivening these spaces with a special cultural programme developed within the framework of permanent patronages.

▸ Sponsored design playgrounds
We want to create a network of “design playgrounds” in St. Pölten that are created by artists or designers, critically reviewed and tested by a children’s advisory board and sponsored in each case by a future-oriented company.
▸ 4 C

▸ Exciting venues
We would like to develop concepts for interim, main and/or continued use with companies that can offer spatial resources.

HOW WE PROCEED

We offer companies the classic range of communication options (▸ 5 B), but we will also create awareness of culture as a soft factor that can significantly strengthen St. Pölten as a business location for future employees and boost local companies’ brands as employers. We are already using existing networks to spread information about St. Pölten 2024 and to get industry representatives excited about our project.

We have already started to build our own network with the KulturGESPRÄCHE in Discourse dialog series “Business and Tourism in Discourse” and other platforms. Should we make it to the shortlist of Austrian candidate cities, we intend to create the *“Club 2024”* for official partners of St. Pölten 2024. They are expected to make a financial contribution appropriate to the company’s resources. What we offer them is a content-related cooperation with the involvement of their employees.

CULTURE COSTS
Operating expenditure

5 A VIII Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure by filling in the table below.

▸ See diagram “Operating expenditure” on the right page.

At present it is still unclear whether the planned central information and contact point “Homebase St. Pölten 2024” (working title) will be conceived as a temporary and/or artistic project and thus financed from the operating project budget, or will in fact be permanent, i.e. an investment measure that is part of the investment costs. Currently, the related expenditure is included as part of the operating budget.

PARTNERSHIP OF NEW QUALITY
Budget for capital expenditure

5 A IX What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year?

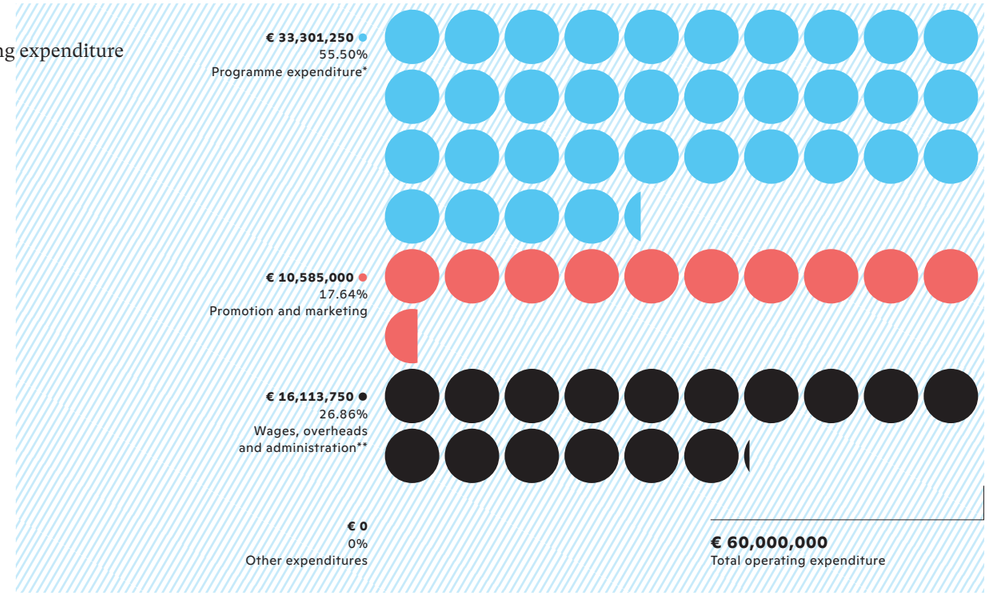
Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure	
City of St. Pölten	8,245,000 €
Province of Lower Austria	12,745,000 €
Federal Government *	
Total	20,990,000 €

* Co-financing of these infrastructure measures by the Federal Government/ Republic of Austria is envisaged. However, negotiations have yet to take place.

On 25 October 2018, the Governor of Lower Austria and the Mayor of St. Pölten issued a binding list of cultural infrastructure investments in connection with the European Capital of Culture 2024. The total cost is 20,990,000 euros.

Formal financing decisions by the responsible bodies of the city and province of Lower Austria are to be taken by June 2019. The listed projects are subject to an ongoing process of coordination in terms of content and finances between the city, province and the St. Pölten 2024 office.

Operating expenditure



* including event- and programme-related personnel (curators, technical management/technical assistance, production management/ production assistance, venue management, education and assistant management, drivers, festival assistants, security, supervisors …)
** including administrative personnel (two managing directors, Project Management and Proxy, artistic director, marketing, press, ticketing, secretariat, publications, personnel administration, research …)

5 A X 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?

In August 2017 Matthias Stadler, Mayor of St. Pölten, and Johanna Mikl-Leitner, Governor of Lower Austria, agreed on important cornerstones in their fundamental decision regarding St. Pölten’s application for the title of European Capital of Culture 2024. Because there already exists an outstanding cultural infrastructure in St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region, new megaprojects will be largely avoided. Instead, only a few new cultural buildings in St. Pölten will be built or adapted to meet the exact needs of the European Capital of Culture 2024. Furthermore, these buildings must show maximum sustainability (both in terms of their artistic content and their impact, but also with an eye to their long-term financial viability).

Further general infrastructure investments (roads, squares, public transport, etc.) have also already been discussed, but still require greater detailing and coordination as regards content, costs and financing between the city, province, and possibly the Federal Government. (▸ 6 C)

The city and province are already negotiating mobility measures in the Capital of Culture Region (such as infrastructural improvement of the railway line from St. Pölten to Krems and the timeline for this) with the Federal Ministry of Transport.
▸ 6 B II

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

The St. Pölten 2024 office has set itself the clear objective of seeking further EU funding. However, reliable statements in this regard can only be made once the content and artistic programme have been specified. These figures also depend on the budgets/financial framework 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 give a serious figure for revenue from the public sector to cover operational expenditure. (▸ 5 A V)

In particular, there are plans to further consolidate and deepen the existing European focal points, initiatives and network projects within St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region and to gradually expand European networking. Second, we want to develop new European projects and submit them for funding within the framework of European funding programmes.

5 A XII 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.

Investment in new infrastructure for the cultural sector	
Cultural infrastructure	€ 20,990,000

A detailed list of all measures currently planned for the cultural infrastructure can be found in ▸ 6 C.

5 B Please give an outline of the intended governance and delivery structure for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year.

Lean structure, wide-ranging expertise

A large testing ground – which we consider the European Capital of Culture to be – calls for a lean, clear structure that is able to act. A pool of experience, expertise, creativity and fire creates the conditions in which anything is, can be and must be possible. The city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria have joined forces and created an important foundation by establishing the NÖ Kulturlandeshauptstadt St. Pölten GmbH (St. Pölten 2024 office). The organisation has been incorporated into the NÖKU Group, ensuring the transfer of know-how in culture management at all times.

When the city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria passed the basic resolution in 2017, it was already clear that an independent organisational structure would be needed to provide the framework for the application phase and for the potential preparations for, and delivery of, St. Pölten 2024. The parameters are clearly defined: clarity, transparency, efficiency and economy, capacity to make decisions and act, organisational capacity, and a sharing of know-how.

PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE
The city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria came together as strategic partners and established the non-profit limited company *NÖ Kulturlandeshauptstadt St. Pölten GmbH* (St. Pölten 2024 office), with each of them holding 50 percent. Of the province's share, 35 percent are assigned to NÖ Kulturwirtschaft GesmbH (NÖKU Holding) and 15 percent to the Lower Austrian Tourism Board. This ensures that strong partners and positive forces are combined for this major joint project. The company agreement of the GmbH also formally fulfils the requirements for achieving favourable treatment of donations (application in progress).

NOT A SOLO EFFORT
We communicate continuously with representatives of the city, province, business and civil society platform KulturhauptSTART in regular *committees and project groups*.

The highest control organ of the company is its *general assembly*, which meets every six months. According to the company agreement, all essential decisions of the partners regarding budget, strategy, the staffing of the management and artistic director must be taken with a two-thirds majority. The *advisory board for matters of strategy and content* is made up of 16 representatives of the city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria. The board advises the partners and managers of the company and ensures that all important matters of strategy, content and finance are coordinated between the city and province. If our bid to become the European Capital of Culture 2024 is successful, the advisory board can be expanded to include representatives of the Republic of Austria and the European Union.

