

5th Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the Danube Local Actors Platform (AC D-LAP)

Bratislava 02 November 2016- Main Outcomes

As announced per mail on the 15th September, PA 10 held a D-LAP meeting in the framework and on the premises of the 3rd Participation Day in Bratislava on the 2nd of November 2016.

The topics of the agenda were:

1. Report on the last National Participation Days (Moldavia, Slovakia, Austria) as well as presentation of plans for future NPD's by DLAP-members:

- 09. September, Austria: Daniela Urschitz, PA 10 reported about the 2nd Austrian National Hearing for Civil Society, called "2. Österreichisches Dialogforum zur EU-Donauraumstrategie", which was held in September in Tulln, Lower Austria and presented the EUSDR as well as CSO projects in the Danube Region with the aim to broaden the number of Austrian Stakeholders in the EUSDR under the title "Innovative Forms of Cooperation in the Danube Region". Students attended the Participation Day for the first time (Annex 1)

- 19. September, Moldova: Valentin Ciobotaru from the association BIOS reported from the 1. National participation Day on the in Chisinau which was also attended by Stefan Lütgenau, DCSF and Daniela Urschitz, PA 10, as well as more than 80 representatives from Moldavian NGO's and local administrations; the vice-minister for regional affairs and National Coordinator of Moldova opened the discussion. Main points were presentation of projects and discussion about changes and opportunities in Moldova. (Annex 2)

- 21. October, Slovakia: Stefan Lütgenau, DCSF, reported about the 1st National Participation Day in Slovakia, organized by the Slovak governments Plenipotentiary for Civil Society Development, member of the D-LAP Martin Gierl in cooperation with the Slovak National EUSDR-Coordinator. Main points were the governance and participation of CSO's in the Slovak government, the Danube Strategy from the Slovak perspective and a discussion about ways how to bring CSO on board of the Slovak path in the Strategy, how to cooperate and interact. PAC 4, 7 and 9 also attended the meeting, while the Slovak members of PA's agreed to assist the process in the future. A stronger NGO input on the new partnership agreements for Slovakia for the next financing period was seen as a key goal for the mid-term future.

D-LAP members are invited to contact their respective National EUSDR Coordinator¹, to participate in national EUSDR coordination meetings and propose to hold National EUSDR Participation Days for the civil society and local actors. DCSF and PA 10 are ready to provide support. A letter from PAC 10 on this behalf will be sent to all NC's. (Annex 3)

¹ See <http://www.danube-region.eu/contact/contact-pacs-ncps>

2. Presentation and discussion of plans for the next participation Day in Budapest , October 2017:

- Following the first information at the last meeting of D-LAP in May 2016, the proposal to hold the next participation day in Budapest at the EUSDR-Annual Forum at and with the Andrassy University was met with approval; Accordingly, the organization was transferred officially at the end of the Participation Day 2016 from Slovakia (Plenipotentiary Martin Giertl) to Hungary (Andrassy University).

Mr. Barabas from Hungary informed that the Hungarian government was thinking about holding a participation day a few months before the Annual Forum so that the results could be better implemented in the Forum. The D-LAP advisory committee has worked in the last years towards a growingly stronger integration of the Participation Day in the Annual Forum, which was also approved by DG Regio (the participation Day becoming an official side-event on the EC Website), and will continue to do so.

He also proposed to think about a new format for the PD in order to “refresh” it, mentioning that there were not enough Slovak speakers at the 3rd DPD and proposing a more bottom up approach. The organisers however noted that there were 35 NGOs from Slovakia present, as well as the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak government for Civil Society Martin Giertl, presentations of Slovak projects in the Workshops and the Workshop “OGP- Open Government Partnership” organized by the office of the Plenipotentiary at the Participation Day in Bratislava.

Mr. Barabas proposed to work on how to create a Danube identity, which was met with approval by the DLAP, proposals for projects/activities are welcome.

He also proposed to have more regular exchange about developments concerning Civil Society between the Participation Days and asked for a report of the PD to the D-LAP, which was agreed upon by PA 10.

(see: <http://www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/news/3rd-participation-day-in-bratislava>)

Daniela Urschitz proposed the plans for the 4th PD at the PA 10 Steering Group meeting on 15th November for adoption. She also reported about the new PA 10 website, where information about ongoing work can be found.

