

COMMUNIQUE
of the
Best of Danube
national hearing
Budapest, 12 October 2018

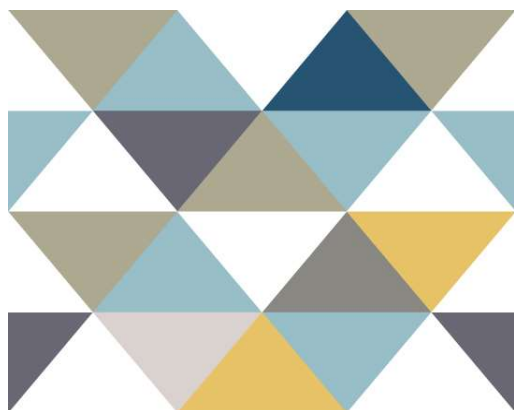
Based on the positive results of civil society involvement in the preparations of the 6th Annual Forum of EUSDR (Budapest, 18-19 October 2017) a national hearing titled "The Best of Danube" took place in Budapest on 12 October 2018 under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary and organised by European House. The event was attended by more than 60 representatives of civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

The primary purpose of the event was to raise awareness among Hungarian stakeholders first of all civil society actors on Danube-related issues thereby contributing to the successful preparations and holding of the 7th Annual Forum of EUSDR to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria on 18-19 October 2018.

The rich discussion carried out in a constructive atmosphere covered a wide range of (eco)tourism-related issues.

As a result participants came to the conclusion that

- development of tourism in the Danube region has the potential of contributing significantly to economic growth, job-creation, connectivity, environmental awareness and nature conservation, and to the well-being of the people; cross-border cooperation can be an effective tool in promoting this process;
- tourism should not be looked upon and considered as a purely economic venture; it has important human, cultural and environmental aspects as well;
- the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 provides an excellent occasion to discover the roots of our national and European identity; civil society organisations can be instrumental in preserving our common cultural heritage in the Danube region like the Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Ripa Pannonica as the joint attraction of Bavaria, Austria, Slovakia and Hungary on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List;
- through tourism people-to-people personal contacts can be promoted and enriched leading to further development of trust, mutual respect and understanding;
- sustainable tourism (also referred to as ecotourism) has excellent prospects in the Danube Region. As tourism affects all Priority Areas of the EUSDR, it is advisable to elaborate a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the region with close cooperation of all Priority Areas;
- green tourism should be encouraged and developed; it can take various forms including cycling tours, promotion of sustainable fishing or canoe tours along our rivers; education should play an important role in this regard especially among young people;



- the systematic use of the European Solidarity Corps initiative in the Danube region countries can contribute to the creation of the necessary human tourist infrastructure;
- the introduction of a Danube Card offering various discounts can be a popular instrument in promoting tourism in the EUSDR countries;
- exchange of best practices, peer-learning arrangements in tourism are one of the non-traditional ways of interaction among the macro-regions with active involvement of civil actors and other stakeholders.