The European Danube Academy (EDA) works on strengthening cooperation in science, culture, education, politics and media in the Danube area. Established in 2008, EDA contributes with its network and projects to a general international understanding and to the integration process in the South-Eastern European countries. Therefore, EDA also supports the 1st Danube Health Conference: the idea is to establish a permanent platform for the cooperation on issues related to health care and –policy in the Danube area. EDA offers readings and lectures of historical and current issues, organizes symposiums and conferences, also on behalf of third parties, and coordinates study programmes such as Master of Danube Studies in cooperation with universities and colleges in the Danube countries. These tasks are related to the Danube activities of the cities of Ulm and Neu-Ulm, the EU strategy for the Danube region, the Council of Danube Cities and Regions, the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg, the Baden-Württemberg Foundation and further private and public partners.

The “Gezondheids- en Servicestelle Oost Europa” (GSO, Administration and Service Centre Eastern Europe) of the Baden-Württemberg Foundation has been supporting the focused implementation of formulated strategic targets through concrete project funding ever since the Baden-Württemberg kick-off event on the EU Danube Region Strategy on 11 July 2011 at Stuttgart. Cooperating with numerous competent, mostly volunteering players in Baden-Württemberg, specific support is given to sustainable thinking and action through the establishment and enforcement of structures in the civil society, improvement of the infrastructure and networking in the Danube region. The strategy’s comprehensive approach, first and foremost, is providing an opportunity for connecting the individual Danube region projects in a network. The 1st Danube Health Conference sponsored by the GSO forms a part of the strategic projects. Together with the players in the health systems of the Danube region, strategies for solutions and guidelines for cross-border health issues will be established and thus a valuable contribution will be made to secure and improve health care and the concrete implementation of the targets of the EU Danube Region Strategy.

**Robert Bosch Stiftung**

Established in 1964, the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH is one of the major German foundations associated with a private company. It represents the philanthropic and social endeavors of Robert Bosch (1861-1942) and fulfills his legacy in a contemporary manner. The Robert Bosch Stiftung works predominantly in the fields of International Relations, Health and Education. Since the end of the 1990ies the Robert Bosch Stiftung funded numerous projects in the health and social service sector in different countries in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. In future these will be integrated into a multilateral European context. In doing so the Danube Health Conference supports the efforts for connecting Eastern and Western Europe. The Robert Bosch Stiftung funds the 1st Danube Health Conference with the strong belief that the conference will initiate multilateral exchange on health in the Danube Region, which will result in binding agreements for future regional collaboration.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

the EU strategy for the Danube region has set the course for the future of the Danube region in the past year – a future, in which Baden-Württemberg wishes to take an active part. The subject of health offers opportunities and perspectives for a more intensive cooperation. The health systems of the Danube countries are an essential part of the social structure. Despite differences existing in the health care systems, there are things we have in common across borders, such as the issues of government responsibilities and financial funding, impacts of the demographic developments on the health situation in the countries, issues of medical progress, the development of the disease spectrum and issues of qualification of the nursing staff.

The first Danube Health Conference focuses on exchanging information on the existing potential of health care for our citizens. We want to create a platform enabling us in the future to discuss health issues together. Our common goals should be a closer awareness of the political focuses on health in the Danube Region and help to improve their quality of life.

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