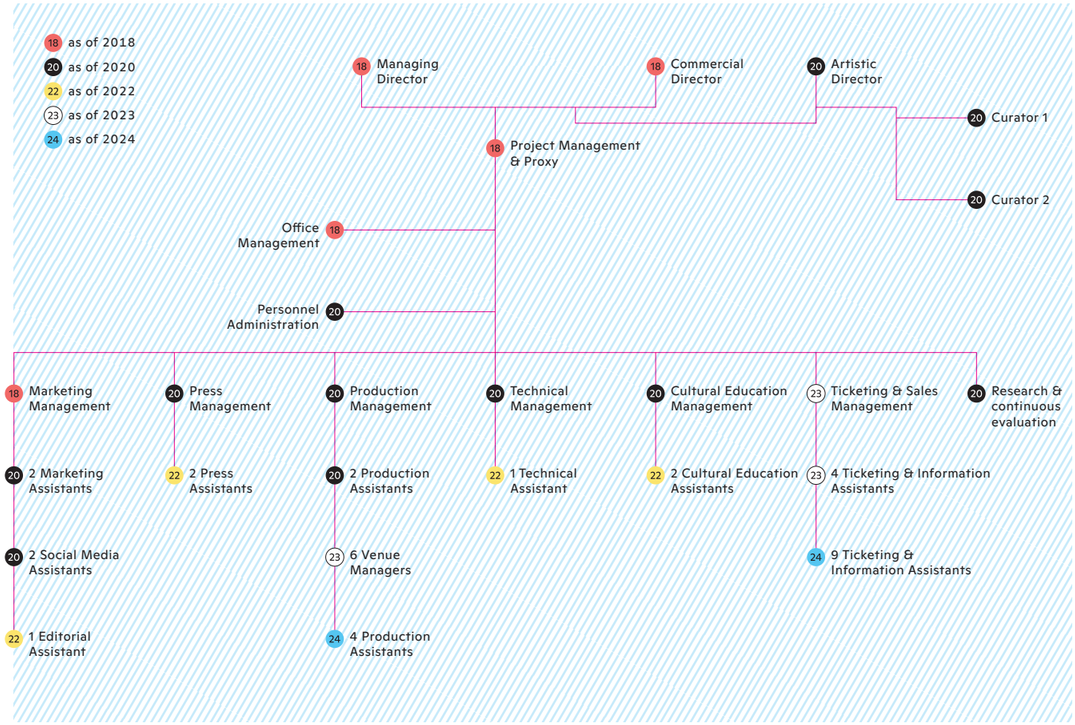
A *St. Pölten 2024 project group* was established as a working and coordination committee comprising representatives of the city, province, the St. Pölten 2024 office and the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART. It meets every two weeks.

In addition, a variety of task groups are being set up for specific topics in collaboration with relevant actors; examples include a task group for developing a guiding concept for public space initiated by St. Pölten 2024. The results of the task groups are passed on regularly to the advisory board for matters of strategy and content.

Regular meetings with key decision-makers including the Mayor of St. Pölten and relevant persons working at the NÖKU Holding or the Department of Arts and Culture of the Province of Lower Austria ensure a constant exchange and quick decision-making.

PROFESSIONAL ON BOARD
The St. Pölten 2024 office is integrated into the NÖKU Group and benefits from its comprehensive expertise in matters of culture management. It obtains numerous services from the NÖKU Holding in particular on a cost-sharing basis.

The province of Lower Austria established the NÖKU Group in 1999 as a public-private partnership. As a culture management model it is unique in the German-speaking world, providing clear, transparent, efficient and independent conditions for the management of key cultural, artistic and scientific institutions in the province. Important commercial know-how and economic thinking can thus flow into the art and culture area, and economic partners assume an important lobbying function for art and culture businesses. Another unique feature of this model is its great diversity and heterogeneity, fed by content from more than 30 institutions and brands, each with their own clear and independent profile. ▸ www.noeku.at



ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE 2020–2024
If the decision on the European Capital of Culture 2024 is in our favour, the St. Pölten 2024 office will prepare and carry out the European Capital of Culture 2024 project with unchanged partnership shares and control organs. The team will be expanded continuously until 2024 (see figure). We are aiming for an equal proportion of women* and men*!

The *Managing Director* was publicly advertised and will not need to be readvertised if our bid is accepted. The *Commercial Director* is yet to be publicly advertised and staffed.

The *Artistic Director* will be a member of the company's management team and will have free reign in designing and programming the artistic content. We have also settled on a process-based procedure for adopting artistic agendas: for the first application phase in 2018, there was close content-related collaboration with so-called *Visionary Advisors* (2018) as well as the artistic directors of cultural institutions in St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region. During the second application phase in 2019, we will also appoint an artistic project team on the basis of consultancy contracts and will codevelop with them a culture programme based on our overall artistic programme strategy. If we are awarded the title of European Capital of Culture 2024, the position of artistic director will be publicly advertised and staffed as quickly as possible.

A *Proxy* was appointed to the company in December 2017; he also holds the positions of *Project Manager* and *Press/PR Manager*. If our bid is successful, the project manager will operate at the interface between management and special departments. By 2024, *Marketing Management* will be expanded to include two assistants each for general marketing and social media, and one person responsible for creating publications.

Coordination and cooperation with the media will be the remit of the *Press Management* and two assistants, who will coordinate the process with marketing. *Production Management* will be mainly responsible for delivering the artistic agenda and will operate with six assistants and six venue managers. *Technical Management* (and their assistants) will handle any questions relating to technical equipment and realisation, administrative procedures and matters of logistics. *Cultural Education Management* is a key department for our bid; it employs two assistants and is responsible for audience development and for communicating artistic content to the audience and public. *Ticketing* & *Sales Management* will be appointed as an important link to the audience, with ten employees by 2024.

We are deeply convinced that many ideas emerge during shared lunch breaks, in conversation or even during ambitious after-work meetings. We plan to develop our own little cafeteria, a kind of "kitchen as a centre of team spirit", with adventurous cooks from our own ranks. Of course it will be organic, sustainable and healthy.

Some parts of the St. Pölten 2024 team are already formed, organised and have plunged into their work. If our bid is accepted, the next organisational steps can be implemented fairly quickly thanks to our structural preplanning, ensuring that the St. Pölten 2024 team is set up perfectly in terms of staffing as well.

ALL SLEEVES ARE ROLLED UP FOR THE KIDS
The new Children's Art Lab is a core part of our bid. So it makes sense to entrust the St. Pölten 2024 office with the planning of the building, the operating concept, and the sustainable and comprehensive use of the building. This will ensure that all available forces are combined sustainably for this joint major project.

We show our strenghts

In all modesty (a becoming feature for a mid-sized city) we should be proud of our (rather impressive) strengths. As "trained" St. Pölteners, we are also very aware of our weaknesses. But let's not get stuck with passive grouching, which we Austrians are said to have cultivated to perfection, and instead discuss the matter at hand. Here is a list of our strengths, weaknesses and solutions at a glance.

OUR UNDISPUTABLE STRENGTHS

CULTURE: sustainable potential

- St. Pölten and the region feature a dense cultural programme. (▸0 C)
- The bid for St. Pölten 2024 and the St. Pölten 2030 cultural strategy have been developed jointly, which ensures sustainability. (▸1 A C)
- The Children's Art Lab flagship project as a centre of education of art and cultural competences for children is a symbol of sustainability in terms of content and structure (legacy). (▸4 C, 5 B, 6 B I)
- Artistic independence is guaranteed. (▸5 B)
- St. Pölten features many interesting potential venues, such as abandoned factory premises and empty shops. (▸6 B I)
- Our artistic programme is intended to rescale existing distances between supposedly opposing poles and embrace the idea of a showcase model of a European mid-sized city of the future. We want to share these experiences with other European cities.

