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Medieval venture into Alba Iulia, the “White City”

Alba Iulia is an ancient city with almost 2000 years of history and rich vestiges of culture, dating back to Neolithic, Bronze Era, Hallstatt, Latène and Middle Ages. A land of warriors and great wealth, it was perceived both as a threat and a trophy by the Roman Empire.

Following the “Days of Alba Iulia” event with various parades and exhibitions, the citizens were invited on 7 June to the official opening of the “Three Fortifications Route” – the first major rehabilitation of the bulwark Fortress under “Beautiful Romania” project. This UNDP hallmark initiative aims at preserving the historical sites and creating employment opportunities for post-institutionalised youth in Romania. At the event Ms. Soknan Han Jung, UN Ambassador/UNDP Resident Representative, highlighted that she is “pleased to see the results of years of hard work under a very strong cooperation with the municipality of Alba Iulia.”

Prompted by UNDP, the local, central authorities, and Local Employment Agency as well as construction companies all came together to finalise the project on time, despite many constraints. Rehabilitation works foreseen for 2006 will cover the *Roman Castro South Gate and the Gate IV of the Vauban Fortress*, both unique in Europe.



The Route was restored and transformed from ancient vestiges to an important cultural tourist site in less than two years, an outstanding accomplishment for Alba Iulia Municipality. The “Three Fortification Route” is to contribute to the development of local and national tourism. The growing tourism in the area will thus further raise awareness among foreign investors, the project itself being a statement of the sustainable development results of adequate investments in the restoration and rehabilitation of built heritage.

Enthusiastic about the project, Ms. Jung, declares: “From a simple idea originated long time ago, I am witnessing now immense accomplishments under UNDP’s landmark project “Beautiful Romania”, combining heritage protection with job creation.” The “Three Fortifications Route” is the first project finalized in Alba Iulia. The Mayor of Alba Iulia, Mr. Mircea Hava, states that “Beyond the financial effort, we must appreciate the long-term benefits this historical objective will bring to Alba Iulia community. As we speak, arrangements are being made to open a tourist information office, a local souvenir shop and an audio-visual facility to project footages of Alba Iulia fortress. In addition, the visitors will be allowed to access the bulwark area.”

The ceremony was rounded off by live entertainment, provided by the Austrian Honour Guard with soldiers dressed in period outfits, reviving the medieval atmosphere of 300 years ago. The City Hall plans to organise during the summer other thematic events and live performances with national artists.



An overview of Alba Fortress



Austrian Honor Guard



Mayor Mircea Hava and Ambassador Soknan Han Jung “checking” on war tools

For further information please contact UNDP Romania, Socio-Economic Section, at socio-eco.ro@undp.org or visit the website www.beautifulromania.ro.