

# Hummus 2050 – East Mediterranean City Belt

Sigi Atteneder|Lorenz Potocnik

The term "Hummus" derives from the dish (i) and the fertile soil (ii). It is a metaphor for a certain common denominator. Hummus as food is something popular all over the Middle East and not exclusive from any of the countries there. (i) Humus as part of the soil is rich in nutrients and an essential support for life, illustrating a complex and delicate system (ii).



## Mission – Vision – Idea

Hummus 2050 is an overall vision of a peaceful and thriving East Mediterranean Region. It is a new defined geographical figure and implies a large conceived, long term initiative to **re-connect** this fragmented area. Generating an East Mediterranean City Belt will lead to a **transnational identity**.

Hummus 2050 transcends territorial islands, borders and national structures and is working on essential change. Hummus 2050 is about **people** who understand, **share and adopt the vision**. It is about the power of ideas and a construct we agree on. It will succeed in those who take part in imagining it!

The initial idea stated Jerusalem as symptom of the whole region, thinking **Jerusalem in the region, and the region in Jerusalem**. We asserted that without a thriving region no peaceful city of Jerusalem will be possible.

Secondly, we focused on cities by envisioning an alliance of about 20 cities, forming an **urban corridor**, the East Mediterranean City Belt. We believe that innovation comes out of the urban, that cooperation on a municipal level could bypass national mechanisms and that given the extreme density and urbanization of the region, a cooperation of cities is crucial.

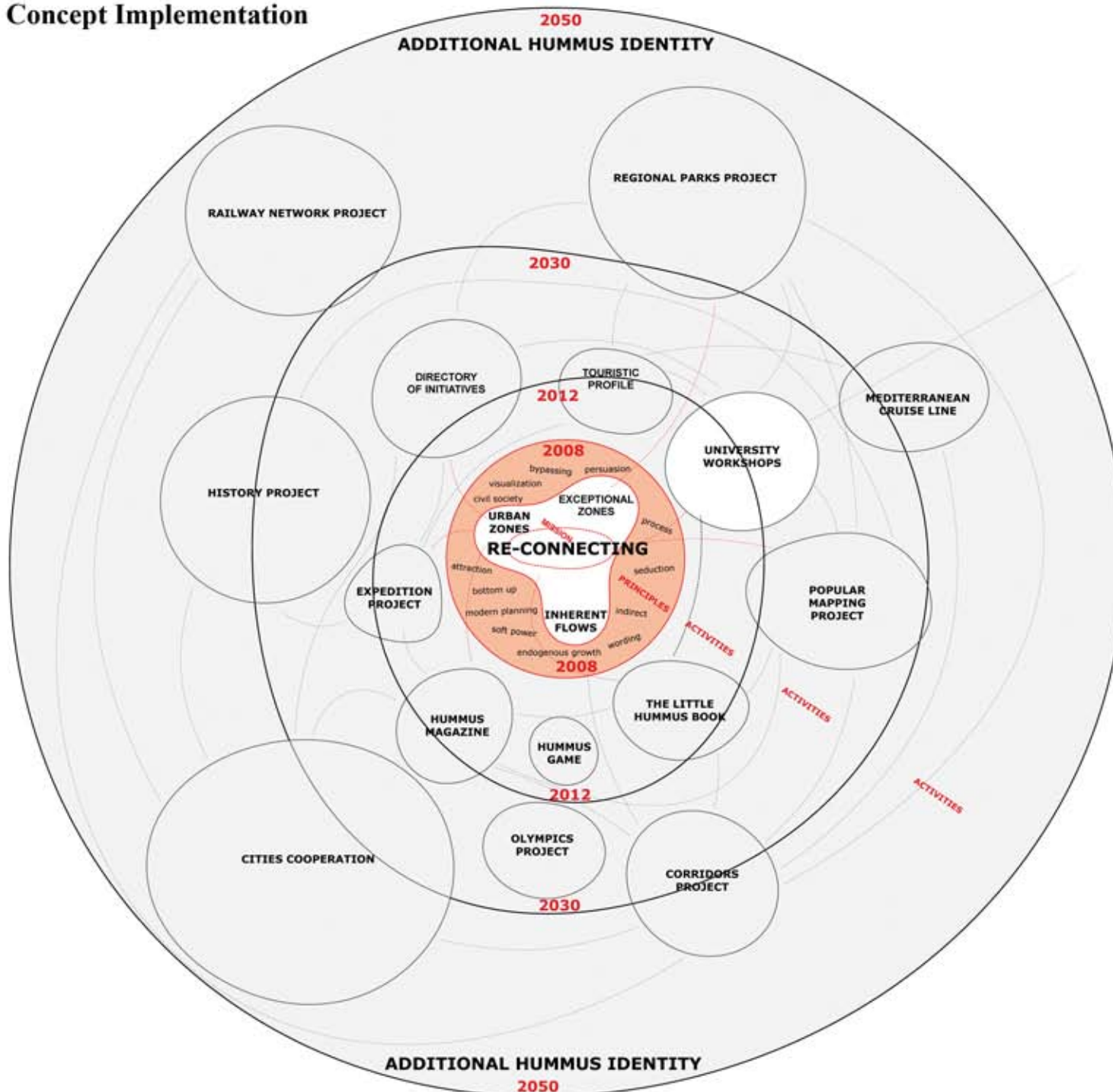
Finally the defined principle of acting was based on imagination and visualization of an overall image of the future – what we called **archeology of the future**. Instead of thinking in planning categories, we imagine a picture in the far future and do the process the other way round, believing that most of what is needed is already there.