PEOPLE: placing participation above all else

- The initiative for our bid came from the civilian population. (▸0 A, 4 A B)
- The St. Pölten 2024 office and the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART are cooperating closely. (▸2, 4 A B)
- Contents and projects are developed in a process-oriented manner and with the involvement of various actors. (▸2, 4)
- The population stands behind our bid, as do actors from the fields of culture, tourism, business and social matters. (▸4 A)
- The contents of the bid are based on the results of the participation process conducted as part of the bid. (▸4 A B)

BUSINESS: a booming mid-sized city

- St. Pölten continues to grow. (▸0 A)
- St. Pölten is an education city and already has as many training positions as inhabitants. (▸0 A)
- The development of the European Capital of Culture Region as a cultural tourism brand with St. Pölten as the centre of a region bursting with art and culture is already starting to develop. (0 B)
- Since 1995, St. Pölten has headed the "Cooperation Network of European Medium-Sized Cities", which was established on St. Pölten's initiative and features 34 members from 13 European countries. (▸3)
- St. Pölten has excellent supra-regional public transport connections: 55 minutes to Vienna Airport, 21 minutes to Vienna and 3.5 hours to Munich. (▸6 B II)

URBAN DEVELOPMENT: plenty of experience

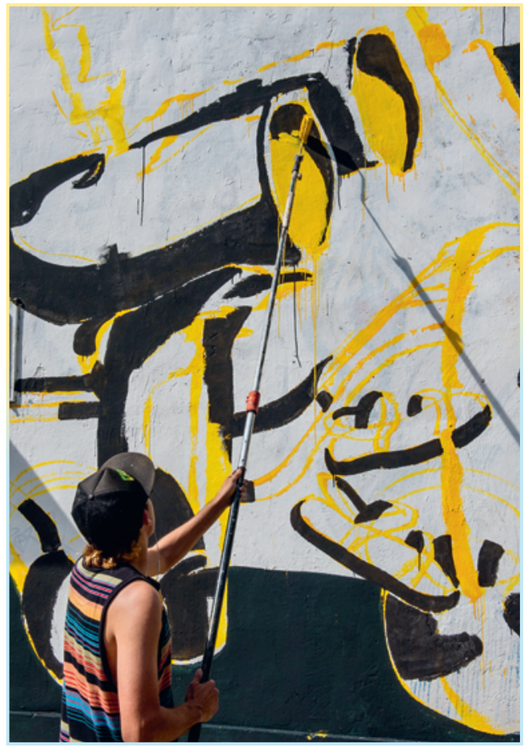
- With the slogan "at the heart of Europe", St. Pölten has included its commitment to Europe in its city logo since the 2004 enlargement of the European Union. (▸0 A, 3)
- Concrete initial steps have already been taken, such as establishing a public space task group, developing the Capital of Culture Region, and making decisions on preliminary projects. (▸0 B, 2, 4 A B)

KNOW-HOW: experts at work

- A separate bid company, the NÖ Kulturlandeshauptstadt St. Pölten GmbH (St. Pölten 2024 office), was established. (▸5 B)
- The St. Pölten 2024 office is integrated into the NÖKU Group and benefits from its comprehensive expertise in matters of culture management. (▸5 B)
- Project goals will be evaluated in a longitudinal study that covers a period of ten years (2020–2030) and will be conceptualised with the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences. (▸1 E)

POLITICS: strong together

- Representatives of the city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria meet in joint committees and task groups of the NÖ Kulturlandeshauptstadt St. Pölten GmbH. (▸5 B)
- The application to become Capital of Culture was taken jointly by the city and province. (▸5 A VI, 6 A)
- The city and province have already made fundamental decisions in regard to infrastructure investments. (▸5 A)
- Budgetary planning security has been ensured. (▸5 A)



... AND OUR WEAKNESSES

Bed capacity and the quality of accommodation businesses could be improved.
SOLUTION: The aim is to create incentives for new hotel projects through a collaboration between St. Pölten's "ecopoint" business service and potential investors in the hotel sector. The Capital of Culture Region and nearby Vienna also offer plenty of bed capacity that we can take advantage of. (▸6 B III)

St. Pölten lacks exhibition areas for fine arts.
SOLUTION: The development of the Children's Art Lab is focussed on fine/visual arts. Other key points of the artistic programme of St. Pölten 2024 will include public art and interim use of empty buildings. Above all, however, the Capital of Culture Region features many high-quality exhibition spaces for fine arts. One example is the State Gallery of Lower Austria in Krems. We will use the venues in the region to complement our programme, and we intend to communicate that fact. (▸0 B, 4 A B)

St. Pölten is generally seen as a boring provincial city and therefore has an image problem.
SOLUTION: A traditional image campaign seems unrewarding, but a self-confident and daring bid to become the European Capital of Culture 2024 combined with our marketing and communication strategy will no doubt turn St. Pölten's image on its head. (▸5 D)

Belief in visionary, innovative European concepts is not yet sufficiently embedded in the public awareness.
SOLUTION: Since our bid has taken shape, the population has been involved and encouraged to think beyond their daily horizons, i.e. in European or global dimensions. So the process of guiding the population towards a European dimension started a long time ago. The artistic programme for St. Pölten 2024 also has deeply European starting and reference points. (▸2, 3)

Within the participation process, we have not yet managed to sufficiently involve St. Pölten's young people and marginalised groups in our bid.
SOLUTION: We are working with Lower Austria's director of education to develop a campaign for the education sector. We also commissioned the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART to compose a dossier on the subject of "Participation of marginalised groups (in culture production)", which served as a basis for our strategy for including those groups. (▸4 B)

Public transport within the Capital of Culture Region should be improved.
SOLUTION: We are already in discussions with the Eastern Region Transport Association VOR about ways to improve local and regional public transport. (6 B II)

OUR PLAN B

ST. PÖLTEN DOES NOT BECOME THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2024.
If, despite all our efforts, St. Pölten does not become the European Capital of Culture 2024, the city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria have already reached a fundamental agreement: a shared urban development focus will be placed in 2024 on the provincial capital of St. Pölten along the lines of the regional development scheme of Lower Austria State Exhibitions (▸www.noe-landesausstellung.at/en). We need to make the most of the dynamism and positive energy generated during our bid to become European Capital of Culture 2024 both for the city and the surrounding region.

5 D Please provide an outline of the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year.

Let's kiss the frog! The myth of transformation

Hardly any other city in Austria has received so little praise and so much ridicule. Even the local comedy scene uses St. Pölten as a synonym for provincialism. At the same time, one would be hard-pressed to find a city where the clichés (which even some St. Pölteners have started to believe) are so far from reality. Paradoxically, this holds great potential, not least for communication and building a unique profile. Who, if not the European Capital of Culture itself, has the power to turn a once sleepy province into a self-confident model of a mid-sized city? A city of which one is rightly proud!

PRESSING THE RESET BUTTON

For some it's just the name that rings a bell; others haven't even heard that. But they all ask the same question: Do you really want to become European Capital of Culture? To be clear: St. Pölten is a lot – the "Fittest City", a "Baroque City", an "ideal business location", a "city of education", the "city for conferences and seminars", an "ideal starting point for excursions elsewhere" … but it is hardly ever associated with its diverse cultural scene, which of course curbs self-confidence. So it's high time to unite the diverging images of St. Pölten into an integrated brand. Our application for the European Capital of Culture 2024 title is in fact the ideal occasion to start an integrated brand development process at the beginning of 2020. To do so, we shall bring all institutions that communicate the St. Pölten brand to the outside world to one table: the Department of Culture and Education of the City of St. Pölten, Marketing St. Pölten GmbH, the Department of Tourism, the "Platform 2020" association and ourselves, the St. Pölten 2024 office.

PEERING INTO THE (PUBLIC IMAGE) CRYSTAL BALL

What are our USPs, and what does the St. Pölten 2024 brand promise? Obviously only an integrated branding process can clarify these questions once and for all. In any case, we will be laying out the messages of the St. Pölten 2024 brand like a brand manifesto:

- We are radically hospitable.
- We are an experimental field and test laboratory; we offer open urban spaces and want to use this potential to grow as a vibrant, lively city.
- We want to become a city of children's culture. The Children's Art Lab, innovative design playgrounds and a strong focus on cultural education guarantee this.
- We want to become a centre of art in public space.
- We will continue to build on our existing strengths in the areas of dance and performance (Festspielhaus St. Pölten festival theatre), theatre (Landestheater Niederösterreich), history (St. Pölten City Museum & Haus der Geschichte Niederösterreich), and festivals (Höfefest, Musica Sacra, Beatpatrol, Frequency).
- We can be reached easily from any direction – in regional, national and international terms – and are well connected to the Salzburg–Linz–Vienna–Vienna Airport axis.
- We are located at the heart of the Capital of Culture Region, which boasts a high density and quality of cultural attractions, nature and wine culture in the midst of unspoiled nature.
- We are a diverse city and will also direct the European Capital of Culture marketing inward.

CAPITAL OF CULTURE REGION AS A CULTURAL TOURISM BRAND

St. Pölten 2024 aims to position the Capital of Culture Region as a unique cultural area with a unique identity on the national and European maps. St. Pölten is to form its prominent centre. This shall go hand in hand with the development of sustainable tourism in the region. Cultural tourism attractions are targeted primarily at visitors from Austria and Europe with an affinity for culture.

Implementation will take place in several steps:

1. Integration into the Lower Austrian Tourism Board's new long-term strategy, which will be presented in early 2020.
2. Organisational anchoring through an inter-destination project. St. Pölten is the only Austrian provincial capital without its own tourism association, though the city is considering founding one.
3. Developing the region as a cultural network (through projects linking St. Pölten with the region, such as the creation of cultural cycle paths and platforms for leaders in the artistic community).
4. Creating a unique cultural tourism brand for the Capital of Culture Region.
5. Implementing appropriate tourism marketing measures.

A networking meeting is also planned for 2019, for the purpose of informing those who sell tourism products about the concept of the Capital of Culture Region and its cultural tourism brand.

