

Conference and Dialogue of Generations

Arranged by the Danube Networkers at the Danube Festival, these meetings bring together young and old people from different Danube countries.

Ulm. Bringing people together and strengthening democracy. “That is our task,” says Carmen Stadelhofer, the chair of ILEU, the Institute for Virtual and Real Learning in Adult Education. This mission is carried out through many projects advanced by the eight staff members and two federal volunteers in the institute’s

premises at Weinhof. Even so, the Danube Festival is the highlight. It is then that participants from many Danube countries have the opportunity not only to meet on screen, but also to see and get to know one another in Ulm. This is made possible by the Danube Networkers, whose work is coordinated by ILEU.

“Intergenerational dialogue in the Danube region” may sound cumbersome as a project title, but when Stadelhofer talks about it, it becomes clear how lively this exchange really is. It is about dialogue between young and old. “German is the main focus,” says Stadelhofer. For Ukrainian pupils in particular who learn German at school, language tandems make it possible for them to use their language skills in practice. The project started as a pilot in autumn 2025. There are now 48 language tandems, with the young people based in Ukrainian cities such as Kyiv or Odesa and the German seniors in Baden-Württemberg or North Rhine-Westphalia. In the meantime, the project has been expanded, and young people from Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, among other places, are also taking part. Twenty-four of them will meet their language partners here in Ulm on Wednesday, 8 July. The tandem pairs will get to know each other in person at the institute’s premises at Weinhof.

workshops will include discussion of women’s self-image in Europe.

There are two things Stadelhofer is especially curious about. An AI system is expected to display statements on a screen simultaneously in different languages of the Danube countries. And a new format will be tested in which people from public life listen to the concerns of the conference participants. One person who has agreed to take part is Ulm’s First Mayor, Martin Bendel. For Stadelhofer, one thing is already certain even before the meetings begin: “At our events, civil society from the various countries is present. It is wonderful to experience that.”

Beate Rose

City tours and conference

The Danube Networkers have organised many programme items for the Danube Festival. On Wednesday, 8 July, for example, there will be city tours on the theme “Tracing Democracy” between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Democracy will once again take centre stage at the symposium on Friday, 10 July. At the Edwin-Scharff-Haus, the theme will be “Democracy needs all of us” (9 a.m. to 6 p.m.). The