3. Report on new developments in EUSDR and PA 10 concerning Civil Society and local actors- next steps for D-LAP:

- The Local Actors meeting on the 3rd of November on the premises of the Annual Forum together with Council of Danube Cities and Regions, Arge Donauländer, Danube Civil Society Forum and D-LAP is a new and innovative step towards participation of local actors in the governance of the Danube Region. At the last Annual Forum in Ulm 2015, the local actors- D-LAP, CoDCR and Arge Donauländer for the first time presented and distributed a common resolution about the role and challenges as well as needs of the local actors confronted with the European refugee crisis. 2016, the session will be dedicated to the building up of participative democracy and cooperation between regions, cities and the civil society in order to foster sustainable macro regional development , stability and growth.

Together, the central stakeholders of the Danube Strategy-and in general of social and economic sustainable development and innovation - should push for an adequate financing through national and EU-funds in the upcoming discussion on the new framework for cohesion policy.

Building upon the results, PA 10-D-LAP drafted an addendum to the Eisenstadt declaration, which we propose to endorse together with the Council of Cities and Regions (Annex 4)

- First Call of the Danube Programme DTTP

Urschitz reports on difficult situation, many projects were rejected, especially in the 4th pillar, only 10 as far as possible to say at this stage from Civil Society and local actors were accepted in the 2. stage of the first call. Many projects failed outright due to a lack of consideration of specific Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) technicalities. Civil Society involvement was indirectly tackled only in few projects, as well as innovative governance models. The 2. DTP call will be a one-step procedure, involving Eni funds for Ukraine and Rep. of Moldova. However, pillar 4.1, where Cities and civil Society as well as qualification could be founded, will be closed. (Annex 5)

- PA 10 will launch a new pilot project, “Danube Strategic Project Fund” in 2017, more informations can be found on PA10 website. (Annex 6)

- Urschitz reported on the EuroAccess website, which facilitates the search for funding possibilities and project partners <https://www.danube-euroaccess.eu/>.

- Roman Haken from the EESC reports on the connected topics, discussed in the Committee. Partnership in strategy making and participation of the citizens is highlighted in many opinions – EU Urban Agenda, Community Led Local Development, EU Forum for Sustainable Development. Important principles are declared in the EC document – Code of Conduct on Partnership. He points out the importance of the engagement of local authorities, national representatives in the activities and events of civil society. He missed most of the members of PA10 steering group at the Participation Day, because this is the event, in which the government administration can hear about the tools and expectations from the other sectors of society, and thanked those who were there.

(www.eesc.europa.eu)

4. Project Presentation:

Juraj Corba from the Central European Foundation CEF, Slovakia from reported about the project “Danube Fund” aiming at the cultural and social revival of the borders of the Danube, which is part of the Annual Forum in Bratislava; it will be presented later in the Day in the workshop on “Social Innovation”. He gave a short outline and asked for information on possible partners. The idea of the project that should take place next summer is to connect people and to use the river space in a better way, to improve the public spaces along the river and to connect NGOs, the public sector and business. (Annex 7)

- Erwin Slezak from Lower Austria and PA6 presented the project SONDAR-Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region, a network which develops activities for soil protection between science and practice, between administration and users of land, between education, arts and civil Society. The measures taken by the partners in the Danube Region are aimed at showing sustainable, quantitative and qualitative soil conservation through demonstration of best-practice examples. (Annex 8)
- Igor Studennikov from the Centre for Regional Studies, Odessa, Ukraine, presented a key output from the EU-funded project “Strengthening Civil Society Involvement in Assisting the Government with the Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region” – a Comprehensive Vision of Ukraine’s Involvement in the Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region” http://www.crs.org.ua/data/danube_strategy/vision_web.pdf In addition, he informed about the course of negotiations with Friedrich Ebert Foundation Ukraine about possible cooperation in holding two events in Ukraine – a Ukraine-Moldova meeting to discuss a common agenda in the context of the EUSDR involving the national coordinators, civil society and expert community, and a National Participation Day in the Danube Strategy in Odessa probably in May/June 2017.

Please save the date for the next D-LAP meeting: 21th March 2017!