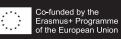


#### **Think Brick! competition**

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Think Brick! is a competition addressing students and young professionals willing to reimagine Jimbolia's former industrial area, through means, strategies and tactical approaches of all scales that can emphasize to local and regional communities the rich cultural, natural and built heritage developed around brick production and bricklaying techniques.

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### Preamble

Triplex Confinium is an ERASMUS+ strategic partnership between the architecture schools in, and around, the DKMT Euroregion. In all, it ecompases five architecture schools of different sizes, a geography faculty and a sociology department.

From its onset Triplex Confinium's mission was to tackle the gaps and mismatches between partner countries educational programs within the field of architecture, while, at the same time, looking at the spatial discontinuities along the borders of Hungary, Serbia and Romania. But these discontinuities, gaps and mismatches include not only real observable territorial issues. They can be as easily traced along the lines of national accreditation systems within higher education, teaching methodologies, and thematic interests. Naturally, partners agreed to search for some common ground. This could be mapped physically, in the territory spanning between our schools (our common hinterland), as well as academically, through learning experiences leading towards a new joint curriculum. We imagine a hybrid program that mixes different educational modules with a competition, showcasing not only the schools themselves but the many missions future architects will be faced with when dealing with this hinterland.

The program is imagined as a flexible international curriculum with three main components:

- The Open Competition
- The Summer Schools
- The Debates

**The Open Competition** is an invitation to all students and young professionals in Romania, Hungary and Serbia to engage in a project driven debate about the future of the architecture education and profession in the hinterland.

**The Summer Schools** (September 2021 and April 2022) will provide students from the Triplex Confinium partner schools competencies related to critical thinking, site exploration and project implementation.

**The Debates** will bring together stakeholders relevant for both the analysis and improvement of the methods tested within the program, but also for the further dissemination of the project results. We strongly believe that the competition, the learning modules and on site experiences, as well as the final proposed projects should allow students and tutors with different backgrounds and academic levels from all neighbouring countries to discover each other, as well as their professional condition within these hinterlands. To achieve our mission we have chosen to look at this territory using a conceptual framework that captures the very essence of this region's material and immaterial culture, its main building block: brick.

#### Think Brick!

### **Brick**

Brick is, arguably, the most architectural of all building materials. Brick is timeless. It defies geography, culture or tradition. Our written history coincides with it's early uses not only as a building block but as a medium for storing information. Brick is born of the land, moulded with water, baked in the sun and fire, and thus transformed into an abstract building block, that defies any intellectual interpretation. Its semantic language is selfreferential. Brick dictates technique. Technology follows suit. Brick will do and be, as Louis Kahn noted, only what it wants to do and be. Perhaps herein lies its undying appeal, for it is a material that commands its way into timeless forms and spaces, a material that empowers light and metaphysics without the need of any decorative embellishment or intellectual alibi, a material that is both utterly functional just as much as it is poetic, ancient and modern at the same time, resilient and sustainable.

By choosing brick we are not only choosing a material that lies at the very core of the architectural discourse but also reinterpreting the rich brickmaking tradition once visible in this region. Jimbolia (Ro) and Kikinda (Srb) were until the end of the XXth century, power houses within this industry. Brick not only built this region's villages and towns and cities, but it's economy as well, and through it, its culture. A culture that, just as it's economy, seems at a loss for present day communities. Think Brick would like to deal with this loss, and reopen a debate around our profession, and our mission as architects dealing with such complex issues. Think BRICK!



Source: Anton Schenk via Heimatblatt Hatzfevld 13, 2006; Heimatortsgemeinschaft Hatzfeld

# Historical background

The history of the Banat region, from its XVIIth century Habsburg spatial, economic and cultural re-programming, until today, can be seen as impressions left in the landscape. The initially marshy area was easily drained due to the advances brought about by the industrial revolution, with the farmland created through this process becoming the largest and best quality agricultural region in the Habsburg Empire, which, in turn, made the estate owners here extremely wealthy. Subsequently, the income originating from agriculture was invested in brick factories to exploit the excellent quality clay to be found here, which, following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, turned into a huge network in unison with the development of the region of Banat.



