



Exhibition:

European Hiking Tradition in Sibiu: Then, Now and Tomorrow

The following pages propose an exhibition within the framework of *Sibiu – European Capital of Culture 2007*. Our initiative seeks to trace an important element of Sibiu’s city life: the evolution of its mountaineering and hiking tradition, including the European dimension, its multi-ethnic spread, and its present and future importance. The goal of the exhibition is not merely to create a retrospective look at more than a century of hiking tradition in Sibiu, but also to display its present “traces” and look at its future development potentials. After a short presentation of the characteristics of this local hiking tradition in chapters 1.1-1.3, chapters 2 and 3 describe how the exhibit will be implemented and how it fits within the framework of *Sibiu – European Capital of Culture 2007*. The exhibit will also be displayed in future venues.

1.1. Hiking tradition in Sibiu: A modern, dynamic city trend

The fascination for the mountains and the passion for hiking, which spread through European cities in the 19th century¹, also reached the most important centres of Transylvania – Brasov, Sibiu and Cluj-Napoca. The first hiking enthusiasts in Sibiu were the city’s German inhabitants, who founded a hiking association called *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein (SKV)* in 1880². But before long the hiking trend included other groups as well. The city embarked on the path to developing a modern mountain tourism infrastructure, such as: hiking and mountaineering associations, organised hiking tours, a network of mountain huts and trails, mountain rescue teams, maps and other publications about the mountains. This new hiking

¹ S. Bätzing, Werner 2005: *Die Alpen. Geschichte und Zukunft einer europäischer Kulturlandschaft*. München, 3. Auflage, C.H.Beck Verlag.

² English: Transylvanian Carpathian Association. Its forerunner was an association from Brasov called “Siebenbürgischer Alpenverein” (Transylvanian Alpine Association), which was founded in 1873 and merged into the newly founded SKV (see Wedekind 2004, S.3).



movement served a number of different purposes. It was a recreational activity (encompassing climbing and other mountain sports as well). It served to develop tourism in the (Southern) Carpathians. It promoted scientific research activities³ (especially cartography). And last but not least it led to the consolidation of group cohesion and nationality⁴.

In short, Sibiu established a lively hiking tradition, which was informally perpetuated from one generation to the next and also formally cultivated through various organisations and institutions. In order to survive all political regimes of the tumultuous 20th century – wars, Nazism, Communism, Totalitarianism, transition to free market economy – the hiking tradition of Sibiu has been constantly in flux⁵.

The exhibition will offer visitors an overview of the following issues:

- *Who* were the major local contributors to Sibiu's hiking tradition over time?
- *How* was hiking practiced? (e.g. informal and formal practices, forms of hiking, European influences on local hiking tradition)
- What importance did/does hiking culture have for the *collective identity* of the city?
- What development potential does sustainable mountain tourism offer for the future of Sibiu's hiking tradition?

This rarely addressed aspect of Sibiu's city life will be presented through representative examples like the *Siebenbürgische Karpatenverein (SKV)*, ecological groups and hiking associations in Sibiu, the local mountain rescue team, and through other ongoing projects, which rely on the city's hiking culture today. The Carpathian Project of ISF München – which

³ The membership lists of the SKV contain the names of some illustrious scientists (see Wedekind, Michael: Der Siebenbürgische Karpatenverein (1880-1944). Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte Siebenbürgens; Westphälische Wilhelm Universität Münster, page 2).

⁴ This is also the case of the Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein, gathering the German ethnic minority in Sibiu.

⁵ An example is the Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein, which ceased to exist as organisation in 1944. However, its members "migrated" to other local hiking associations of that time (for example to the association *Amicii Muntilor*, to the public mountain rescue teams). Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein re-started its activity as an association in 1990.



seeks the development of sustainable mountain tourism in the Fagaras Mountains and within whose framework the idea for this exhibition was born – is one of the initiatives which wants to support and further develop the local hiking culture.

