

STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION - PRESENT AND FUTURE IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

The paper presents the progress made since the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region was adopted. The Strategy identified concrete actions and examples of projects in 11 thematic Priority Areas as a result of close collaboration between the Commission and the Danube Region countries. The Strategy facilitates new methods of working together to make the most of existing structures and resources. This cooperative method involves a wide range of stakeholders at national and regional level in Danube countries to drive the day-to-day implementation forward.

Key words: commitment, cooperation, Danube Region, opportunity, strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Danube macro-region covers 14 countries - including 8 EU Member States and Croatia. Home to over 100 million residents - one-fifth of the EU population, the region's countries differ in terms of economic strength, but are strongly interlinked, with potential for further integration and growth, as well as shared approaches to common challenges. [2] European Union Strategy for the Danube Region is an internal strategy of the European Union which have connected all three riparian states respecting the principles applied and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - no new institutions, no new funds without changes in legislation.[1]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

On 16.09.2010 was held in Brussels Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) when was adopted the "European Union Strategy for the Danube Region". Now, three years after the adoption of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Romania and other 13 countries have prepared The National Forum Matrix for implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

EUSDR is a long chain of consultations and debates that raised over 800 contributions that highlighted the wishes of the 14 countries affiliated to the Strategy.

The Danube states expressed their commitment to create a Danube macro-region, which is based on 4 pillars and focuses on 11 priority axes.

By 2020, all citizens of this macro-region should enjoy better prospects of life, economic development and prosperity of the local area, special conditions created for a higher education, reduce unemployment and increase employment in the labor market, modern and sustainable agriculture taking into account that Romania has pooled around 5.07 million hectares of agricultural land, representing 34.5% of total agricultural land nationwide. Danube macro-region motto is: "The Danube River of Opportunity"

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Year 2013 brings in Romania the second Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region that will be held on 27-28 October 2013, with the main topics of discussion:[5]

-Ensure and support the economic, social and cultural development of countries and regions

in the Danube basin in environmental compliance;

-Reduction of the gap between poorer regions and attracting new funds for the Danube Region;

-Connectivity (sustainable transport networks, energy, tourism, culture);

-Environmental protection, water resources and risk management;

-Prosperity and social – economic development (education, research, rural development, competitiveness, domestic);

-Improving governance (institutional capacity and internal security);

-Structural Funds by training technical and financial resources to achieve timely implementation feasibility studies SUERD in Romania, accompanied by a guide instrument flexible and smart guy for beneficiary future projects.

Today a few projects of the EUSDR started to take shape:

-Historic and symbolic link between Bulgaria and Romania. The Vidin-Calafat Bridge was built between Bulgaria and Romania to provide a vital link on a key priority route of the Trans-European Transport Network. The bridge, is a good example of bilateral cooperation.

-Removing shipwrecks and boosting sustainability. The Danube Shipwreck Removal Project aims to remove shipwrecks from the Danube, Sava and Tisa in Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria - improving navigation and ecological conditions so as to develop the inland waterway to its full potential.

-Connecting Danube SMEs. The Danube Region Business Forum, coordinated by the Austrian Chamber of Commerce, provides an important networking platform for over 300 SMEs.

-Research and Innovation . The European Commission's Joint Research Centre provides scientific support to the Strategy. A first joint Declaration of Danube Region Ministers for Research was signed in Ulm on 9 July 2012. The Commission fully supports this.

-Preventing floods. The Danube Floodrisk project promotes cooperation methods with 19

institutions in 8 Danube countries, sharing databases and flood mapping.

-Fighting crime. A police chief meeting in January 2012 launched an initiative to intensify cooperation among police authorities in the Danube Region, improving measures against river-related crimes (including organised crime), and setting up a transnational law enforcement platform.

2014-2020 SUERD encourage cooperation in the European Union and all the 14 countries , encouraging the expertise and involvement of governments, academia society, institutions, the bilateral chambers of commerce, employers' organizations, NGOs, county councils, mayors, etc., and not least SMEs. Extensive work is needed, involving appropriate combinations of institutions, sectors and countries. [4]

CONCLUSIONS

The European Union Strategy for the Danube River has started to show the first concrete results of innovative approaches of bilateral, interregional, inter-institutional and transnational cooperation in the fields of education, labour market and inclusion. [3]

A long-term and sustainable cooperation framework needs to be enabled which promotes decentralised but also coordinated work. A demand for professional exchange to develop ideas and to collaborate in concrete projects is clearly visible.

REFERENCES

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