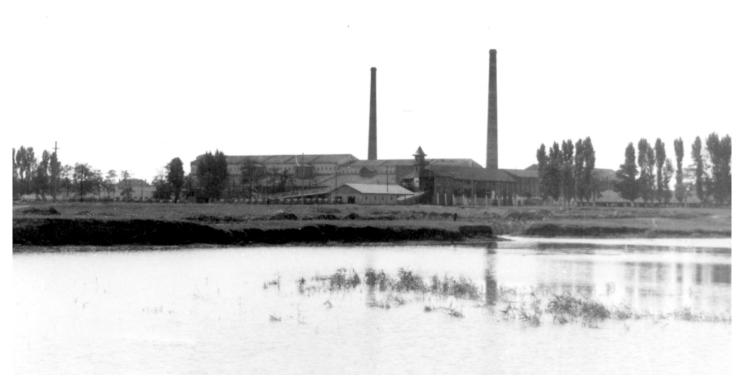
Source: Walther Konschitzky; Die Ziegel-Rivalen Bohn und Muschong; Heimatblatt Hatzfeld 18, 2011; Heimatortsgemeinschaft Hatzfeld

Through its many industrial facilities, (Bohn, Muschong, Treiss), Jimbolia (RO) has been, as early as the XIX century, at the forefront of brick and tile production within the region. Similar brick production facilities and clay quarries were functioning throughout it. Clay products from Jimbolia or Kikinda were used throughout the entire Austro-Hungarian Empire, and were even presented and certified for their quality at the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris. The best example portraying this european dimension can be seen in the case of the local brick factory producing bricks for the reconstruction of Szeged following the Great Flood of 1879. Hence, the brick factory's history and its heritage is not only an important part of the past of Jimbolia, but of the entire region. After the Great War the Treaty of Trianon split the region up into three parts, which put an end to this previously unified development.

Brick production, however, has remained a staple of the local economy alongside agriculture and other smaller manufacturing enterprises, even during the communist administration. Yet it is communism that set the path toward oblivion, through the systematic destruction of Jimbolia's entrepreneurial class and their family owned businesses. Even as late as the interwar period, Jimbolia's functional, economic and cultural raison d'etre remained relevant mainly through its entrepreneurial class and its many transnational networks. In many respects this multiethnic class supported not only it's economy but it's cultural assets as well, social clubs and community programs, setting the tone of its development and general progress. One can rightfully argue that Jimbolia's gradual transformation into a cultural cul de sac can be traced back to this initial loss of it's societal and economic structure.

Jimbolia's current efforts in showcasing this rich social and cultural history are visible today in its six different museums and memorial houses. Right on the outskirts of the competition site, the Railroad Museum is home to several early XXth century rail equipment, cranes and, until recently, a steam engine. The old water tower is still standing next to the brick clad historic train station. The "Florian" Fireman's Museum, managed by the local volunteer fireman's brigade, is home not only to several historic fire fighting vehicles but to all sorts of paraphernalia and memorabilia. Not far away, the Stefan Jager Museum captures the life and work of the most famous painter of the Banat swabians. The "Sever Bocu" press museum is home to an extensive collection of unique newspapers from around Romania, dating back to the middle of the XIX century. The collection donated by the famous writer and journalist Petre Stoica, has gained great attention from researchers and historians. One last memorial house is dedicated to the famous doctor Karl Diel, a prominent figure in the cultural and social life of historic Hatzfeld at the turn of the XIXth century.

Unfortunately, none of these cultural facilities capture the rich history of industrial brick production and it's role in developing the local community. Foreign eyes are as oblivious to this history as are those of young Jimbolians.