INSTRUCTION MANUAL FOR ST. PÖLTEN 2024

Even the best, most expensive image campaign in the world would be futile in St. Pölten if it promised something it couldn't deliver. The brand promise has to be substantiated locally as added value in terms of space and content. A number of things need to be tackled in order to do this:

1. Create spirit through content
   … via events, cultural interventions and art in public space, through cooperation between cultural institutions at the content level, by means of joint cultural education programmes and cultural events that embody the idea of St. Pölten 2024. (▸ 2)
2. Radical hospitality
   We want to develop concepts with a diverse array of stakeholders involved in shaping city life – be it retailers or city authorities, public transport companies or taxi operators, restaurants or hotels, tourist offices or rubbish collectors. We want to develop concepts that explore hospitality in a new light and overcome distances. Our objective is to enhance hospitality in St. Pölten!
3. Design of the public space
   Public space design is considered a highly important factor. Domplatz (Cathedral Square), for example, is to become a meeting place for cultural events, with seating that invites visitors to linger, free WLAN and much more. (▸ 6 B)
4. Orientation system
   The current visual orientation system leaves a lot of room for improvement in terms of user-friendliness, content and legibility. The brand development process will include the development of a new concept that meets the requirements of a wide range of target groups, also with regards to barrier-free access.
5. Improving connections and mobility
   The creation of cultural cycling and hiking trails in the city and Capital of Culture Region (illustrated by means of an app and an analogue map) and the integration of these into supra-regional cycle path networks in cooperation with tourism destinations, improving transport options in the region, introducing a cultural region ticket and other measures should give a strong boost to mobility and thus to the region.
6. Creating culture consumption packages for specific target groups
   Packages tailored to regional, national and international target groups should make the visit easy to book and experience. Examples include packages for passengers of the Austrian Federal Railways ("Stop in STP"), a Capital of Culture Day by bike for Vienna tourists or marketable product combinations, such as Capital of Culture attractions in combination with nature and culinary delights in the Capital of Culture Region.
7. Capital of Culture 2024 ticketing
   The NÖKU Group has a uniform ticketing system for the entire event and exhibition area, including museum shops, into which ticketing for St. Pölten 2024 will be integrated. Here it will be important to plan special ticket variants and quotas for locals.
8. Homebase St. Pölten 2024
   This information and contact point for the European Capital of Culture 2024 should be located as centrally as possible and should also act as a place for artistic interventions.

PROVEN CHANNELS, NEW PATHS

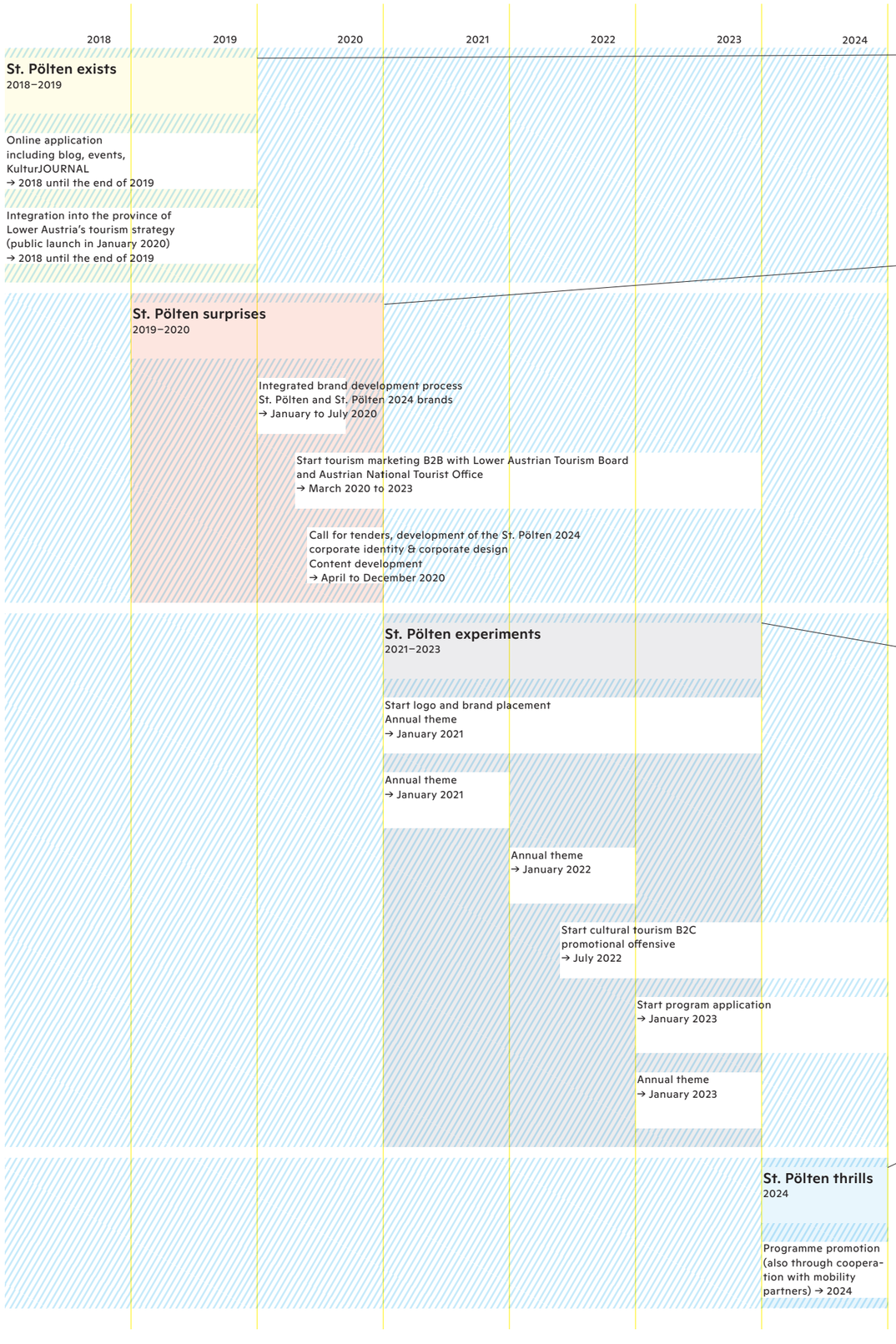
A project like the European Capital of Culture is so complex and varied in terms of content that it requires an equally diverse and well thought-out communication strategy. It is important to use tried and tested channels, but also to break new ground. Our communication concept engages digital and analogue worlds independently in order to draw attention, address feelings and provide comprehensive information – even beyond the boundaries of our city and region. The strategy encompasses classic media work, target group-specific and multilingual printed matter, advertisements, outdoor advertising, mobile advertising/branding, a range of promotional items and merchandising (also from regional providers), all social media channels, the web, playful mediation via a separate app and newsletter, to name just a few outlets.

STRONG PARTNERS

Reaching an international audience in a targeted way will require cooperating intensively with existing networks and partners, such as the Austrian National Tourist Office, the Lower Austrian Tourism Board and the Austrian Cultural Forum. (▸ 3 B)

MEERKAT STRATEGY

Marketing is yet another area where we will continue to leave routine behind and (be it in Austria or in Europe) pop up where St. Pölten 2024 is not expected, which is to say we will appear in unusual places with unusual messages. This "meerkat strategy" is an opportunity to attract a lot of attention both emotionally and in terms of the media, to adequately communicate the European Capital of Culture 2024 and be a constant source of surprise!



Marketing projects we are looking forward to

BLOG AS A LAB FOR IDEAS
Guest authors write "lab reports"; experts present their positions on specific questions (e.g. European dimension) and detailed aspects (e.g. of urban development) are examined.

MEDIA IN TRANSIT
Everyday media use and the experience of content in transit will be researched in cooperation with the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences so as to develop specific media formats for selected regional public transport connections in the Capital of Culture Region.

MEDIA COOPERATION
A media cooperation with the "Lower Austrian News" (NÖN) aims to use testimonials to promote both art and culture and the European Capital of Culture 2024 project to broad sections of the population.

ONLINE CAMPAIGN
"St. Pölten surprises" … with well-known testimonials from St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region as well as influencers from core markets (moving images). Another idea: non-German speakers pronounce the name "St. Pölten", which is not that easy …

NEW CONVERSATION FORMATS
Innovative discussion formats should help to rescale distances. One of these could be a "dialogue of opposites" (working title), for example, between two interlocutors who hold opposing positions, but in this format are called upon to adopt the other's opinion in order to challenge their own capacity for empathy. This can also be tried at home. Another innovative discussion project is planned with the visual arts institution Kunstraum Niederoesterreich. ▸ 2

LONG-TERM FILM PROJECT
A film project about changes in public space and the development of an online documentation format (such as moving images, interviews, blogs or Instagram campaigns) will follow St. Pölten's metamorphosis from an industrial city to a city of education, art and culture from the very beginning.

