

PRESS RELEASE



Cornelia Dlabaja Appointed Endowed Professor for Sustainable Urban Tourism

The sociologist and cultural scientist will conduct research on sustainable and resilient location and tourism development. The professorship is funded by the Vienna Chamber of Commerce.

Vienna, July 3, 2023 – Tourism is of great importance for Vienna. With its Visitor Economy Strategy, the City of Vienna pursues the goal of shaping this economic sector in such a way that it takes into account the interests of the population, the local economy and guests. An Endowed Professorship for Sustainable Urban and Tourism Development at FHWien der WKW will provide scientific support for this process in the future. The newly created position will be taken over by Cornelia Dlabaja on August 1, 2023, and is designed to run for five years. The professorship is the first in Austria in the field of urban tourism. It is sponsored by the Vienna Chamber of Commerce (WKW).

Guidance for companies

“The professorship is intended to act as a source of ideas and a knowledge hub that provides recommendations for action to economic operators in tourism and other industries,” says Walter Ruck, President of the Vienna Chamber of Commerce. “According to Ruck, the scientific study of urban tourism and the visitor economy is also important for the future of tourism education in Vienna, because the research findings will be incorporated into education and training.

Scientifically accompanying the Visitor Economy Strategy

The aim of the endowed professorship is to establish a research program for sustainable and resilient location and tourism development that provides scientific support for the implementation of the Visitor Economy Strategy. “Based on the challenges of sustainable tourism and urban development, the endowed professorship addresses socially relevant issues for location development. It analyzes them from multiple perspectives. It provides findings for practice by means of applied and basic research and accompanies the process of the Visitor Economy Strategy from conception to implementation,” explains Cornelia Dlabaja.

About Cornelia Dlabaja

Dr.ⁱⁿ Cornelia Dlabaja is a sociologist with a PhD in cultural studies, specializing in urban and planning sociology, urban transformations, international tourism research, overtourism and inequality research. She brings with her extensive experience in applied and basic research, gained as a research associate at the Institute for Urban and Regional Research at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and during her many years at the Institute for European Ethnology at the University of Vienna.

A central aspect of her work is communicating scientific findings to the public. She collaborated with the Wien Museum in 2022 for an exhibition on the changing Brunnenviertel. At the UNESCO Chair SSIIM of the IUAV University of Venice, Dlabaja researched overtourism and visions for a sustainable development of Venice. Her dissertation, which was awarded the Theodor Körner Prize, elaborates on the emergence of the urban development area Seestadt Aspern. In 2011, she founded the Social Inequality Section of the Austrian Sociological Association, of which she is the spokesperson.

PRESS RELEASE



Signal for the relevance of tourism for Vienna

“With Cornelia Dlabaja, we have been able to attract a proven expert in urban sociology as an endowed professor,” says a delighted Florian Aubke, Head of Tourism & Hospitality Management Study Programs at FHWien der WKW. “Her approach to urban spaces research, which takes equal account of visitors and residents, is in line with our understanding of contemporary destination management. The creation of the endowed professorship and its appointment are important signs of the relevance of tourism for Vienna. Dr.ⁱⁿ Dlabaja’s research findings will not only benefit the local tourism industry as well as decision-makers in business and politics, but also the students of our Master’s program in Urban Tourism & Visitor Economy Management.”

International benchmark

“With its Visitor Economy Strategy, Vienna is doing pioneering work – in it we commit ourselves to a sustainable development of urban tourism in ecological, economic and social dimensions. FHWien der WKW is a showcase partner when it comes to its academic implementation,” explains Norbert Kettner, Managing Director of the Vienna Tourist Board. “The upgrading of the Tourism & Hospitality Management study programs by an endowed professorship shows impressively how science and practice in Vienna work hand in hand to create new impulses and further develop tourism in such a way that it brings benefits for the city and its inhabitants beyond the industry itself. I would like to congratulate Dr.ⁱⁿ Cornelia Dlabaja – with her, the endowed professorship is in extremely experienced hands. This is the best prerequisite for setting international benchmarks,” continues Kettner.

Focus on sustainability research

As an endowed professor, Cornelia Dlabaja will work closely with the Tourism & Hospitality Management study programs of the university of applied sciences, which have been offering practice-oriented Bachelor’s and Master’s programs since 1994. “With our study programs in tourism management, we are fulfilling an important task for the tourism industry,” emphasizes Michael Heritsch, CEO of FHWien der WKW. “After all, tourism in Vienna and Austria needs the best trained specialists and managers. With her research work, Cornelia Dlabaja will contribute to the further development of these offerings in the spirit of sustainable tourism.” At the same time, FHWien der WKW is confirming its leading role in sustainability research in Austria: In future, two research institutes and two endowed professorships will deal with aspects of sustainability.

Photo:

Sociologist and cultural scientist Cornelia Dlabaja takes over the newly created Endowed Professorship for Sustainable Urban and Tourism Development at FHWien der WKW.

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FHWien der WKW – University of Applied Sciences for Management & Communication

FHWien der WKW is Austria’s leading university of applied sciences for management & communication. Working in close contact with Austrian corporations, FHWien der WKW offers comprehensive and practice-oriented academic programs to over 2,800 Bachelor’s and Master’s students. Two thirds of our teaching staff have a background in business. Our programs are tailored to the needs of companies, optimally preparing our students for their future careers. Since its foundation in 1994, FHWien der WKW has already produced around 14,400 graduates.

PRESS RELEASE



Contact

Bernhard Witzeling
Head of Corporate Communication, Marketing and Alumni & Career Services, Press Officer
Tel.: +43 (1) 476 77-5733
presse@fh-wien.ac.at
www.fh-wien.ac.at