### **Problem definition**

The 90s decade, with it's often corrupt and purely speculative transition processes, dealt a final blow to these once proud regional enterprises. In the case of Jimbolia the factories were dismantled brick by brick, only the clay quarries remaining as a new natural feature of cultural and environmental importance. As an anthropic landscape shaped by man through industry, yet gradually reclaimed by nature during the past two decades, the quarries remain a silent witness to a bygone era. One walks around their trails without even imagining the many industrial apparatus, rail lines and laborers permanently toiling in its depth. It is not only regional history that was lost under their waters but real personal stories as well. With many informal functions overlapping: natural habitat, illegal garbage dumpsite (in the northern part),

recreational areas filled with obsolete playgrounds and parasitic structures, their status is currently uncertain even to the local community. And how else can it be, when even similarly important traces are barely visible in this geography of loss.

At the same time, the recent decades of European integration, following the transition into democracy, have once again created the opportunity for tighter relations between the parts of the formerly unified region. What are the common features, opportunities and ambitions of the former Banat? Can this site be reevaluated in a larger euroregional framework, one that is in tune with similar european endeavours while clearly remaining of the land and for its people.



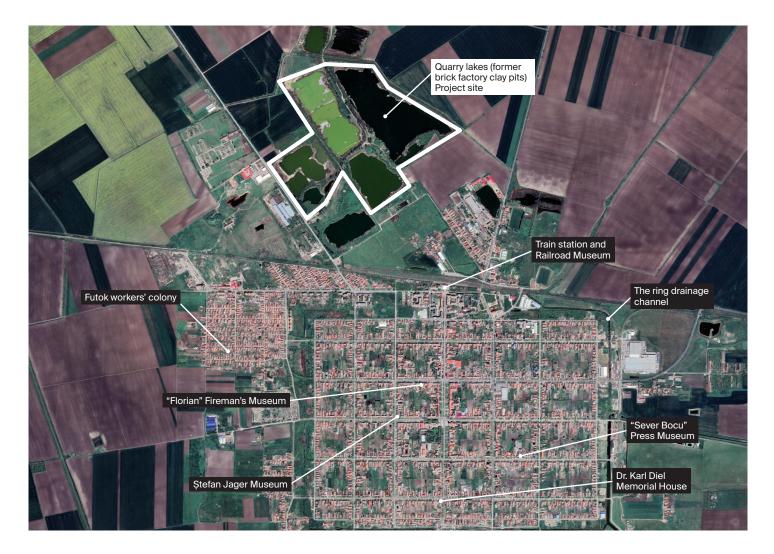
Source: Josef Koch

**Competition Brief** 

### Hypothesis

A problem this deep situated at the intersection between built heritage, nature, regional history and multiculturality, economic speculation and political decision is prone to various interpretations. Some statements have to be made to guide the design process and better determine the scope of the competition through a viable hypothesis.

Contenders are invited to formulate their own hypothesis on the problem at hand, while exploring the strategic site, decoding its history and untapping its potential future states. The former industrial area, with its clay quarry – now a natural park – the Futok workers colony and main railway station will serve as the strategic site offering participants with a background on the development of the area and its *genius locci*. The different interventions and working hypotheses imagined will however be organised in – and around – the quarries area. Around these, proposed projects are free to explore at all scales and through various building programs, ways in which the site can be recovered, all while strengthening its natural qualities.









Source: Bogdan Demetrescu

### **Competition site**

Considering this hypothesis, the competition brief argues that the quarry lakes can offer contenders with an ideal setting for exploration and interpretation. The six lakes formed in the abandoned clay quarries are located in the northern part of the settlement, beside the largely deserted and unused area of the former brick factory. They create a natural border between the urban environment and agricultural land.