1.2. Hiking tradition in Sibiu: An inter-ethnic and multicultural phenomena

Modern hiking tradition in Sibiu was initiated by the city's German ethnic population. However, despite limited inter-mixture among different ethnic groups in Sibiu (especially in the case of the German population), the *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein* was never an exclusive 'German club' but involved members of other ethnic groups from its very beginnings (Hungarian, Romanian, Jewish, etc.). Thus, the *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein* can be regarded as an example and, to a certain extent, an 'ambassador' of peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups in Sibiu. In addition, the *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein* influenced the appearance of similar associations in Sibiu. Over the years these local initiatives learned to cooperate with each other in order to maintain the mountain tourist infrastructure (especially, the maintenance of huts and marking of trails in the Southern Carpathians).

1.3. Hiking tradition in Sibiu: A European phenomenon

The complex European influences on the local hiking tradition in Sibiu are palpable. Interactions between (especially German) citizens of Sibiu with hikers or hiking associations from Europe, most notably with the *Deutscher und Österreichischer Alpenverein*⁶ played a very significant role. This latter cooperation was not only crucial for the adoption of similar organisational structures when the *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein* was formed, but also shaped the development of tourism infrastructure in the Fagaras Mountains and Southern Carpathians (e.g. the construction and administration of huts). The exchange of ideas and experiences between the 'East and West' was not just of an organisational and technical

⁶ English: German and Austrian Alpine Association.



nature. Rather it extended to cultural and political issues as well, including not only the establishment of certain mountain sports and the use of hiking for ecological education but also the confrontation with the ideology of the Third Reich.

These connections between local and European hiking traditions show the presence of European thinking in Sibiu. Local actors currently involved in hiking activities perpetuate these ideas. A chronological presentation of these hiking activities through selected pictures, documents⁷, objects and illustrations will emphasize some of the past, present and potential future European influences on the local hiking tradition in Sibiu.

2. The planned exhibition within the framework of *Sibiu – European Capital of Culture 2007*

The special focus of the planned exhibition on the European and multi-ethnic dimension of Sibiu's hiking tradition harmonizes with the motto "*Cultures hand in hand to the future*" of the temporary exhibition "15+10+2 European Identity" and complements that exhibition⁸ – which will take place within the official framework of *Sibiu – European Capital of Culture 2007*.

The museum complex ASTRA in Sibiu thus offers an ideal location for the exhibition, although alternative locations would also be considered. But the planned exhibit would fit well were it to run parallel with the tail end of the temporary exhibition "15+10+2 European Identity," which runs until July 20, 2007.

A further presentation of the exhibit would take place in conjunction with the 2nd Meeting of the *Carpathian Convention* in Brasov (scheduled for May 2008).

3.1. Implementation: The exhibit „European Hiking Tradition in Sibiu: Then, Now and Tomorrow“

⁷ In the case of *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein*: its archives, archives of Deutscher Alpenverein and its Carpathian Section. In the case of other organizations or associations: their own archives and documents.

⁸ See: <http://www.muzeulastra.ro/proiecte/13.php?PHPSESSID=011a0f205592c6c67751875f03d390f4>



The exhibit will concentrate on the past, present and future trends of Sibiu's hiking tradition. These elements will be approached from a chronological and socio-historical perspective. The focus will be the expansion of local hiking culture over time and will include important formal and informal representatives of this local hiking culture including hiking associations, organisations, and famous hikers and mountaineers of Sibiu. Based on the existing mountain tourism infrastructure (e.g. huts and trails in the Fagaras Mountains) and local active hiking groups, the exhibition will offer a glimpse of the future in order to show the potential of Sibiu's hiking tradition.

The cooperation between the *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein (SKV)* and the *Deutscher Alpenverein (DAV)* will be used to illustrate the European dimension of Sibiu's hiking culture. The multi-ethnic expansion of the hiking trend will also be illustrated through some representative examples from Sibiu's hiking history.

