

7<sup>th</sup> Danube Participation Day

# Youth in the EU Danube Strategy. Towards a common Vision.

WORKING GROUP 4:

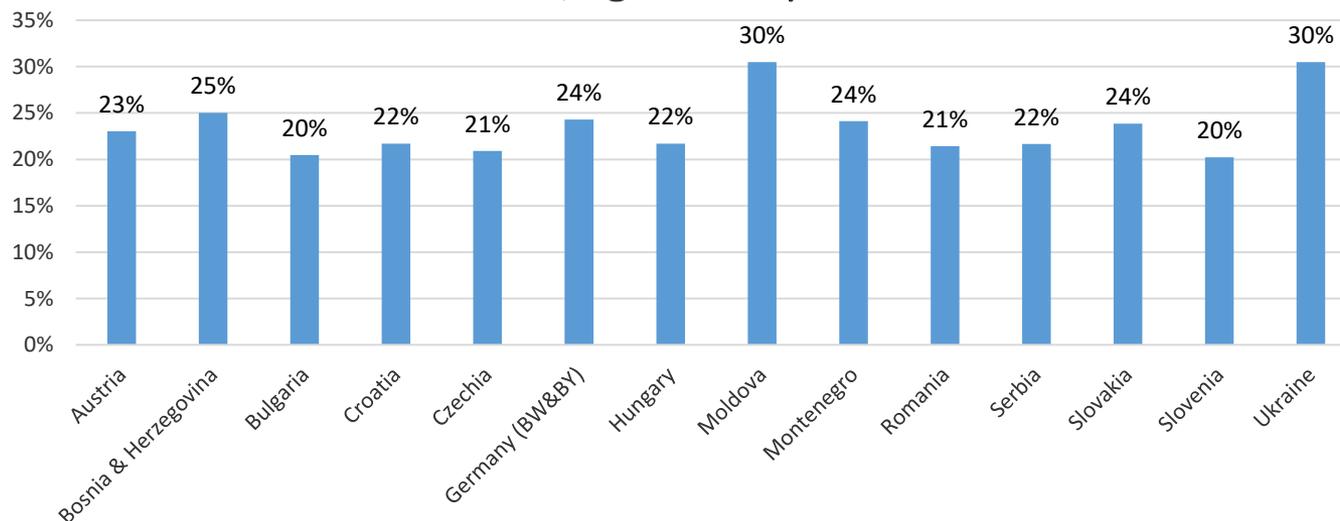
## Boosting Youth in the EUSDR Governance: Low Hanging Fruits?

Moderation: Robert Lichtner, Coordinator, Danube Strategy Point

Wednesday, 21 October 2020 / 12.00 – 13.00 CET

## Youth in the Danube Region states 2019\*

### 26 Million, age 18-35 years



\* Youth being defined as age group from 18-35 years

Source: Eurostat; numbers for MD from 2017; no data available for BA and UA > estimated

⚠️ data for Germany (BW & BY) on NUTS3 level refer to age 15-34



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- Revised EUSDR Action Plan – alignment to the European policy context of the new strategic agenda for the EU. Five strategic objectives of the EUSDR following the 5 Policy Objectives:
  1. Counteracting Climate Change
  2. Stimulating Sustainable Development
  3. Establishing and enforcing Knowledge Society, stimulating the Economy and fight Poverty
  4. Improving Mobility and Connectivity
  5. Enhancing Democracy, sound Administration and strong Involvement of **Civil Society and Youth**



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- **Boosting Youth in the EUSDR Governance: Low Hanging Fruits?**
  - Maximum success to be achieved with minimal effort?
  - Guidance Paper for Youth Participation
    - 3Cs: Capacity building ↔ Communication ↔ Cooperation
  
- **Claudia Singer, Coordinator, Priority Area 10 Institutional Capacity and Cooperation**



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Plenary session: *“Inclusion in the decision making processes at EUSDR.”*

- EUSDR Governance involvement
  1. Where / what (thematic) interfaces can be identified in the EUSDR governance with youth (for youth – by youth)?
  2. How to attract youth for EUSDR governance issues?
  3. (How) Can the EUSDR build on existing cooperation of youth organisations in the region? e.g. Danube Youth Network, Young Bled Strategic Forum, DPD, etc.