MEERKAT STRATEGY
We will continue to leave routine behind and (be it in Austria or in Europe) pop up where St. Pölten 2024 is not expected, which is to say we will appear in unusual places with unusual messages. So watch out!

NOMADIC PROJECT
A specially developed mobile tool moves from city district to city district and creates new spaces for meeting and action. Its mobile architecture will then migrate to the Capital of Culture Region and create new connections.

ANNUAL COMMUNICATION TOPICS
We are planning annual themes for 2021 to 2023 that will be taken up and worked on by the art and cultural institutions.

PERSONALISED ADVERTS
We will be placing our Internet advertisements via a single ad server together with the Austrian National Tourist Office and Lower Austrian Tourism Board. This automated ad management system will help us reach culture-loving audiences (affinity groups) throughout Europe.

VIRTUAL CAPITAL OF CULTURE
The testing and further development of exhibition and interactive communication formats is intended to make St. Pölten 2024 an experience for those who cannot come to St. Pölten. Physical distances are suspended in virtual space – it's the "Capital of Culture from your living room or wherever you are", so to speak. But we also want to use the growing market for *virtual reality* content to promote St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region internationally.

A burning passion for Europe

We live in an age in which more and more political forces are challenging the European peace project. We prefer to offer a different perspective – a positive outlook. Our intention is not to save Europe – we don't see things in such a negative light. Rather, we want to make people feel enthusiastic about the idea of Europe again. This is not about uncritical acceptance, of course, let alone about playing with fire. It's about sparking a passion and conviction that make us all feel the spirit of Europe once more.

During the application phase, we have already begun to highlight the European dimension both in participatory dialogue formats and in our communication strategy. And not just out of a sense of obligation to promote the European Capital of Culture as an action of the European Union, but out of our deep desire to convey the guiding principles, fundamental issues and values of the European peace project. The artistic programme for St. Pölten 2024 is also profoundly European. We intend to pursue this aspiration as a way of strengthening the values of the European Union in St. Pölten, the Capital of Culture Region, and beyond.

In this spirit, our aim is to:

1. Strengthen competences in European matters, make people fit for Europe!
   - As part of the bid to become European Capital of Culture 2024, we are in the process of setting up a Children's Art Lab – House of Education of Art and Cultural Competences for Children. A clear objective of this is to impart knowledge of democracy, Europe, and the European Union project to children from a young age, as a part of their cultural education.
   - With the support of Lower Austria's director of education we are set to enter into a dialogue with the schoolchildren of St. Pölten. Starting in 2019, the dialogue will revolve around their wishes, needs, approaches, ideas and visions for the European city of the future.
   - A media cooperation with "Lower Austrian News" (NÖN) is planned to start in 2019, so as to cover the topic of "European Capital of Culture" for local citizens.
   - We are currently working closely with members of the European parliament to launch a project for schoolchildren on the European Union. The first prize will be a trip to Brussels.

2. Continue to highlight the European dimension in our participatory process
   - As part of our participatory process, the public KulturFORUM#3 took place in September 2018. Its focus was on "Views of Europe". International guests discussed "Social and Diversity Issues" that Europe is currently facing. Local panellists provided a link with St. Pölten. Our public dialogue formats will continue to highlight European themes.

3. Strengthen the European focus of communications
   - Since 2017, all of our online and offline communication channels have adopted the wording "European Capital of Culture", highlighting the fact that this is an action of the European Union.
   - For CI/CD during the initial phase of the application process we used *European blue* so as to reference the European Union in terms of colour.
   - A city embraces an attitude: the slogan *St. Pölten. Mitten in Europa. ("St. Pölten. In the Centre of Europe.")* has been part of the logo since 2004. During the European Capital of Culture 2024 application phase, the phrase *Mitten im Aufbruch. ("St. Pölten awakes")* was added. Since 1995 St. Pölten has held the presidency of the "Cooperation Network of European Medium-Sized Cities", with 34 members from 13 European countries. In 2001 St. Pölten was awarded the Europe Prize by the Council of Europe.
   - Since the start of the application, our online blog has featured articles and interviews on EU-related themes, including one with the Austrian writer Robert Menasse.
   - Campaigns on Europe Day: the St. Pölten 2024 office supports various events connected with Europe Day, ranging from official ceremonies to collaborations with the civil society platform KulturhauptSTART. This has also given us the opportunity to present the project and application.
   - If our bid to become European Capital of Culture 2024 is successful, the logo of the European Union will feature on all of our analogue and digital channels.
   - We support existing NÖKU Group projects carried out in collaboration with other EU institutions, such as the European Youth Orchestra Campus in Grafenegg.

6 Capacity to Deliver



6 A Please confirm and provide evidence that your application has broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the relevant local, regional and national authorities.

Could it be love?

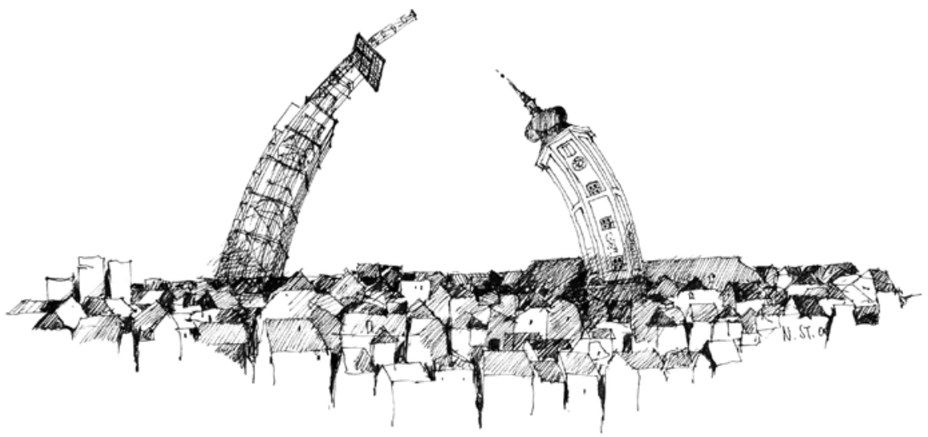
After years, even decades of coexistence, something like love must have brought together political players from the city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria: love for the European Capital of Culture 2024. Ideological differences are set aside in favour of a common goal. This, like many other things, is a completely new quality of cooperation and communication. It surprised many at first, but ultimately represents one of the great strengths of our application: an alliance that transcends borders in several respects and distances itself from any tendency to establish such boundaries in our greater European family.

The city of St. Pölten is closely allied with the province of Lower Austria in its bid for the title of European Capital of Culture 2024. This new level of cooperation between the city and the province in terms of a joint project is a unique characteristic of our application. This is how the responsible authorities' sustainable commitment has manifested itself: founding of the St. Pölten 2024 office (NÖ Kulturlandeshauptstadt St. Pölten GmbH); appointment of representatives of the city and province to boards of the St. Pölten 2024 office (general assembly, advisory board of strategy and content, project group) and to all other task groups (including one developing a guiding concept for public space); active participation of relevant representatives of the city and province in the entire application process.

Both the city and the province have taken all the necessary policy decisions and have committed themselves to sharing cultural infrastructure investments equally. The aim is to divide the project and programme budget by three in a joint effort with the Republic of Austria. The fact that these decisions were taken unanimously by the respective boards demonstrates the broad political support offered by the relevant responsible bodies. (▸ 5 A VI) The city and province have agreed to take further necessary steps in June 2019 together with the Republic of Austria in the event of being shortlisted.

We also receive broad support from the following public authorities and officials in realising our projects:

- Lower Austrian Tourist Board
- Department of Education of the Province of Lower Austria
- Minister for Economic Affairs, Tourism, Technology and Sports of the Government of Lower Austria
- Eastern Region Transport Association VOR (Vienna, Lower Austria, Burgenland)



Klangturm (tower of sounds) and town hall tower

6 B I Please confirm and provide evidence that your city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title. To do that, please answer the following questions: Explain briefly how the European Capital of Culture will make use of and develop the city's cultural infrastructure.

City of unlimited possibilities

Say "St. Pölten" and many hear "province". And yet the density of cultural infrastructure here and in the surrounding area is anything but provincial. As insiders have known for a long time, some of it exudes a radiance that extends far beyond the city and region. Now it's a matter of harnessing this radiance for an entire continent and showing Europe that we are here and ready to go! But in order to get ready we have to redesign, reanimate, renovate and redevelop our infrastructure.

