

education

UNIQUE KNOWLEDGE HUB IN KŐSZEK

HUNGARY'S INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES IS HOME FOR THE MINDS OF THE FUTURE TO GROW



➤ The Institute of Advanced Studies Kőszeg (iASK) is a new research and development institute which brings together scholars and experts who think creatively and responsibly about sustainable solutions in a time of profound global transformation and uncertainty. iASK is home to a new generation of intellectually open, courageous and knowledge-sharing researchers and practitioners who explore creative, collaborative and innovative solutions to complex and interrelated local and global challenges. iASK scholars focus on well-being and social cohesion, particularly in societies in transition with special regard to the CEE region and the Balkans. Professor Ferenc Mislivetz, the founder and director of iASK, elaborates: "Our aim is to provide creative space for innovation and integrative development initiatives in the arts and sciences that transcend disciplinary boundaries." He explains that iASK is the result of over two decades of intellectual and practical application of 'out of the box' thinking involving students, professors and partners. In this way, iASK, as a centre of excellence, strives to be a new version of advanced studies institute, distinguished from ivory-tower-types of institutions such as the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, which is known as the academic home of Albert Einstein and John von Neumann. "I firmly believe that this kind of institute was missing from the Hungarian academic scene."

WHY KŐSZEK?

Kőszeg is often referred to as 'The Pearl of Pannonia', located at the crossroads of many cultures: the beautiful medieval town borders five countries (Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia and Hungary). This provides rich cultural and regional added value, and the opportunity for strong cross-border cooperation on many levels.

I also believe that we must not act as elites sitting in ivory towers and, through less talk and more action, we need to be open towards the society. We serve societal needs with open dialogue and socially responsible research, publications and policy recommendations for a wide range of stakeholders," he notes, highlighting pre-iASK projects in which academics worked together with IBM researching the Hungarian work culture in a global context, and with Siemens on their Green City and Smart City concept. Prof. Mislivetz continues, "We respond rapidly to changing social and economic conditions, and contribute at a high level to international political, social, economic and cultural life. The Polányi Centre at iASK (named after Karl and Michael Polányi), for example, addresses the complex and interdependent aspects of local, regional and global transformation."

Creative City, Sustainable Region

One of the flagship iASK projects is called KRAFT (the Hungarian acronym for Creative City and Sustainable Region). Prof. Mislivetz notes: "This began years ago as a proposal to achieve the Danube macro-regional strategy of the EU via the example of Western Pannonia. The pilot project we developed proved so successful that today it is often applied to Hungarian sustainability and innovative regional development." He adds that KRAFT concentrates on the practical applicability of its programs while it is rooted in the conviction that the key to successful development is the effective cooperation between social, economic, cultural and political stakeholders. The KRAFT Index was developed as an integrated framework to evaluate and interpret the interests of these stakeholders. This provides the basis for "win-win" scenarios, such as in the town of Kőszeg – which is



home to iASK and became the first example of the implementation of the KRAFT methodology. "Infrastructure improvements, renovation of the related historic buildings such as the famous Sgraffito House, expansion of local services and establishment of bonds of cooperation are all part of the renewal of Kőszeg. The town's geographical location – at the Hungarian-Austrian border, and unique built heritage, and historical and civic traditions as a school town enhance its potential to become a novel knowledge center that can facilitate Hungary's further integration into the global and European scientific and cultural communities." One example of the regional development aspect of the work at iASK and the KRAFT project involves the city of Veszprém and its bid to become Europe's Cultural Capital in 2023, by including the municipality with its surrounding Balaton region. Accordingly, the tender's title is 'Town on the Lake'. Prof. Mislivetz emphasizes that besides fostering creative forms of cooperation in Hungary, "Researchers are developing an integrated methodology to measure the creative, innovative, network and

HANKISS CENTER



In memory of his late friend, Hungarian sociologist Elemér Hankiss (President of the Hungarian Television between 1990-93, a professor at Stanford University, the Bruges and Florence European University Institutes as well as the Central European University, and the director of the Institute of

Sociology at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,) who often provided guidance for iASK, Professor Mislivetz opened the Hankiss Centre and Research Archive within iASK to cultivate his legacy. This includes the cataloging of his manuscripts, the presentation of his most inspirational works to the international public. Researchers work in the archive to identify his key intellectual investigations like civilization crisis, life and death, and reflection on the symbols of everyday human experience, taking the Hankiss legacy into the future. This includes re-starting the Hankiss-Mislivetz initiative of 'Reinventing Central Europe!' the purpose of which was to deepen relationships between different ethnic groups in the region, promoting recovery from historic grievances in order to strengthen unity.

sustainability potential of cities, chains of cities and their surrounding regions. The methodology is developed particularly for small and middle-sized cities and their rural agglomerations in Central Europe in order to foster their revival and viability for current and future residents." In this regard, iASK fosters collaborations with as many global and European scientific, academic and cultural networks and institutions as possible in its role as an international 'think tank'. Its Advisory Board includes Katalin Bogyay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the UN and former director of the Hungarian Cultural Center in London, Erhard Busek, former Vice-Chancellor of Austria, Imre Asztrik Várszegi, who served as the Archbishop of Pannonhalma between 1991 and 2018, Sean Cleary, Chairman of Strategic Concepts Ltd., and Executive Vice Chair of the FutureWorld Foundation, and György Schöpflin, Hungarian MEP and professor at the University College of London, as well as leading figures in the Hungarian and international scientific communities. The current deputy director is Iván Bába, former Hungarian State Secretary of Foreign Affairs. "iASK promotes excellence in research, training and strategic thinking in cross-border cooperation through involvement in transnational research projects and individual scholarship programs. Since the end of the '90's, we have organized summer universities: this year the focus was 'Europe in the Vortex of Change – Central European Scenarios,' where we discussed topics such as 'European security and security policy in a changing global landscape', 'Remembering and forgetting communism', 'At the intersection of migration and populist politics', 'Interreligious dialogue' and 'From global to local sustainability: microregional aspects and the circular economy'. Reflecting on global transformations and increasing global crisis, there is a need to develop new ways of thinking, and cooperation. We would like to serve, not only to know. New answers will not be found unless new questions are asked. iASK is the institute of new questions," Prof. Mislivetz concludes. 