

Danube Crafts

Traditional Crafts Route for Sustainable Cultural Tourism Development

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Welcome to the first DanubeCrafts Newsletter!

*We are delighted to launch the very first edition of our newsletter and to share with you the beginning of our journey within the **DanubeCrafts project, led by the National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest.***

***DanubeCrafts Project**, running from 1st April 2025 to 30th September 2027, aims to preserve and promote traditional crafts, using sustainable cultural tourism as a key instrument for their valorization in the **Danube Region**. By supporting craftsmen, local communities, organizations, and tourism actors, the project contributes to socio-economic development through heritage, culture, and tourism.*

*Over the next 30 months, our consortium will develop innovative tools, training programs, and pilot itineraries to create **the Traditional Crafts Route – a slow, authentic, and sustainable tourism experience.***

Stay tuned to discover stories, events, and opportunities to get involved in shaping the cultural and touristic identity of the Danube Region through crafts.

Enjoy this journey with us!



Projects News!!!



Baden-Württemberg: Expert Group in Action

In Baden-Württemberg, collaboration with regional actors plays a central role. The Steinbeis Europa Zentrum coordinates an expert group that unites professionals from crafts, tourism, regional development, and business. Together, they:

- Analyze existing strengths and challenges,
- Develop ideas for regional initiatives and pilot projects,
- Contribute to the design of the transnational "Route of Traditional Crafts."


Members shape strategy and regional activities, gaining access to training, workshops, and European cooperation.

Kick-off Meeting: 5 August 2025

Experts conducted a SWOT analysis assessing crafts and tourism, focusing on:

- Tourism infrastructure development
- Visibility of traditional craftsmanship to visitors
- Cooperation, offers, funding gaps
- Available support programs and barriers

Findings feed into project planning to foster tangible change benefiting craft businesses, tourism providers, and the Baden-Württemberg region.



Next Steps

- Develop a regional action plan
- Launch first pilot projects
- Shape the European "Route of Traditional Crafts"

DanubeCrafts First Stakeholder Meeting in Vratsa, Bulgaria

On **August 25th, 2025**, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Vratsa, Bulgaria, held the first stakeholder meeting under the project "[DanubeCrafts: Creating and Promoting Sustainable Forms of Cultural Tourism](#)" funded by the Interreg Danube Region Programme (DRP).

- Participants: Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa, regional agencies, tourism experts.

Meeting themes:

- Project objectives, activities, expected results
- Political support and strategy integration
- Challenges related to tourism infrastructure and crafts

Key takeaway: Partnership between public sector, businesses, NGOs, and education is key to sustainable development and social inclusion.

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Past, Present, and Upcoming Events

Traditional Crafts Events!!!

Past Events!!!

1. *Traditional Bosnian Blacksmith - The Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC)*

The 'Pekijada' – Scent Of Tradition And Sound Of Steel - August 9th 2025

Oceviya, a village located at the foot of Mount Zvijezda in the municipality of Vares, will on August 9th become the center of merging traditional cuisine and craft heritage, thanks to the 9th edition of "Pekijada".


The Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) is located in the central part of Bosnia and Herzegovina and represents a region rich in cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and diverse natural landscapes. With its combination of traditional crafts, vibrant local communities, and growing tourism infrastructure, ZDC holds significant potential for sustainable development.



Traditional Bosnian Blacksmith

- In the past, ZDC became part of a network of authentic villages, consisting of numerous small traditional areas.
- Participation in this project has brought many benefits, including the maintenance of the territory and its cultural heritage, as well as the preservation of local identities such as traditional production methods, cuisine, and more.

Traditional crafts in ZDC are an important part of local identity and community life, a cultural asset and a potential driver of local economic development, but face increasing challenges such as:

- Ageing of artisan populations
 - Market competition from mass-produced goods
 - Limited digital and promotional reach
- 

At the same time, thematic tourism offers opportunities to revitalize these crafts by integrating them into visitor experiences and local value chains.