St. Pölten 2024 focuses first and foremost on existing cultural infrastructure: Which institutions can be used? What needs to be redesigned, reanimated or renovated? New cultural infrastructure should only be redeveloped where there is a definite need and demand for it. A comprehensive analysis of venues carried out in 2018 together with an external expert enabled us to also find exciting locations off the beaten track that could potentially accommodate a European Capital of Culture.

REDESIGN

Two unfinished, evergreen chapters of urban development are near completion. At last.

PUBLIC SPACE

Our participation process clearly highlighted the need to take action in matters of public space. Connecting the cultural and government districts to the historic district in particular has yet to prove successful. There is no obvious integration into the existing orientation system, nor is there any artistic design or corresponding system of structural facilities for pedestrians or cyclists. This means there is no clear definition of logistically sophisticated and attractive routes between the city centre and the government district including the cultural district. Currently even central public squares in St. Pölten have very little to offer in terms of quality of stay. In response, St. Pölten 2024 has set up a task group to develop new solutions for public spaces. Residents of the city are actively involved in the process, which will be completed in spring 2019.

▸ 4 A B

DOMPLATZ (CATHEDRAL SQUARE)

Domplatz – St. Pölten's historic centre and town nucleus – was used as a cemetery for about a thousand years. Today it serves as a car park and – twice a week – as a marketplace. It will also be explored in archaeological excavations until 2019. The performance of rock legend David Bowie on Domplatz in 1996 is one of St. Pölten's longest-lived urban stories. Now we're taking up Bowie's call for "Changes" on Domplatz:

Current planning provides for a complete redesign and new use. A task group has been set up to align these plans with the objectives of the St. Pölten 2024 project. The utilisation concept envisions a further development of the market, a contemporary presentation of the historic heritage and development of the square into a place of encounter, contemplation and culture. With a maximum capacity of around 5,000 visitors, the square can be used for open-air concerts, summer theatres and other carefully curated outdoor events. The "resurrection" of Domplatz will be celebrated with a major concert by the Tonkünstler Orchestra in September 2022. The concert is to recur at the same time every year.

▸ 2, 6 C

REANIMATE

Let's breathe a new soul into healthy structures!

CULTURAL AND GOVERNMENT DISTRICTS

Not far from the historic centre is the government district, which opened in 1997, along with the cultural district including the Festspielhaus St. Pölten festival theatre, the Lower Austria Museum including Haus der Natur and Haus der Geschichte, as well as the Lower Austria Provincial Library and Lower Austria Provincial Archives. The area also offers exhibitions in the Landhausbrücke gallery, the city's highest density of art in public space, and numerous indoor and outdoor areas suited to a wide variety of formats. We plan to stage art projects in the open spaces and squares in front of, between and around the cultural institutions and

government buildings. Initiated in cooperation with the institutions located in the area, this programme will extend beyond the European Capital of Culture year. The green area by the river opposite the quarter can be used for major events.

KLANGTURM (TOWER OF SOUNDS)
The Klangturm, a 77-metre-high glass-and-steel sculpture, is a city landmark, but also St. Pölten's most prominent vacancy: after its original use as a sound sculpture ceased due to the need for renovation, it now serves as a lookout point over the Capital of Culture Region. The Klangturm thus symbolises the need to reinvigorate the cultural district. We are planning to reanimate the tower of sounds with an artistic and cultural programme.

CULTURAL FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICTS
Some districts of St. Pölten have *Kulturheime*, most of which offer space for about 150 to 250 visitors. The rooms of these working-class community centres, which are influenced by blue-collar culture and resemble each other in structure and appearance, would benefit from a "breath of fresh air" and opening to visitors of all types and classes. Most of these centres are equipped with small stages, technology and gastronomic infrastructure. In order to emphasise the identities of the various districts, we want to use them in a much more creative way, e.g. for concerts, cabaret, craftworks, panel discussions, workshops, rehearsal spaces …

RENOVATE
We want the city's gems to shine in new splendour befitting a Capital of Culture!

FORMER SYNAGOGUE
The former synagogue of St. Pölten is situated on a main connecting road between the cultural district and the historic centre. It serves as a venue for concerts, exhibitions, and educational programmes for Jewish practice designed by the Institute for Jewish History in Austria, which is housed on site.

Unfortunately, for technical reasons, this venue cannot currently be used year-round. The rooms are nevertheless suitable for events coordinated with the Institute and thematically related to the Nazi past and Jewish life in the city and region.

CLUBHOUSES IN SONNENPARK
Sonnenpark is an open, four-hectare area that contains two buildings with a total usable area of approximately 500 square metres. Supported and used by the Sonnenpark and LAMES associations, the park functions as an experimental laboratory for alternative lifestyles.

The location plays a central role in the independent scene and serves as a green space for the whole neighbourhood. It is suited to a wide variety of alternative formats to enrich the European Capital of Culture year. Renovation of the buildings must be carried out with great sensitivity in order to do justice to the spirit of the place and the people.

FESTSPIELHAUS ST. PÖLTEN
Festspielhaus St. Pölten is one of Austria's most distinctive contemporary theatre buildings. It fulfils all requirements for full theatre operation. Current capacity utilisation suggests that additional formats and intensive use within the framework of St. Pölten 2024 would be possible. The venue consists of a large hall, which has a 480-square-metre stage area with all technical facilities and an audience capacity of up to 1,100 people. Other areas that could be used include a small hall, several rehearsal stages and the foyer, which we also used for KulturFORUM#3. The investment budget includes an urgently-needed automation of the stage equipment and a constructional improvement of the entrance, foyer and ticket areas.

REDEVELOP
Creating something new with care and diligence

CHILDREN'S ART LAB – HOUSE OF EDUCATION OF ART AND CULTURAL COMPETENCES FOR CHILDREN
St. Pölten 2024 is creating a new institution at a central location that will be dedicated to educating children in art and cultural competences: the Children's Art Lab. We are planning a state-of-the-art building with an interior that will be as flexible as possible so as to accommodate exhibitions and events. Workshops and a café round off the space's offerings on an area of approximately 1,500 square metres. A spacious outdoor area is to open the institution and accommodate the independent scene in the evening. We are currently conducting a site analysis to find the perfect location for this new architectural landmark.

TEMPORARY CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE & EXCITING VENUES
St. Pölten 2024 wants to charge vacant spaces or those currently used for other purposes with new meaning. As part of a temporary or permanent cultural utilisation concept, they will serve as a field for experimentation and thus reveal potential uses. This is to boost the transformation from a city of work and industry into a city of art, culture and education.

GLANZSTOFF FACTORY PREMISES
The premises of the former chemical company Glanzstoff Austria are undoubtedly one of the city's landmarks. Although the historic halls have been listed since 2015, its culture-loving owner plans to turn the rest of the area into a new city district. Brigitte Kowanz's permanent light sculpture "Fountain" gave the site a new lease on life in 2017. The spaces could serve as venues for festival-like formats in the areas of theatre, performance, media art, installations and debates.

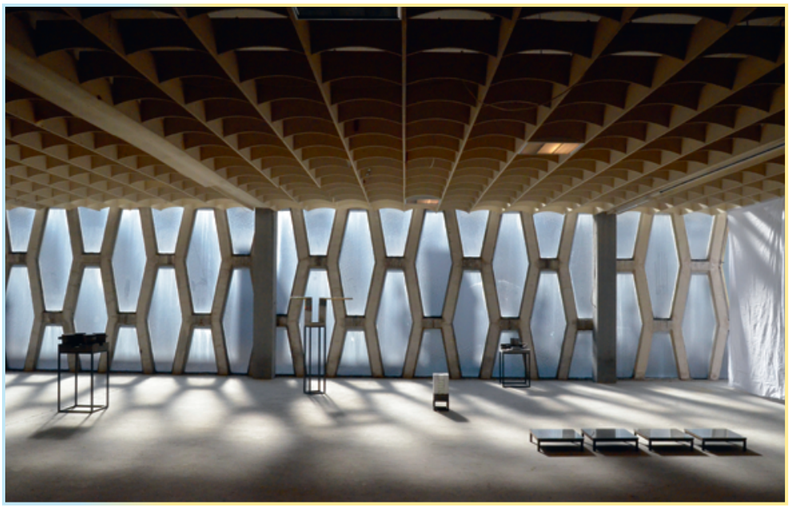
WESELY-HAUS
Located in the city centre, this former car dealership from the 1960s features an interesting concrete architecture. The property has 1,300 square metres of useable space and is currently being renovated. Its owner wants to create space for a cultural use. The building offers space for contemporary applied art, design and architecture, for discussion rounds, workshops, lectures, readings, etc. It could also be used for centrally located offices or artist's studios. But above all, it just looks so cool!

