

OWWF Quo Vadis

At the end of the year, the OWWF had invited to the "Maximilianeum Round" on 2 December in the Hofbräukeller to reflect on the year 2019 and to discuss the outlook for 2020. OWWF President Eberhard Sinner particularly welcomes Dr. Ernst Schmied from Salzburg, organizer of the DMRBW Donau-MacroRegionBusinessWeek. The Danube region is also one of OWWF's priorities, which is why we support the DMRBW project in close cooperation. Another guest is Jiri Burianek, former Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions of the European Commission in Brussels.

Sinner paid tribute to the development of the OWWF from the initial relationship "Bavaria - Czechoslovakia - Turkey" to the enlargement to Eastern Europe, the Danube region with a total of 14 nations and China with the focus on the "Silk Road of the 21st Century". The association is always caught between sanctions and options, e.g. Russia and Ukraine. Where official diplomacy fails, popular diplomacy is in demand, i.e. human encounters and contacts in difficult times must be held high in order to overcome barriers.

The OWWF president gives an overview of the previous event formats - the newly introduced very successful economic forums in Russia and Ukraine with a large number of participants, the popular monthly Maximilianeum round with interesting lectures and the club evenings in Munich and Nuremberg.

Another focus of the OWWF's work are projects. As a dynamic example of a project he cites the inauguration of the Rossoschka Peace Chapel in 2016, for which a donation volume of 250,000 € from private funds was achieved. In 2018 the peace soccer game of the U18 national teams Germany - Russia in Volgograd developed from it, in order to introduce the youth to a common memory culture. A school partnership between Ingolstadt and Volgograd was also established, through which school internships are made possible by sponsoring of the company Knauf. "One action develops into further initiatives with a signal effect, which enables access to the Russian soul. In 2020, we will be offering a delegation trip to Volgograd with the OWWF Russia consultant, Christian Holz, to cultivate relations and continue the projects," Sinner holds out the prospect.

Continuation of projects and maintaining contacts instead of one-off activities is also the unique selling point of the OWWF, Sinner emphasizes. In addition, the OWWF is distinguished by the fact that long-standing contacts between all board members at the economic and political levels mean that high-ranking participants can always be won over for events and projects.

He pointed out the importance of the initiatives in Nuremberg, which will continue even after the closure of the OWWF office: the good cooperation with bayernhafen Nürnberg, the private university FOM and of course the Ministry of Local Affairs in Nuremberg were the venues for our club evenings. He names Nuremberg as a traffic junction, from where the freight traffic center realizes a weekly rail transport to the western Chinese city of Chengdu.

In 2020, several major events are already planned in the Maximilianeum, where the OWWF has five dates per year at its disposal:

- Friday, 6 March 2020: Economic Forum Serbia with expected participation of Serbian Prime Minister
- Tuesday, 28 April 2020: Economic Forum Russia. Former Senior Minister Councillor Bernd Pantze informs that the event is dedicated to the topic "Infrastructure in Russia" and provides a podium with representatives of the transport industry. Ilse Aigner MP had already confirmed her patronage as President of the Bavarian Parliament.
- Monday, October 05, 2020: Opening of the DMRBW (DonauMacroRegionBusinessWeek), first held by Dr. Ernst Schmied in 2010. Dr. Schmied explains that further events will then take place

along the Danube, including the Austria stand at EXPO 2020/2021 in Dubai from October to April 2021, where information will be provided about Danube Tech Valley, among other things.

The first quarter of 2020 is also scheduled to hold a meeting of members. Managing Vice President Hermann Pönisch complements the plans for the next year with the note that Messe München can also be included with space capacities for events. He informs that the number of Maximilianeum rounds will be reduced in 2020 and that regional informal round tables will take place instead, e.g. in Regensburg, Weiden, Nuremberg and Salzburg. In addition, he pleads for a publicity-effective meeting of the Board of Trustees to be held once a year.

Ukrainian expert Karl Walter proposes a business trip to Ukraine in order to make known the new possibilities of Ukraine as a production and trading location in the EU economic area. Jiri Burianek sees in the town twinning Nuremberg - Prague and the recently decided creation of a G5 corridor a good topic for a meeting in the Nuremberg official seat of the finance and homeland ministry. OWWF board member Stephan Rauhut is interested in the topic "River navigation on the Danube" under a new energetic aspect and mobility approach resulting from a new political action plan. The navigability of the Danube can be improved by the construction of branch canals. Interest in an event within the framework of the Munich Security Conference is expressed, in cooperation with the Bavarian Parliament, e.g. on the subject of "Cyber Security", or by attracting a participant to the Security Conference as a speaker at an OWWF event. Eberhard Sinner addresses the Youth Culture Forum Russia, where the planned continuation in Moscow did not work out, a project he wants to initiate again in 2020.

Hermann Pönisch reports from a recent telephone call with LMR Andreas Ellmaier, Head of the Basic Principles Department at the State Ministry of Health and Nursing, suggesting that the OWWF network with Global Partners Bayern e. V. and the Bavarian Health Association. Mr. Ellmaier will try to arrange a meeting before Christmas. Pönisch also informs that Ms Belousova from the Association of Young Entrepreneurs in Russia, together with the OWWF, will organize a joint workshop for young entrepreneurs and start-ups in 2020. He also points out the possibility of English-speaking students who are enrolled at the EU Business School in Munich and are looking for internships in the fields of business, HR and marketing and are looking for jobs in Germany after their studies.

The event format Maximilianeumsrunde discusses how a larger number of participants could be reached. The shift to another time of day is rejected however due to partly long journey times. Also the inclusion of video conference technology does not promise a solution. For example, on the newly established Youtube channel of the OWWF, only short videos of up to one and a half minutes are watched, videos of event length are hardly noticed.

Hermann Pönisch asks the participants for support in recruiting new members in order to be able to guarantee the financing of further activities. The members also benefit from the OWWF network. For example, consulates are increasingly asking it to look after international delegations and to organize and carry out company visits. Here too, he would like support from the members. He also points out the possibility of using the cooperation platform on our homepage.

At the end of the Maximilianeum round, Hermann Pönisch congratulated OWWF President Eberhard Sinner on his 75th birthday and presented him with a small present on behalf of the board. Mr. Sinner said goodbye with the words "Blessed Advent season, stay with us!"