The exhibition will be divided into four epochs (see below). In each of them, the social historical backgrounds, European influences, and multi-ethnic aspects of Sibiu's hiking tradition will be presented using informational plaques, images, documents and objects – from both public and private archives – in addition to introducing the visitor to important representatives of the movement. Bilingual Romanian—English presentations of all informational plaques, captions and explanations will assure a broad participation of local, Romanian and international guests.

The exhibition will conform to the following structure:

1st Epoch: The Beginnings of Modern Hiking in Sibiu

- (1) Informational plaque: History of SKV's founding and the role of DAV at its constitution – presentation of the original founding document of the SKV.
- (2) Pictures: Famous members and mountaineers of the newly founded SKV

2nd Epoch: Expansion of the Hiking Tradition in Sibiu (1900-1944)

- (1) Informational plaque: Other hiking clubs in Sibiu



- (2) Contemporary postcards: depicting landscapes from the surrounding mountains
- (3) Pictures and maps: The former SKV hut network (with an emphasis on huts still functioning today) complete with a map of their locations. In addition, the role of the DAV in hut construction will be addressed
- (4) Documents: Natural science publications and first maps (from SKV and others)
- (5) Pictures: The joy of group hikes (group pictures from SKV and other groups)
- (6) Pictures: Famous hikers and mountaineers of Sibiu
- (7) Objects and/or pictures: Hikers in the Carpathians and in the Alps (comparative illustrations); Mountain sports including skiing and climbing
- (8) Informational plaque and pictures: Hiking tradition in Sibiu during the Third Reich (anti-Semitism, racism, confrontation with Nazi-ideology)

3rd Epoch: Hiking Culture from 1945 to 1989

- (1) Informational plaque: The socio-historical changes after the end of World War II and their effect on the local hiking groups (e.g. the expropriation and dissolution of SKV)
- (2) Pictures and illustrations: The new representatives of the hiking culture (including the “migration” of SKV-members to these new groups)
- (3) Documents and pictures: Founding of the public mountain rescue service *Salvamont Sibiu* (including the group’s adoption of SKV-guidelines for mountain rescue operations and trail marking; former SKV-members in the mountain rescue services)
- (4) Pictures: Famous hikers and mountaineers

4th Epoch: Hiking Trends after 1989

- Informational plaque: Revitalisation of the hiking tradition through the re-establishment of SKV and of other similar associations in Sibiu (with a focus on the new political-economic circumstances in Romania; specific problems of mountain tourism after 1989; cooperation with the DAV (and others) and the role played in this cooperation by those who emigrated from Sibiu to Germany; the future potential of sustainable mountain tourism)
- Pictures and maps: hut network in the Fagaras Mountains today



- Short presentations: local ecological and mountain initiatives; associations from Sibiu and its region with a focus on international cooperation; the Carpathian Project of ISF München.

A bilingual brochure containing information presented in the exhibition as well as contacts of all of the local hiking and mountaineering groups will be produced.

3.2. Implementation: partners involved

The exhibition will be organised in close cooperation between the Carpathian Project of ISF München and its local partners in Sibiu, including the *Siebenbürgischer Karpatenverein*, the NGO *Naturfreunde Rumänien (Prietenii Naturii)*, the mountain rescue team *Salvamont Sibiu*, and the county association for tourism (*Asociatia Judeteana de Turism Sibiu, AJTS Sibiu*). Additional partners are the *Karpaten-Sektion of the Deutscher Alpenverein* from Germany. Most of these actors dispose of the necessary documents (written and visual material), or they have access to them through their networks. Further connections between DAV and SKV can be enabled by ISF München (through its geographical proximity and good relations to DAV), as well. The collection, creation and presentation of the exhibits will take place in Sibiu.

Final remark

Initial discussions with the organizers of *Sibiu – European Capital of Culture 2007* revealed their keen interest in the planned exhibition. If the exhibition manages to activate and connect local actors of the hiking tradition in Sibiu – hiking associations, organisations, institutions, hikers and mountaineers themselves – the planned exhibition will have achieved its primary aim. Reminding the city and its people of its close relationship to the mountains, and demonstrating the Sibiu region's close connection to Europe – that is what we want to achieve.