In their current natural state, the lakes are a good reference point for observing the interaction between human activity and the landscape, both past and present. Clay guarries were a common site around Jimbolia, and in fact all colonial settlements, as far back as the 18th century. For local building purposes, early colonial dwellers would dig clay pits (kaule) at the end of each street. It is only with the arrival of Stefan Bohn, an entrepreneur native of nearby Sankt Hubert that the first large quarries are opened in the northern part of the town. Bohn took advantage of the new rail line built between Budapest and Timisoara in 1857. Seizing this opportunity Bohn scouts for clay to the north of the train station and his intuitions prove right. His business expands as do others in the area, and Jimbolia quickly develops a sizable industrial zone. The first guarries were dug manually by Kubikas, intensive laborers, paid by the cubic meter. They were living in makeshift barracks in the vicinity of the guarries. Later on, these laborers were invited to build the workers colony of Futok. In the early XXth century heavy machinery was introduced. The quarries were from now on exploited using huge excavators set on railroads (the remnants of such a machine can still be spotted in the deepest lake). The clay was transported in small trains along a complex system of rails that linked each quarry to the nearby factory. There, the clay was cleaned of impurities (shells, stones and even mammoth bones), mixed in

various recipes, shaped in special molds, dried and later burned in huge ovens, some spanning more than 100 meters. The production values were enormous. Before The Great War, Bohn was producing 18 million tiles and 8 million bricks per year. His nearby competitor Threiss was producing just as much. The production figures were doubled by the second world war. Bricks were exported not only in Hungary or Austria but as far away as Greece and the Middle East.

The lakes themselves were created naturally, as extraction progressed throughout the site. The accumulation of water has been an issue even during clay extraction and several measures were devised for the control of surplus water. The quarry pits were connected with underground pipes and flotation pumps that would flush the water from one another as needed. This topographical project was extremely important in order to fulfil the different recipes of brick that the factories produced. Several quarries were opened at the same time. These had different depths, some going as far down as 30m.

The factory continued extracting clay well into the 9th decade of the XXth century. It is in the economic chaos of the 90's that the Romanian state decided to abandon production, dismantling all built structures, selling it for scrap metal. The process was quick and the community, faced with financial difficulties, agreed to sell all of its assets.

The lakes are the only man made structure still visible of this great industrial project. In the two decades that followed, they have been gradually reconquered by nature. Ironically, as industrialized agriculture has taken hold of the nearby fields these lakes have transformed into an oasis for natural wildlife. They are currently an informal place for recreation used mainly by the local community either for fishing or bird spotting. Swimming is officially prohibited as several deaths have occured in the past years. These were caused either by the algae growing in shallow waters or by the cold currents inhabiting the deeper pits. These have variable depths that quickly and unpredictably change the temperature of the water. While some lakes are truly deep some are drying out, as the water leveling system stopped working two decades ago. All connecting pipes are now above the water level. This creates an interesting landscape with different kinds of water textures. Birds flourish in this environment. Local administrations have proposed various projects for regenerating the site, some going as far as proposing a water adventure park. The latest one imagines a place dedicated to bird watchers and nature enthusiasts. None, however, planned to reinterpret the industrial tradition, the memory of the production facilities and the many stories that it spanned.



Source: Bogdan Demetrescu

### **Objectives**

The main objective of the competition is to generate a generous debate about the possibilities of this site in particular, and about such sites, in general. The debate should be relevant for both local communities and professional ones, and the projects developed through this tool should either be very pragmatic and easy to implement, or with a very strong conceptual value, thus instigating a more elaborated approach to the site or problem.

Three categories of projects can be submitted:

- Small scale, tactical interventions that form various forms of networks connecting and telling the story of the site
- Visible structures (pavilions, small buildings) that become part of the site's image and are used to frame and present it
- 3. Landart/landform interventions that work with the site's topography and allow for a better understanding and parkour throughout the entire area

When working within these categories, one should have in mind the following objectives:

- The project needs to be well adjusted to the needs and capacity of the local community. (in creation, implementation and use);
- The project needs to use local materials and be conscious about the local environment;
- The project needs to address both the current character of the site and its historical and cultural legacy;
- The project needs to have a contemporary language and approach;
- The project needs to connect to the wider context of Jimbolia as both a particular place and a typological one.



Source: Francisc Jung



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### **Competition eligibility**

Think Brick! is open to any team consisting of at least one architecture student enrolled in one of the accredited architecture faculties in Romania, Hungary, Serbia or Bulgaria. The student may be in association with one or more students or professionals of the same or related disciplines within the architectural, urban and landscape field (such as architects, urban planners, landscape architects, engineers) or from other relevant fields (such as sociology, geography, art, computer science, etc).