*„To know is nothing at all, to imagine is everything“*  
Anatole France

*„There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come.“*  
Victor Hugo

*„This is a conceptual revolution in thinking about the place.“*  
Anat Biletzki

## Concept Implementation



First of all, Hummus 2050 is a series of initial workshops at Universities in Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Amman, Alexandria and Adana etc.. It is thought to make the vital start in the region and - similar to a think tank - to discuss the future!

The main goal of these brainstorming sessions is: (1) meet people, find allies, create networks, detect leaders for possible task- forces (2) spot pioneers (individuals, economy, tourism, knowledge, communities,...) (3) brainstorm, collect ideas, interdisciplinarity, create discourse with future decision makers, professors, mayors (4) seed and spread the idea, agenda setting, test the idea.

Hummus 2050 is a supporting structure for dozens, if not hundreds of activities and projects. It offers a framework, an overall goal in the far future and clear principles of acting as well as a focus on tourism.

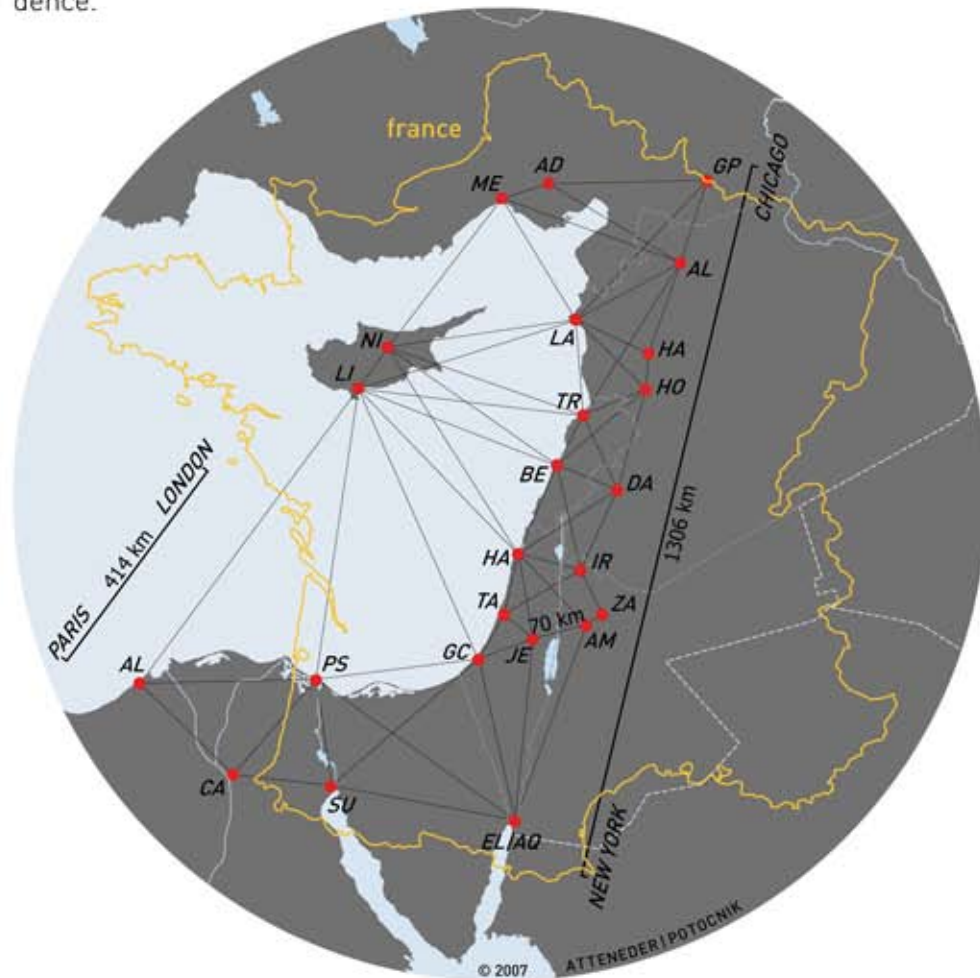
The Hummus approach includes following core principles: to persuade and to attract (soft power), to approach indirectly, to grow endogenously, to communicate in new forms, to plan in an up-to-date way and to act multi-faceted and concerted.

