

---

## Danube River Show (DRS) – Interim Report (11/2013)

### A. Project Aims

1. Promotion of participation of local actors (local authorities; civil society, actors in the cultural sector) in the EUSDR in the Middle and Lower Danube.
2. Collection of qualified information on the status of local actors in the EUSDR in the Middle and Lower Danube.

### B. Spatial Dimension of the Project

1. Cities (regional centres) and their hinterland of 50.000 to 350.000 inhabitants in the Middle and Lower Danube.
2. Periphery areas of EUSDR participating states with a GDP below 25% of EU average. Cities in post-industrial transitional phase.

### C. Methodology

1. Sequence of 12/14 information events following the same model: a general introduction into the EUSDR, followed by 3 specific introduction into the issue of local administration, Culture and Civil Society as elements of the EUSDR. 3 working groups with focused discussion (local administration, Culture, Civil Society). Each event is closed in a final plenum presenting WG reports and outlook.
2. Information events follow a low hurdle concept offering local language(s) simultaneous translation in the plena and WGs in local languages with a (two) local experienced chairperson(s).
3. In border-situations (Esztergom/Šturovo; Ruse/Giurgiu) both languages could be used throughout the entire event.
4. Two track approach to:
  - offer insight information from a EUSDR stakeholder perspective;
  - collect information from participants via questionnaires (local languages), interviews and detailed WG reports from the local and international chair.
5. Qualified academic reporting (with interim work-in-progress report) on the state of the local actors, analysis and findings in a comparative approach.

### D. Project specialities

The Danube River Show is a joined programme bringing together local authorities (hosting cities), regional actors (Baden-Württemberg, Auton. Region Vojvodina), as well as network platforms (CoDCR, DCSF) and civil society and local stakeholders.

The DRS is the first and so far only project to explore the status, needs and expectations of local actors in territorial and social periphery areas of the EUSDR.

Interim and final report will create new knowledge on key actors and areas of the EUSDR.

## **E. Visibility**

The DRS is a project of visibility in the EUSDR due to its presence in a large number of cities and regions as well due to its outreach to key stakeholders and networks in the Middle and Lower Danube. The DRS has been highly welcomed at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum of the EUSDR in Bucharest, October 2013.

## **F. The first four DRS Stops**

### **1. Esztergom/Šturovo**

**Venue:** Hungary, Esztergom, City Hall

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2013

**Number of Participants:** 47 Pers.

#### **Speakers:**

*Tétényi Éva, Mayoress of City Esztergom*

*Peter Langer, Ulm and Neu-Ulm*

*Daniela Stoikovic Jovanovic, Danube Civil Society Forum*

*Méhes Márton, Collegium Hungaricum Wien*

*Daniela Stoikovic Jovanovic, Novi Sad, Serbia*

*Gábor Schneider, Stockholm, Budapest*

#### **Main Outcomes:**

This first stop was considered as a “pilot” station and was of special importance. Within the framework of this event were experiences made and suggestions of improvement collected. The major determined difficulty is the different background of the participants. Some of them have not ever made any experiences with the EUSDR and others already work in EUSDR related projects or on concepts. The working groups were participated by a very heterogeneous company but everybody had their own project or a project idea or some concrete need for Danube-cooperation. This fact initiated an active and effective discussion during the workshops. The strategy is at local and regional as well as at state level the most popular presumably because of the better communication in these levels. We can determine that the private sector and the civil stakeholders are not convinced like the above mentioned sectors. The reason for that are probably not only the financial difficulties but also the communication problems. The participants referred about problems regarding the transparency of the EUSDR: EUSDR needs more publicity in the national and regional media, a better coordination and co-operation between the stakeholders and existing intuitions.