All team members must be under the age of 30 years old on the closing date for submission of projects.

Teams can choose to be tutored (by a Triplex Confinium team member or by any other teacher from any of the accredited architecture faculties from the 4 countries). The tutors are considered external collaborators, and are not part of the team. The Triplex Confinium available tutors can be found of the project's website, together with their contacts (contacts will be displayed only for the tutors available for collaboration).

A member can be part of maximum 2 teams within the competition.

#### **Composition of the Teams**

There is no limit to the number of participants per team. Multidisciplinary teams are strongly encouraged, considering the Competition Brief.

Each team can have maximum 2 submitted projects in the competition.

**Team Coordinator** – Each team names one "Team Coordinator" among the members. The Team Coordinator will be the sole contact with the Triplex Confinium secretariat during the whole competition. Furthermore, every communication shall be done with one email address, which shall remain the same during the whole competition.

In order to initiate the collaboration with a tutor from the Triplex Confinium team, the team coordinator must contact the selected tutor before de 1st of December 2021.

Each tutor can collaborate with a maximum of 5 teams. Each tutor has the right to select the teams with which he/she can and wants to collaborate with.

#### **Non-Eligibility**

None of the Think Brick! jury members and/or members of their families are eligible to be part of any team, or to tutor any of the teams.

The teaching staff from the partner universities can tutor any of the teams that registers in the competition. Any team has the right and possibility to be tutored by the Triplex Confinium available tutors.

The members of the Triplex Confinium team and the members of their families can only take part in the competition as tutor and organizer, and cannot be a member of the competing teams or author any of the projects.

### **Competition materials**

#### **Competition Brief and Research Materials**

A database with competition materials has been created and is composed of the following:

- Repository of relevant materials about the region and project site;
- Digital (dwg) file with the project site and surroundings;
- A selection of pictures from the project site;
- Competition Brief.

Besides these materials, the following will be published on the competition website:

- Interviews with locals about relevant stories and places in Jimbolia – 10 episodes, published throughout the competition duration;
- Jimbolia Atlas will be published on the 22nd of October.

#### **Competition Submission Layouts**

100 x 70 cm Panel Layout

A3 Project Motivation & Presentation Layout

### **Competition calendar**

16 July	Competition launch
3 September	Deadline for Questions regarding the competition
10 September	Deadline for Answers to the submitted questions
19 September	Guided Site Visit
17-30 September	Triplex Confinium First Summer School
22 October	Online publication of the Jimbolia Atlas (Summer School Research)
1 December	Deadline for establishing contact with one of the Triplex Confinium tutors (if the participants wish to – working with tutors is not compulsory)
18 February	Deadline for Project Submissions - 24:00hrs GMT+3
21-24 February	Preliminary analysis of Submissions by the Competition Technical Commission
25 February	Online Publication of the preliminary analysis report
28 February	Deadline for Submission of Complaints
2 March	Online publication of Complaints resolve and of the final list of projects to be presented to the jury members
2-18 March	Online Jury Works
21 March	Online publication of selected projects
1-12 April	Selected Works Exhibition in Kikinda, Serbia ( <i>Triplex Confinium Second Summer School</i> )
14 April	Jury Members Lectures and Award Ceremony in Novi Sad, Serbia
21 April	Online Publication of Jury Report

### Project Submission

#### **Digital submission**

Digital submission is compulsory and will be realised through the "Competition Submission" section of the Triplex Confinium website (www.triplex-confinium.eu)

The form found on the Competition Submission section of the website must be fully filled in and submitted before 24.00hrs GMT+3 on the 18th of February.

The form will imply the upload of:

- one 100x70cm panel in PDF format of maximum 15Mb, using the layout provided in the competition materials;
- one Project Motivation & Presentation file in PDF format of maximum 15Mb and 10 A3 pages, using the layout provided in the competition materials;
- one PDF file proving the eligibility of all team members;
- 3 project images in JPG or PNG format of 150dpi and maximum 3Mb each.