The organizer of this event is the Local Community of Ocevija in cooperation with the association "Eko turist" from Vares, with the support of the Municipality of Vares, numerous sponsors, and the relevant ministries of the Zenica-Doboj Canton (ZDC) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH).

<https://sarajevotimes.com/the-pekijada-scent-of-tradition-and-sound-of-steel/>

2. European Night of Museums – Vratsa, Bulgaria -17 May 2025 *Traditional craft workshops and exhibitions.* [Link](#)

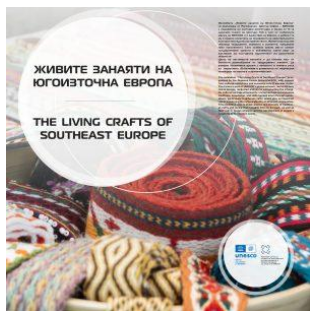


Museum visitors had the opportunity to explore all exhibitions in the central building and the ethnographic and historical complex for free, and to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the past through various workshops, games, challenges, reenactments, and presentations of traditional and authentic costumes.

3. Living Crafts of Southeast Europe Exhibition Regional Centre Sofia and UNESCO-promoted crafts exhibition – 16th July 2025

https://www.unesco-centerbg.org/en/2025/07/16/exhibition-the-living-crafts-of-southeast-europe/#pll_switcher

The exhibition was realized by the Regional Centre Sofia – UNESCO, with the support of cultural institutions and museums from it's Member States. The exposition presented the diversity and richness of the region's cultural heritage and demonstrate the important role that traditional crafts play in fostering social cohesion and creative expression in the modern world.



4. 17th Edition of Traditional Crafts Week , Regional Ethnographic Museum, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 1–6 July 2025; Rare traditional crafts showcased. [Visit Plovdiv](#)

This year's theme for the "Traditional Crafts Week" was "The Sign" – the symbolic language present in every handcrafted item. Whether people looked at the embroidery adorned with ornaments, felt works, woven fabrics, or pottery, they found anthropomorphic, geometric, or floral motifs everywhere – a visual language that objects had used to "speak" from ancient times to the present day.

Visitors were able to observe rare traditional crafts such as vertical loom weaving, pottery, blacksmithing and knife-making, felting, lacework and embroidery, Easter egg painting, candle making, jewelry crafting, and more. In the spirit of good tradition, live demonstrations were held throughout the week, and everyone had the opportunity to "try their hand at the craft."



5. Folk Costume Festival – Zheravna (22–24 Aug 2025); Immersive folk traditions and costumes. [Festival Info](#)

The **Zheravna Folk Costume Festival** took place from **August 23 to 25, 2024**, in the village of Zheravna, southeastern Bulgaria. This annual event celebrated Bulgarian cultural heritage, attracting thousands of visitors from across the country and abroad.

Participants showcased authentic Bulgarian folk costumes and performed dances, including *horo* and other regional styles. Renowned ensembles such as "100 Kaba Gaidi," "Gerg'ovden," "Orpheus," and "Thracian Mood" performed traditional music. Visitors joined interactive workshops to learn traditional skills like weaving, pottery, embroidery, and woodcrafts. Authentic Bulgarian dishes, including *banitsa* and grilled specialties, were prepared in traditional ways.

The festival featured competitions for the best traditional outfits, highlighting creativity and authenticity.

Mobile phones, cameras, and other electronic devices were prohibited to maintain authenticity. All participants wore traditional Bulgarian costumes or early 20th-century attire.

The festival reinforced the **preservation and promotion of Bulgarian traditions** and crafts and it boosted **tourism** in Zheravna, turning the village into a popular destination for cultural tourism and of course, local residents benefited economically by showcasing crafts and regional products.



The Zheravna Folk Costume Festival remains a **vibrant celebration of Bulgarian cultural identity**, offering a unique opportunity to experience traditional crafts, music, and customs in an authentic setting.

