Declaration of the Danube Local Actors Platform:

In the context of the financial, economic, political and social crisis shaking up the foundations of the European Union, the decline of trust in political systems at the European, the national and the local level, hampering a stable and sustainable social and economic development, is evident and it´s consequences are dramatic.   
  
Civil Society, empowered Local Actors as well as Cities and Regions are key partners for the stabilization and development of the European Project as well as the Danube macro-region. They can make an important difference in finding solutions for common national or transnational challenges, if they are included in the governance at all administrative levels in the Danube Region.   
  
The stronger involvement of Civil Society trough consultative networks and platforms has repeatedly been stressed, as in the Commission’s report to the European Parliament (COM(2016)805 final)   
 on the development of macro-regional strategies .While this is of relevance for all member countries of the strategy, some have made significant progress in establishing structural participation, while others are just starting the process. It is therefore essential to further the exchange at all levels on the practical implementation of participative governance.  
  
This has been furthered in the Danube Region by both National Participation Days and the annual EUSDR Danube Participation Day, held back-to-back with the Annual Forum, where Local Actors of the whole Region have an opportunity to meet and exchange, to develop ideas and projects.  
  
However, European programmes and ESI-funds are not suitable for the financing of such smaller projects, events and cooperation, and are therefore unable to enhance the implementation of macroregional strategies on the ground by a relevant group of its stake-holders- Civil Society and local actors.  
We therefore call on the Member Countries of the EUSDR, the respective presidencies, the high level group, the European Commission and the European Parliament:  
- to ensure and support the organization of the EUSDR Participation Day as well as of National Participation Days ,   
- to consider the importance of small project funding instruments in the starting discussions on the next European cohesion policy, thus showing their willingness to truly engage, in the spirit of the European treaties, in new ways of governance for the benefit of the Danube Region and promote the idea of active citizenship.