VOITH HALL 88
This industrial hall with 1,800 square-metres of floor space and an eleven-metre-ceiling was temporarily used as a theatre auditorium. Its proximity to the city centre and easy accessibility make it a particularly attractive option. Industrial charm and flexible usage possibilities allow for different programmes of use. In addition to the tried-and-tested use for performing arts or events such as KulturFORUM#2, concerts, exhibitions and hybrid projects would also be conceivable at the location.

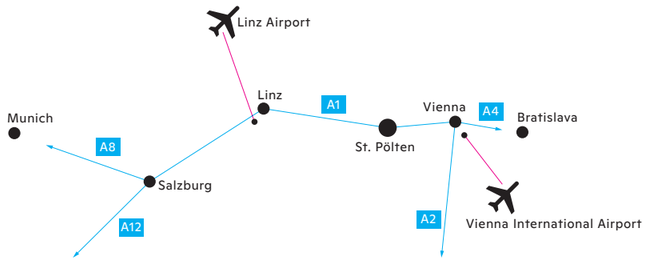
ÖBB TRAINING CENTRE, WÖRTH
The training centre for basic railway operations exudes the true railman spirit. It comprises classrooms, workshops, offices and hostel-like accommodation for approximately 250 people. A large part of the premises will probably be available starting in 2022. Unique features include the architectural complex and the facility's accessibility by rail (which would make it possible to offer special rides as an attraction, for example). The centre could serve in any number of ways: for accommodating artists with affiliated workshops and production facilities, as an exhibition venue, warehouse, or a production site for catering at this or other venues. The training rooms can be used for seminars, congresses or workshops.



Glanzstoff factory premises with Brigitte Kowanz's permanent installation "Fountain"



Wesely-Haus



St. Pölten's space-time paradox

At the airport check-in in one hour, the world's most liveable metropolis just 21 minutes away, a train station in the heart of the historic city centre, the traffic gridlock of other cities still nowhere in sight … and yet the travelled distances to the surrounding region often feel much longer. St. Pölten's central location is a priceless asset with regard to accessibility. What remains to be done now is to tap this potential from all (cardinal) directions and re-think distances in terms of mobility. In a word: St. Pölten is "rescaling distances" for its visitors!

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

St. Pölten's supra-regional connection has always been very good, and recent years have seen it improved even further. A train arrives from Vienna every half hour; it travels to St. Pölten in 21 minutes (and tends to be pretty crowded at the morning rush hour, by the way). Vienna Schwechat Airport is 55 minutes away by train. Linz is a 45-minute train ride, and Linz-Hoersching Airport is one hour and 20 minutes by rail. St. Pölten is also easily accessible by car thanks to its location on the A1 motorway, the most important westbound arterial road in Austria.

REGIONAL CONNECTION

While St. Pölten's national and international accessibility leaves hardly anything to be desired, the potentials offered by the city's central location must be better exploited regionally. Krems an der Donau, for example, is a 33-minute train ride to the north, but the train currently only runs until around 10 pm. The historic pilgrimage site of Mariazell can be reached after a contemplative train ride aptly dubbed the "stairway to heaven", with a travel time of two hours and 15 minutes. The Tullnerfeld and Traisental railway lines provide transport to the east and south, respectively. What they all have in common is that people from the Capital of Culture Region and the surroundings will find it very difficult to reach cultural attractions in St. Pölten, so an upgrade of the public regional transport is urgently needed in view of the application.

Our concept for St. Pölten 2024 aims to improve the networking of places in the Capital of Culture Region and enhance interaction between the city and countryside in order to increase cultural mobility. We are in talks with the responsible Eastern Regional Transport Association VOR to promote the expansion of regional public transport. An extension of the important St. Pölten–Krems line is presently planned, which would make operating hours beyond 10 pm possible. We are currently checking the state of progress with responsible boards.

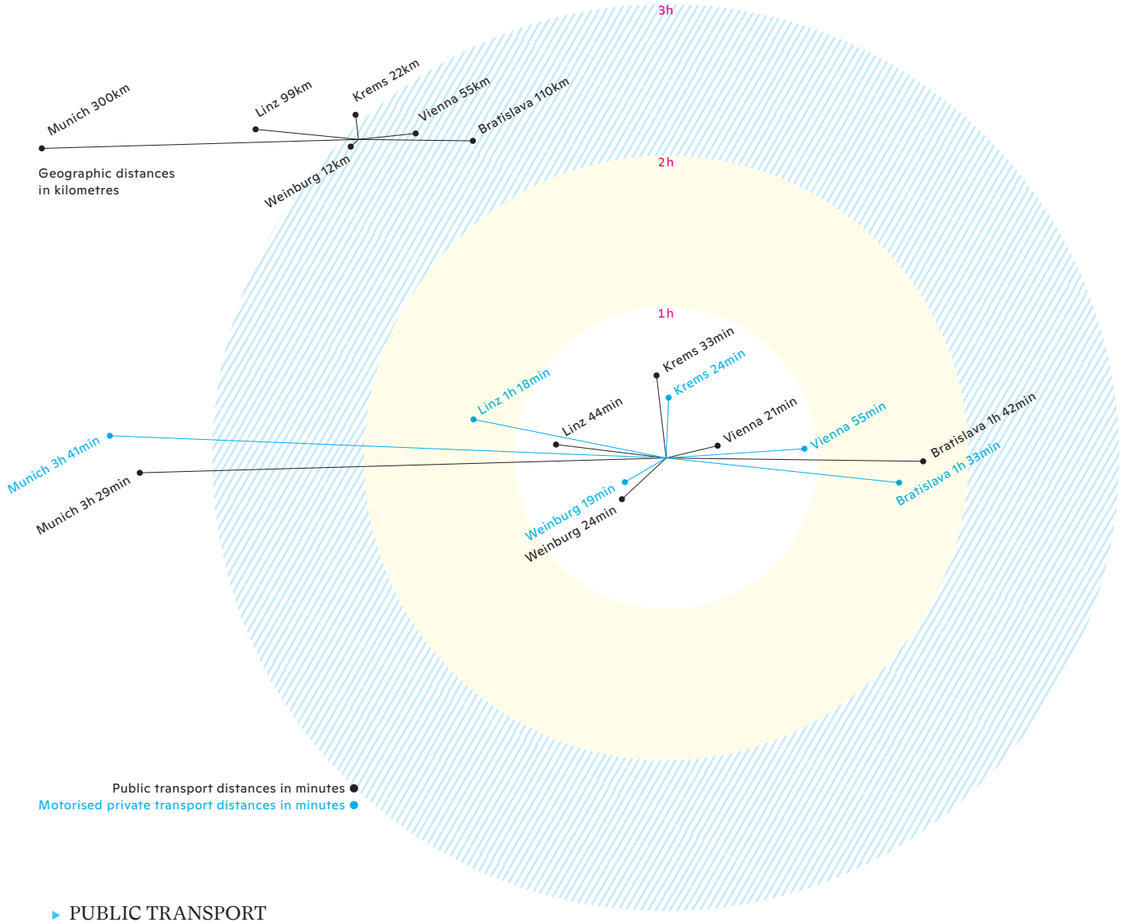
The Capital of Culture Region is fully accessible by bike. The Traisental cycle path, for example, runs 107 kilometres from Mariazell via St. Pölten to Traismauer an der Donau. Many other routes – such as the Pielachtal, Meridian, Melker Alpenvorland, Perschlingtal, Triesting-Gölsental, Wienerwald, Fladnitztal, Franz Schubert, Neidlinger, Weinberg cycle paths or the EuroVelo 6 – are highly popular with cyclists, although connections between some cycle paths are still missing. We want to discuss this as part of the development scheme for the Capital of Culture Region and propose cultural cycle paths to decision makers at the Lower Austrian Tourist Board.

LOCAL MOBILITY

St. Pölten's residents cover 44 percent of their distances using environmentally-friendly means of travel – on foot, by bicycle or with public transport. Although this figure is good, appropriate measures could see it improved in terms of an Austria-wide comparison. One important measure is to reduce the dominance of cars in public space and strengthen ecomobility. We are focussing on this issue in the public space task group.

Excursus TIME AND DISTANCE ARE NOT THE SAME THING

What makes the area surrounding the Capital of Culture Region special in terms of accessibility is the unequal ratio of geographical and temporal distances. In other words, from a temporal perspective, the closer region is further away than the nearest metropolis, Vienna. One example: while Vienna, which is 55 kilometres away, can be reached in 21 minutes by ÖBB's Railjet train, it takes no less than 24 minutes to get to Weinburg, which is only 16 kilometres away.



▸ PUBLIC TRANSPORT

13 bus lines carry passengers across St. Pölten every half hour or hour from Monday to Friday, 5 am to 8 pm. Nine lines will also be available on weekends and public holidays starting in December 2018.