Failure to comply with the here-mentioned requirements on board presentation may result in the disqualification of the team.

#### **Anonymity and Compulsory Content**

The project title must be displayed on every document: panel, project motivation & presentation.

A specific code will be attributed to each project after upload. The teams do not know this code, through which the jury members take note of the project. The teams' identities will only be known by the Technical Commission.

#### Language

The panel and all text presenting the ideas shall be written in English.

#### Items to Submit

#### The 100x70 Panel

#### Contentwise, the panel must:

- explain the ideas developed in the project with regards to the specific site issues;
- present the project as a whole, highlighting the architecture of the project, and particularly the relationship between the new developments and the site's existing context, including threedimensional representations of the project.

#### Technical specifications:

- The panel must use the layout specified by the Competition;
- PDF format;
- Vertical (L 700 mm x H 1000 mm);
- Maximum 15 Mb;
- All technical drawings must have a specified scale;

#### The Project Motivation & Presentation File

#### Content:

The text must answer the following 4 questions:

- 1. What is the specific problem that the project wants to solve?
- 2. What is the project hypothesis?
- 3. What are the project's objectives?
- 4. Which are the desired outcomes?

The File must also contain a short presentation of the project, and will be used for online presentations of the project.

Technical specifications:

- maximum 10 pages;
- PDF format;
- Maximum 15 Mb
- Horizontal A3 (L 420mm x H 297mm).

#### Documents to prove the eligibility of the team members

Documents for the disclosure of names and verification of the validity of the proposals shall be uploaded as **ONE PDF** on the competition website and will include:

- a copy of an ID document with a picture for each team member, providing evidence that they are under the age of 30 at the closing date for submission of entries (see calendar);
- any form of proof (certificate, badge, letter of recommendation from one of the faculty members, etc.) for one member of the team, that shows that the person is an active student in an architecture faculty in Romania, Hungary, Serbia or Bulgaria;

#### Documents for the project communication;

• 3 separate JPG or PNG images that symbolize the project (max. 3Mb per image).

#### **Control of the Submissions**

After the upload you should receive an automated e-mail confirming your submission. Please also check your spam box.

If you do not receive this message within 24hrs from the submission, please write an e-mail to the competition secretariat: <u>thinkbrick.competition@gmail.com</u>

Any message written after the 24hrs window regarding the project upload will not be considered, and the project (if not received) will not be considered by the Jury.

### **Jury works**

#### **Technical Commission**

The Technical Commission does not judge but examines all the projects submitted in order to prepare the work for the jury. It will check if the submission is compliant with the rules, attribute a specific code to each project and keep the secret of the identity of authors until the public announcement of the competition preselection.

#### Juries

The Jury is composed of an interdisciplinary team representing the four countries. Its composition will be announced up until the 1st of September.

\*the Organizers have the responsibility to replace any member of the Jury in case one of the above members cannot fulfill its mission for any reason.

#### Working Methods and Evaluation Criteria

The jury's decisions are final in compliance with the competition rules. The jury meets in 2 separate sessions at different times:

First round – At the beginning of this session, the jury appoints one of its members as chairman and agrees on its working method. It assesses the projects on their conceptual content and the degree of innovation and relevance for the project site and community and shortlists a maximum of 25 projects from the submitted works.

Second round – During the second round, the jury examines the shortlisted projects and points out the 3 winners, and 2 mentions. The jury could assess the projects on basis of: the relationship between concept and site; the relevance to the questions raised by the competition brief; the relevance of the programme and of the proposed solution for the local community; the innovative nature of the proposed solutions; the consideration given to the connection between different functions; the landscape, architectural and technical qualities.

The jury finally writes a report giving the reasons for the choice made in relation to the requirements of the competition and the concerned site.

If necessary, the jury can distribute prizes among entries up to its will or decide not to award all the prizes. In this case, the reasons shall be made public.