6. Mutat la Țară Fest 2025 took place in two editions: **July 11–13**: Poiana cu Goruni, Vinerea, Alba County, **August 15–17**: La Fermă, Homorâciu, Prahova County, Romania.

The **Mutat la Țară Fest** celebrated Romanian rural life with a special emphasis on **traditional crafts**. Visitors explored **hands-on workshops and demonstrations** in pottery, wood carving, weaving, earth construction, and decorative crafts, gaining the

chance to learn and practice these authentic skills. Alongside, children enjoyed theater, painting, modeling, horseback riding, and interactive games, while the marketplace showcased local handmade products, from pottery, wooden items, and jewelry to traditional foods such as zacuscă, dried fruits, cheeses, and pastries. The festival came alive with folk and contemporary music, evening campfires, communal singing, and traditional Romanian cuisine, including sarmale, tocănițe, plăcinte, and bulz, all prepared using authentic recipes, creating a rich and immersive cultural experience.



The festival offered an **immersive experience of Romanian crafts and cultural heritage**, promoting learning, participation, and appreciation for traditional skills.

7. The 13th edition of the **Haferland Week Festival took place from **July 31 to August 3, 2025****

The 13th edition of the Haferland Week Festival took place from July 31 to August 3, 2025, in the picturesque Saxon villages of Țara Ovăzului (Haferland), including Archita, Saschiz, Homorod, Rupea, Criț, Roadeș, Meșendorf, Cloașterf, Bunești, and Viscri. This cultural and ethnographic festival, the most beloved of the Transylvanian Saxons, attracted approximately 10,000 visitors from Romania and abroad.

Saptamana Haferland

Over the four days, the festival featured around 70 events, including traditional craft workshops, folk music concerts, theater performances, guided tours, and lectures, all held in or near the Evangelical C.A. churches of the host villages.



A highlight of the festival was the adventure and non-formal education camp for youth and teenagers, organized in partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, offering participants a unique blend of cultural immersion and personal development.

The Haferland Week Festival 2025 successfully celebrated the rich cultural heritage of the Transylvanian Saxons, fostering a deeper appreciation for traditional crafts, music, and community life.

Join us to Upcoming Events!!!

1. *The 12th edition of the Balkanik Festival, Bucharest, Romania*

Between **September 5–7, 2025**, the **12th edition of the Balkanik Festival** transformed **Grădina Uranus** and **Strada Uranus** in Bucharest into a vibrant celebration of world music, traditional crafts, and cultural exchange. Under the theme “Joy is an act of resistance,” the festival featured over 70 events, including live concerts, workshops, exhibitions, and artisan demonstrations.

In **Grădina Uranus**, visitors engaged with authentic artisans showcasing traditional skills such as **wood carving, pottery, weaving, and metalwork**. Notably, Marius and Diana Iosub from Târgu Neamț captivated audiences with a live demonstration of sculpting a 1.5-meter wooden spoon, while children participated in hands-on workshops crafting small wooden items. Additionally, a **specialized company in beekeeping and candle-making** offered interactive exhibits and workshops, sharing insights into these traditional crafts.

The festival also featured **Balkanik Talks**, which provided a platform for discussions on topics like “Reimagining the Balkan Space through Art and Ecology,” bringing together artists and researchers to explore community art, the transformation of industrial spaces, and regional cultural identity.



Overall, the **Balkanik Festival 2025** successfully merged music, craftsmanship, and cultural dialogue, offering attendees a rich tapestry of experiences that celebrated both tradition and innovation.

2. CRAFTOUR General Conference - 30 January 2026, Brussels
Institutions and professionals meet on crafts & tourism. CRAFTOUR



CRAFTOUR is a European initiative bringing together 75 partners and six major projects to safeguard, support, and modernise traditional craftsmanship through innovation, research, and community engagement.