<https://www.sli.do>

#44522

<https://app.sli.do/event/jugzt2qy>



1. Where / what (thematic) interfaces can be identified in the EUSDR governance with youth (for youth – by youth)?

Future of the region

Institutional capacities

Participate in decision-making

Research

Enablement Transparency

# analyzing revised action plan

Mobility connectivity Competitiveness

Participation in institutions Education

Participation

#44522

Labour market

Environment & Sustainability

## 2. How to attract youth for EUSDR governance issues?

Getting more concrete

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Promotion of the EUSDR at the education institutions

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Approach young people at eye level

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Using actively the YGP

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I think we should start "bottom up" at national level, then go further "up"

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Take them serious

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invite them as a guest keynote speakers at the beginning of the governance meetings

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Pointing out how they are/could be influenced by eusdr governance issues

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Consult them for topics where young people have expertise

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Offer them real possibilities to speak up, contribute and co-decide

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Surveys

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using youth language

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Involve them into policy issues that are tangible

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### 3. (How) Can the EUSDR build on existing cooperation of youth organisations in the region? e.g. Danube Youth Network, Young Bled Strategic Forum, DPD, etc.

What about a roundtable of youth organisations within the forum?

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Invite feedback and criticism

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Smart networking of networks

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Coming back to my last comment, cooperation takes time and needs resources- does the coordination of the EUSDR have these resources ?

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Gaining feedback on how to do youth participation

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### WORKING GROUP 4:

## Boosting Youth in the EUSDR Governance: Low Hanging Fruits?

WG4 discussed various possibilities of involving youth and youth organisations in the governance structures of the EUSDR. The participants agreed that a boosting the participation will be key to achieve a better involvement of young people as a further stakeholder group. The estimated 26 Million young people between 18 and 35 years of age in the Danube Region build a critical mass that must not be neglected. A more active focus on and cooperation with youth in the EUSDR was also taken up in the revised Action Plan of the EUSDR which positions youth-focus as one of the five strategic objectives of the EUSDR. The group elaborated via Zoom and sli.do proposals on a) interfaces for participation, b) means of attraction for governance topics and c) capitalizing experience of existing networks in the Danube Region Strategy.

The first area of discussion focused on the question of where and which (thematic) interfaces in (the) EUSDR governance for and by youth (or: young people) can be identified. Here, the participants from National Coordinations suggested (or: proposed) a discussion on equal terms on opening up governance structures and processes to representatives of youth organisations (on observer levels or by inviting youth representatives as speakers to EUSDR core-stakeholders meetings), under the precondition of commitment and understanding of the processes. To achieve a stronger involvement, young people need to learn about the current status of the Strategy implementation and to understand the processes of European Territorial Cooperation. This could be done, for example, by a proactive analysis and positioning on the part of youth organisations on the revised Action Plan of the EUSDR. Also, youth could be more actively involved in topics in which they have experience and expertise (e.g. digitalisation). Involvement in concrete policy issues should be offered where tangible results are to (or: can) be expected in the first place.

The second question focused on how to attract youth for the governance of the EUSDR. The discussion provided valuable insights especially on bottom-up capacity building, in the sense of building youth capacity on governance issues first on national and regional levels, before advancing to discussions of transnational cooperation. As capacity building takes time, the establishment of cooperation networks does not happen overnight. Therefore, it is crucial to develop an understanding of the processes and cooperation on national and regional levels first. Communication (explaining and simple language) and education (on EU related issues) also play a crucial role in understanding cooperation networks of macro-regional strategies and territorial cooperation patterns. National contact points for youth could also give valuable inputs in this sense. The attendants also pointed out the question of the resource necessity on EUSDR side for capacity building towards the youth.

The last question focused on how to build on existing cooperation of youth organisations in the region, using and capitalising from experience of e.g. the Danube Youth Network, the Young Bled Strategic Forum, the DPD, etc. A so-called smart networking of networks was proposed as a possible approach. Here, several youth networks could cooperate with the EUSDR and also from other MRS (e.g. EUSAIR) and exchange ideas and experiences on the involvement (or: participation) in governance processes. The participants also suggested to run a discussion on how to better explain and understand the added value of macro-regional cooperation in the region. One concrete step in the process could be prepared for the next Annual Forum 2021 (under Slovak Presidency of EUSDR) by including youth organisations in the preparation for the forum by giving them the opportunity to co-create events (at the forum), with the youth rather being a part of forum's side-events (e.g. round table of youth organisations with the governance of EUSDR). To conclude, there are low hanging fruits when it comes to governance inclusion of young people in the EUSDR, but there are also fruits that hang on the top of the imaginary apple tree that require further skills and tools to reach them.