

ROAD MAP FOR CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUSDR

Promoting transparency and participation through multilevel governance and project development in the Danube Region

Following the first Participation Day and the EISENSTADT DECLARATION ON PARTICIPATION IN THE EU DANUBE STRATEGY of 25 June 2014¹, the overall approach for civil society involvement in the EUSDR is twofold:

- Civil society and social partner involvement in the governance of the EUSDR;
- Strengthening civil society, European citizenship, social partners and civic engagement throughout the Danube Region.

Civil society involvement within the framework of the EUSDR implementation should first and foremost:

- Improve conditions for civic and democratic participation at EU, the macro-regional, and the national/regional level;
- Communicate the EUSDR to the citizens;
- Encourage democratic participation of citizens at EU level.

In order to comply with the European principles of participation, transparency and subsidiarity, minimum standards of civil society involvement are to be implemented through a potential upcoming Action Plan.

¹ See <http://www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/civil-society>

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN A POTENTIAL REVISED ACTION PLAN OF THE EUSDR

Each of the Priority Areas of the EUSDR should provide a participative structure and interfaces to the civil society.

In the participating states and regions, National Coordinators are invited to establish transparent and regular exchange fora for non-state EUSDR stakeholders (National Hearings), especially for civil society and local actors, and thereby developing their respective political culture of participation. Within the current governance of the EUSDR, civil society involvement matters especially with regard to multi-level governance and project development.² Currently, the D-LAP implements three actions of the Action Plan³:

- To improve the trust of citizens and stakeholders in political authorities
- To establish a Danube Civil Society Forum
- To ensure sufficient information flow and exchange at all levels

With the Danube Civil Society Forum already being set up and continuously growing in terms of members and capability, a potential update of the existing Action Plan should regroup those actions which are already being implemented by PA10 through the D-LAP and its partners.

- Make civil society participation and **integrated part of the EUSDR governance**, on the basis of the **Participation Day for local actors and CSOs** as an integrated part of each Annual Forum of the EUSDR and through the National Hearings in the participating states;
- Ensure the **parliamentary dimension** of the EUSDR through involvement of the EP as well as national and regional parliaments;
- Create a strong link and exchange of experience with **other macro-regional strategies and research on macro-regional strategies**;
- Involve **European bodies** dealing with the topic, e.g. EU Institutions or regional institutions in the Danube Region.
- Support **capacity building** in the Danube Region, in cooperation with the PA10 Danube Capacity Platform (D-CAP), in order to enable institutional memory, capacity to participate on regional, national, macro-regional, and supranational levels (e.g. public consultation processes for policies and programmes), sustain bottom-up processes for self-organization of civil society in a macro-regional context, and project development.

Ulm, 27 October 2015

² Cf. Council conclusions on the governance of macro-regional strategies of 21 October 2014, 16207/14

³ SEC(2010) 1489 final