3. 19th International Fair of Traditional Crafts - Etar Museum (6-8 Sept 2025)
Exhibitions, competitions, folklore. [Etar Fair](#)

International Fair of Traditional Crafts at Etar Museum in Bulgaria is the country's only fair based on a museum concept. Its mission is to educate, preserve handicraft traditions, and promote both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The fair brings together craftspeople from Bulgaria and abroad to exchange practices and form new contacts, while visitors can experience traditions directly. The seventeenth edition, held in 2019 for the museum's 55th anniversary, featured over 70 expert craftspeople and freelance artists from 16 countries. It is organized by the Ministry of Culture, the Municipality of Gabrovo, and the Regional Ethnographic Open Air Museum "Etar," and is held under the patronage of Tsveta Karayancheva, President of the National Assembly of Bulgaria, with support from media, craft chambers, and travel agents.



4. *Autumn Crafts & Art Festivals (Sept 2025), Festivals in Plovdiv and Veliko Tarnovo*

<https://velikoturnovo.info/en/events/samovodska-charshia-night-and-crafts-festival-2024/>

- **Veliko Tarnovo Crafts Festival 2025**, September 18–23, 2025, Samovodska Charshia, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

In September 2025, Veliko Tarnovo will host the **Crafts Festival** as part of the event **“Samovodska Charshia Night and Crafts Festival”**. The festival will transform **Samovodska Charshia**, also known as the “Street of Crafts,” into a lively market of traditional crafts. Over **60 craftsmen from across Bulgaria** will participate, giving visitors the opportunity to explore and purchase authentic products, including textiles, pottery, weaving, and jewelry.

The program also includes **interactive workshops** for all ages, where participants can learn to make soaps, candles, jewelry, and mosaics. Additionally, there will be **music and dance performances** as well as **puppet shows**, creating a full cultural experience for attendees.

- **Traditional Crafts Week - Autumn Crafts Fair**: Scheduled from **September 18 to September 21**, this fair will be held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

The **Autumn Crafts Fair** in Plovdiv is scheduled from **September 24 to September 27, 2025**, and will be held in the **Old Town**, specifically near the **Balabanov House**. [Visit Plovdiv](#)

Over **50 craftsmen** from across Bulgaria will showcase more than **20 traditional crafts**, including weaving, pottery, felting, and wood carving. A special feature this year is a demonstration of the ancient craft of producing woolen garments known as **“plastene”**, believed to date back over 2,500 years. The fair will also include a **crafts competition** organized by the Ethnographic Museum. Participants will first complete a task set by the jury, followed by creating an item of their choice. All items from the first part will be donated to the museum. Additionally, **workshops for children** will be held on **September 24 and 25 at 13:00 and 17:00** at the **Bakalov House**, offering hands-on experiences in various crafts. After the competition, the crafted items will be displayed in the **“Crafts” Gallery**, allowing visitors to appreciate the skills and creativity of the participants. For more information and updates, you can visit the official event page: [Autumn Crafts Fair - Plovdiv](#).

5. *Traditional Crafts Fair , October 24–26, 2025, Craiova, Romania*

Organized by the **Muzeul Olteniei Craiova**, this event will take place in **Piața William Shakespeare** and is part of the **45th edition** of the fair. It will feature approximately **40 artisans** from various ethnographic regions of Romania, including Dolj, Olt, Gorj, Mehedinți, Vâlcea, Argeș, Cluj, Harghita, Suceava, and Sibiu. muzeulolteniei.ro primariacraiova.ro

Visitors can expect to see a wide range of traditional crafts such as **pottery, wood carving, weaving, embroidery, icon painting, leatherwork, and blacksmithing**. Additionally, there will be **traditional food products** available for purchase, including smoked meats, cheeses, and sweets. The fair offers an excellent opportunity to experience Romania's rich cultural heritage and support local artisans. For more information, you can visit the official website of the Muzeul Olteniei Craiova: www.muzeulolteniei.ro.



Thank you for being part of our community of craft enthusiasts! Stay inspired, discover unique creations, and join us in celebrating the rich traditions of artisans from near and far. Don't miss out on our upcoming events – your next favorite handmade treasure awaits!



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