Hummus 2050's formative principles and approach are part of its nature.

Short term projects need to satisfy certain conditions: most important, they have to comprehend and anticipate the big idea of re-connecting the region and make a consistent and tangible start at the same time. And they have to aim for the transnational hummus identity.

## The Region

A size comparison to France not only reveals a physical dimension, but clearly points to disproportionated conditions: crossing France by train (1050 km) takes roughly the same time than going from Amman to Jerusalem (70 km), borders, wars, huge international attention, lack of infrastructure and ideological differences tend to make the region much larger than it actually is. The Hummus region is one of the most dense regions in the world. Distances between the main cities and capitals are strikingly short. Analyzing the East Mediterranean Countries leads constantly to the same conclusion: they are all very much dependant on each other. They constitute in fact a systemic organism which requires close cooperation by nature. Hummus 2050 emphasizes the complementary character and the potential of this interdependence.



## Team

**Lorenz Potocnik** is a Vienna-based architect whose practice is concerned with a wide range of crossover projects and research in the fields of architecture, urbanism and art. He was trained at Vienna University of Technology, School of Architecture in Portsmouth (GB) and Delft University of Technology (NL). He co-founded the architectural collective feld72 and was part of it until 2004. Their „urban strategies“ were rewarded with several international honours including the Austrian State Award of Experimental Architecture. Freelance since 2001, recent projects include several conversions in Vienna, a public place in Linz and project development and consulting for works of art and installations. His work has been exhibited internationally.



Potocnik was Assistant Professor at University of Applied Arts in Linz (2003 – 2006). He was born in Vienna in 1971, grew up in Paris and Geneva and traveled extensively in the former Eastern Bloc and the Middle East. He did an alternative civilian service in Tel Aviv in 1999-2000 and is father of Vivian born in 2001. For further information please visit Potocnik's personal archive [www.potocnik.net](http://www.potocnik.net)

**Sigi Atteneder** lives and works in Linz, Austria. He holds a degree in Architecture from the University of Arts and Industrial Design in Linz.

In his first career, Atteneder was trained as a builder and worked in the building sector for more than a decade. He then went on to study architecture at the University of Art and Design, Linz and the University of Hong Kong. During his studies he extensively traveled and conducted numerous projects related in between social development and space, with the highly awarded "living tebogo"-home for disabled children near Johannesburg, South Africa on top. His recent thesis-project was about the East Mediterranean Region.

In addition to his studies, Atteneder has also worked for several architectural firms in Austria and in 2007 did work for Shigeru Ban Architects in Tokyo. He has been awarded several prizes and scholarships.

He's interest lies in global processes, politics and humanism, related to space and long term strategies. The Middle East, especially the so called "Levant" and it's potentials for a thriving and peaceful interconnected region, is his present research focus. Contact: [siegfried.atteneder@ufg.ac.at](mailto:siegfried.atteneder@ufg.ac.at)