The jury may single out projects for Special Mention. These projects are recognised by the jury as presenting innovative ideas or insights, yet not sufficiently suitable for the site. The authors of such projects do not receive any reward.

#### **Disclosure of Authors**

The projects assessed by the jury are anonymous. Once the list of selected projects is final, the authors of the selected projects will be revealed. This operation is done with the help of the Technical Commission.

### Awards

Each of the 3 winners receive a reward of the equivalent of 1000 euro (taxes included). The organizers undertake to abide by the decisions of the national juries and to pay the reward within 60 days of the announcement of the results.

Each of the 2 mentions receive a reward of the equivalent of 500 euro (taxes included). The organizers undertake to abide by the decisions of the national juries and to pay the reward within 60 days of the announcement of the results.

# **Rights and obligations**

By registering to the Think Brick! competition, the participants agree to have their personal data, as it has been provided, processed by the organizer.

The organizer ensures that the participants' data will be honestly and transparently processed, exclusively in the professional interest of both parties, in accordance with the provisions of the (EU) Regulation no. 679/2016 of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (GDPR).

By registering entries in the competition, the participants declare that they have read and agree with the entirety of the rules from this present document.

All material (images, texts, panels...) submitted to the organizers becomes their property, including reproduction rights. The intellectual property rights remain the exclusive property of their author(s). Teams may not publish the documents submitted to the competition or disclose their names by using their project for any communication before the official announcement of the results. Any such publication may result in the disqualification of the team.

The organisers reserve the right to publish all the projects submitted to them after the official announcement of results. Projects are exhibited or published under the names of their authors.

Any kind of dispute will be resolved amicably. In the event of jurisdiction, this will take place in Timişoara, Romania.

The Organizers hold the right to make any necessary changes to the Competition Rules, due to the Covid-19 situation or any other situation. All changes must be announced on the competition website.

### Communication

The official means of communication for the competition is e-mail. The official email address for the competition is thinkbrick.competition@gmail.com

All communication related to the competition must be made through this address.

The official website of the competition is <u>www.triplex-confinium.eu</u>

### Organizers

Triplex Confinium is a project partially funded by the ERASMUS+ grant program of the European Union under grant no. 2019-1-RO01-KA203-063881 which is tackling gaps and mismatches in the field of higher education for architecture and urban planning while exploring and addressing discontinuities along the national borders inbetween Romania, Hungary and Serbia.

#### Team members

UNIVERSITATEA POLITEHNICA TIMIȘOARA

Cristian Blidariu, Oana Simionescu, Ioan Andreescu, Bogdan Demetrescu, Mihai Danciu, Tiberiu Bucşa, Bogdan Isopescu, Ştefana Bădescu.

#### <u>UNIVERSITATEA DE ARHITECTURĂ ȘI URBANISM</u> ION MINCU DIN BUCUREȘTI

Irina Tulbure, Irina Băncescu, Ilinca Păun-Constantinescu, Cristi Borcan, Alexandru Belenyi, Cristian Bădescu, Horia Moldovan.

#### BUDAPESTI MUSZAKI ES GAZDASAGTUDOMANYI EGYETEM

Zsolt Vasáros, Levente Szabó, Gergely Sági, Zoltán Major.

#### DEBRECENI EGYETEM

Tamas Szentirmai, János Vági, Miklós János Boros.

#### UNIVERZITET U NOVOM SADU

Bojan Tepavčević, Ivana Bajšanski, Vesna Stojakovic, Marko Vučić, Miloš Obradović, Jelena Kićanović, Marko Jovanović.

#### SOFIA UNIVERSITY ST KLIMENT OHRIDSKY

Kaloian Tsetkov, Georgi Bardarov, Antonina Atanasova, Peter Stoyanov.

#### UNIVERSITATEA BABES BOLYAI Norbert Petrovici, Cristi Pop.

Technical Commission Oana Simionescu, Vesna Stojakovic, Gergely Sági, Zoltán Major

*Competition Secretariat* Oana Simionescu