▸ BICYCLE

St. Pölten could be a paradise for cyclists: short distances, a cyclist-friendly topography, a calm traffic situation, (existing, but expandable) bicycle rental facilities, and the opening of the pedestrian zone for cyclists in the city centre offer ideal conditions for the most environmentally friendly form of transportation. The cycle path network currently covers 165 kilometres within the city area, a number that should increase to 219 kilometres in the coming years. In order for St. Pölten to become a paradise for cyclists, the infrastructure must become much more attractive. The public space task group is already dealing with this issue.

▸ ON FOOT

The city centre is very pedestrian-friendly and can be crossed in ten minutes. Nevertheless our participatory process on this subject shed light on some areas that need action, especially in terms of revitalising vacant premises in some streets and connecting the historic city centre to the government district including the cultural district.

▸ HAUPTSTADTEXPRESS

The "Hauptstadtexpress" (lit. "Capital City Express") is a free land train operated by the city of St. Pölten. It runs hourly from Thursday to Saturday and also has a space for wheelchair users. It already connects the city centre with the government and cultural districts. Its times of operation should be extended, and the train should be redesigned for a better presence in the city.

6 B III What is the city's absorption capacity in terms of tourists' accommodation?

Making the beds

Luckily, we are not in a situation of suffering from the phenomenon of overtourism. St. Pölten being a mid-sized city in a central location, this is a great opportunity for us: we can offer an appealing alternative to other destinations that have reached their limits. As European Capital of Culture 2024 we shall invite Europe to come and visit St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region. If we all roll up our sleeves and keep our high quality standards in mind, there will be space for everyone who visits St. Pölten in 2024, and all of them are sure to feel at home.

ST. PÖLTEN SHOWS A DYNAMIC DEVELOPMENT

The positive trend in figures for overnight stays in St. Pölten is reflected in a growth in supply. In 2002, the city had only 17 accommodation businesses; now, in 2018, there are 33 of them (with two of them opening in 2018) if you include the city's camping site. The number of beds available to tourists has increased accordingly: from 886 beds in 2002 to 1,686 beds in 2018 (or 2,050 if you include the camping site). This upwards trend was, however, accompanied by a reduction in 3-star businesses in favour of 2- and 1-star businesses. The city of St. Pölten aims to continue to expand the range of available accommodation and has worked with the ecopoint business service to develop 17 potential sites for new hotels.

SLEEPING IN THE CULTURE OF CAPITAL REGION

The number of businesses in the region, which comprises about 80 communities, has also increased (slightly): it has risen from 643 tourist accommodation businesses (including the camping sites) in 2007 to 650 in 2017. The capacity of these businesses has increased from 13,050 beds in 2007 to 13,669 in 2017 – i.e. by around five percent in the past ten years.

One major asset for St. Pölten as a European Capital of Culture is its attractiveness to day-trippers. As it is close to Wachau an der Donau, a world heritage site, and easy to reach from Vienna and Linz, people can visit our city on the spur of the moment. In addition, the nearby metropolises (and the Capital of Culture Region) can compensate for any temporary bed shortages in the city.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Like many European mid-sized cities, St. Pölten faces the challenge of vacant retail spaces in its city centre. An innovative new hotel concept envisages using these locations as hotel rooms: the "grätzlhotel", named after *Grätzl*, an East-Austrian term for "quarter", the French term *quartier*, or English "neighbourhood". The process would breathe new life into these locations, but their original purpose would remain visible and they would retain their character. St. Pölten 2024 is currently in discussion with the coordinators of the "grätzlhotel" in Vienna and has put them in touch with St. Pölten Marketing GmbH.

ST. PÖLTEN'S QUALITY CAMPAIGN

As well as increasing the range of available accommodation, we need to deal with another challenge in terms of tourism: the situation of existing hotels, guesthouses and landlords of private rooms. Our aim is to make these accommodation businesses ready for Europe. In this process, we will draw attention to the fact that we need to offer quality that lives up to European standards, and we will do so both in our publicity work and in conversation with representatives of the city, tourism and business. As a model we have chosen the Wachau seal of quality ("Best of Wachau"), which is awarded on the basis of 15 criteria such as food and drink culture and atmosphere. There are currently approximately 50 "Best of Wachau" businesses, which are subject to regular inspection, undergo training, and benefit from media cooperation. The focus of the scheme is on regional networks.

OPENING DOORS

St. Pölten and the Capital of Culture Region already record more than one million overnight stays per year, around 13 percent of them in the provincial capital. We are currently on the right path, with a total capacity of around 15,400 beds in 683 accommodation businesses, but a lot of work is still required to widen and deepen the supply. If the European Capital of Culture and the Capital of Culture Region work together, and if we pursue new approaches and ideas, those visiting St. Pölten in 2024 will find that all doors have literally been opened to them. That is something to look forward to – for them and for us.

6 C In terms of cultural, urban and tourism infrastructure, what are the projects (including renovation projects) that your city plans to carry out in connection with the European Capital of Culture action between now and the year of the title?

We've got plans!

The city of St. Pölten and the province of Lower Austria are making common cause to implement and finance upcoming infrastructure projects. In view of the abundance of concrete measures planned – from new construction and redesign to refurbishment, adaptation and maintenance – all those involved have years of work ahead of them. We are looking forward to it. Let's not lose any time!

CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

For the most part, the density and quality of the cultural infrastructure on offer, also in the surrounding region, are already worthy of a European Capital of Culture. Nevertheless, a moderate mix of infrastructural redesign, reanimation and redevelopment for 2024 would create further opportunities to draw visitors and enhance St. Pölten's appeal. (▸6 B I)

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The first concrete general infrastructure measures (roads, paths and squares) are already provided for in the budget of the city of St. Pölten, with plans figured out in close coordination with the St. Pölten 2024 office and a public space task group. These include, for example, the redesign of Kremser Landstrasse and Schillerplatz square, as well as basic considerations on some areas of the pedestrian zone.

Further general infrastructure investments are also being considered, though this will require more detailed planning in terms of content, costs and financing, as well as coordination between the city, province and, presumably, the federal government.

EUROPE CAN COME!

St. Pölten 2024 should be an example of how ideas become initiatives and thoughts become projects, how interest turns into commitment and participation arises from enthusiasm. St. Pölten 2024 has been characterised from the beginning by the phenomenon of positive cross-fertilisation between everyone involved, including interested citizens, political decision-makers and cultural actors. We want to give space to this dynamic, but have no interest in building skyscrapers and ivory towers (either in people's minds or in the cityscape) only for the sake of drawing attention to ourselves.

Instead, we have drawn up a well-considered plan that, depending on the possibilities and requirements, focuses, above all, on reanimating, renovating or redesigning existing cultural infrastructure. We only want to create something completely new if our participatory process reveals it to be really necessary and desirable. One example is the innovative Children's Art Lab – House of Education of Art and Cultural Competences for Children.

PROJECT	MEASURES	COSTS (rough initial estimate)	FINANCING
Children's Art Lab – House of Education of Art and Cultural Competences for Children	Expected new construction	9,340,000 €	50 % City of St. Pölten 50 % Province of Lower Austria (LA)
Festspielhaus St. Pölten (festival theatre)	Maintenance measures	4,000,000 €	100 % Province LA
Former synagogue	Refurbishment and adaptation	750,000 €	50 % City of St. Pölten 50 % Province LA
LAMES clubhouses in Sonnenpark	Refurbishment and adaptation of buildings	300,000 €	50 % City of St. Pölten 50 % Province LA
Klangturm (tower of sounds)	Maintenance measures	500,000 €	100 % Province LA
St. Pölten City Museum	Optimisation measures	600,000 €	50 % City of St. Pölten 50 % Province LA
Connection of city centre with cultural district / government district and Traisen river	Redesign, not including road construction measures (cycle paths, pedestrian paths, etc.)	500,000 €	50 % City of St. Pölten 50 % Province LA
Domplatz (Cathedral Square)	Redesign including presentation of archaeological finds, furnishings etc.	5,000,000 €	50 % City of St. Pölten 50 % Province LA
Total costs (rough initial estimate)		**20,990,000 €**	

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Page 59 (top): Brigitte Kowanz, Fountain, 2015–17, LED, steel, Permanent Installation, Glanzstoff factory premises St. Pölten

Page 59 (bottom): Pauline Debrichy, concrete works, Wesely-Haus for expo "150 years of Spin"

ST. PÖLTEN 2024 MITTEN IN EUROPA. MITTEN IM AUFBRUCH.

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Three coloured basic elements orbit a common centre while growing, shrinking and continually reconfiguring themselves. The constant change of perspective alters their equidistance and establishes new relationships between them: as the elements connect, they produce new colour transitions; they conflate into surfaces which then decompose into clouds of dots, always linked by their common orbit.



St. Pölten 2024