

Conclusions

of the
»CITIZENS' VOICE: TOGETHER. STRONGER.«
international civil society meeting
Budapest, 29 September 2017

A year-long process of civil activities leading to the 6th Annual Forum of EUSDR came to its culminating point with an international civil society meeting bringing together more than 150 registered participants from 14 countries. European House, a Hungarian civil society organisation acted as the host assisted by several national CSOs.

A. The objectives of the event were to

- (a) contribute to the successful preparations and holding of the 6th Annual Forum of the EU Danube Region Strategy (Budapest, 18-19 October 2017) and
- (b) build contacts and promote joint actions among civil society actors of the four macro-regions.

B. During the plenary and working group sessions participants discussed several issues including

- (a) lessons learned aspects during the implementation of the EU macro-regional strategies with special emphasis on the EUSDR from a citizens' perspective;
- (b) macro-regional civil participation as a vehicle to promote the notion of active European citizenship;
- (c) communication matters actively assisted by social media as a means to make macro-regional policies understandable for citizens.

C. During the debates it was emphasized that

- (a) macro-regional policies can assist in shaping the future of Europe facing new challenges; strategic thinking is a prerequisite in this process;
- (b) this approach is correctly manifested in the agenda of the 6th Annual Forum of EUSDR: it includes regional energy security and infrastructural development issues and the Danube Transnational Programme;
- (c) civil society organisations should actively and creatively contribute to the elaboration of post-2020 cohesion policies.

D. Participants agreed on a number of follow-up points including

- (a) preparation of a shadow civil document on the Commission report on the implementation of macro-regional strategies (December 2016)
- (b) holding of a meeting in autumn 2018 of civil actors from the four macro-regions with the aim to contribute to the elaboration of the next biannual report of the Commission on the implementation of macro-regional strategies
- (c) initiation and collection of best civil practices for the promotion of EUSDR and the other macro-regional policies
- (d) submission of a proposal for the joint statement of the 6th Annual Forum of the EUSDR on the added-value of involvement with their bottom-up approach of civil society actors and other stakeholders in the implementation of the EUSDR.

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More information: info@europeanhouse.hu