The cross-border event convened (Hungary/Slovakia) local stakeholders

## **2. Novi Sad**

**Venue:** Serbia, Novi Sad, City Hall

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> of June, 2013

**Number of Participants:** 55 Pers.

**Speakers:**

*Assoc. Prof. Siniša Sević PhD, President of the City Assembly of Novi Sad*

*Milivoj Vrebalov, Vice-President of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*

*Prof. Pavle Sekerus, Ph.D Vice-Rector of the Novi Sad University*

*Miodrag Poledica, State secretary for the Serbian Ministry of Transport, PAC of PA1b*

*Peter Langer, Ulm and Neu-Ulm*

*Stefan August Lütgenau, Danube Civil Society Forum*

*Méhes Márton, Collegium Hungaricum Wien*

*Daniela Stoikovic Jovanovic, Novi Sad, Serbia*

*Gábor Schneider, Stockholm, Budapest*

**Main Outcomes:**

A major outcome of the conference was that there was a strong support for the rationale of EUSDR. Especially new co-operation opportunities, projects would be expected from the strategy. Concrete project ideas, concepts with available financial resources and better information service were mentioned as key challenges. There was an almost unanimous support for the concept of EUSDR. Furthermore, all groups of stakeholders showed a very positive attitude towards the strategy despite the growing critics that they had not seen any concrete achievements of the strategy so far in Vojvodina. Assessing the participants' expectations from EUSDR almost 73% of the respondents indicated that EUSDR should help them to participate in international projects. High expectations were given that EUSDR should promote networks in the field of culture and education as well. In the thematic working groups stakeholders emphasized the need for more concrete guidelines and best practices in order they could strengthen their participation in international projects.

## **3. Smederevo**

**Venue:** Serbia, Smederevo, Regional Center for Professional Development in Education

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 2013

**Number of Participants:** 25 Pers.

**Speakers:**

*dr Jasna Avramovic, Mayor of Smederevo*

*Ms Natalija Matunovic from the Serbian European Integration Office*

*Peter Langer, Ulm and Neu-Ulm*

*Stefan August Lütgenau, Danube Civil Society Forum*

*Daniela Stoikovic Jovanovic, Novi Sad, Serbia*

*Gábor Schneider, Stockholm, Budapest*

*Andrej Fajgelj, Cultural Center of Novi Sad*

**Main Outcomes:**

The Danube River Show event in Smederevo brought some very interesting outputs like for instance the fact that attendances of Smederevo had had the most experience about EUSDR. On the other hand the general knowledge of EUSDR was not higher than in the other stops, where the participants could indicate significantly lower degree of experience in EUSDR. Many of the participants were asking for general information about EUSDR e.g. who was the national contact point, where to receive information etc. Furthermore, attendances were especially interested in the functioning of EUSDR, the operation of PACs. They were more interested in the local, regional and the national relation of the strategy: what kind of impact could EUSDR have on Smederevo and Serbia. Related the expectations respondents gave clear messages that they would like to have concrete project initiatives and opportunities especially in areas of culture and education.

**4. Ruse/Giugiu**

**Venue:** Bulgaria, Ruse, City Hall

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, 2013

**Number of Participants:** 50 Pers.

**Speakers:**

*Nicolae Barbu, Lord Mayor Giurgiu*

*Strahil Karapchanksi, Deputy Mayor of Ruse*

*Peter Langer, Ulm and Neu-Ulm*

*Stefan August Lütgenau, Danube Civil Society Forum*

*Méhes Márton, Collegium Hungaricum Wien*

*Prof. Dr. Monica Vlad, Sibiu/Hermannstadt, Romania*

**Main Outcomes:**

Ruse introduced the candidacy project of the city in close collaboration with Giurgiu for the European Capital of Culture programme in 2019 as the key issue regarding the region's future role in the EUSDR. All international co-operations such as the Ruse and its surroundings relation to EUSDR was mentioned in the frame of this candidacy. The preparation for the application seemed to be the main facilitator in Ruse's participation and involvement in EUSDR. The audience showed a strong interest about EUSDR. Many participants said that forums such as DRS conference where they could express their own opinion had been completely missing in previous consultations and were a unique experience for them. Co-operations between municipalities and state authorities were at a very low level. Participants indicated three major expectations from the EUSDR. They would like if the strategy could promote their participation in international co-operations and projects at first place. Furthermore, they expect from EUSDR that it provides wide range of information and it supports co-operations in the fields of culture and education. Respondents gave a very positive feedback regarding the openness and transparency of the programmes and aims of EUSDR.

## **G. Next Steps**

In 2014, DRS Stops are planned for Vukovar, HR, Tulcea, RO, Galati, RO, Ismail and Odessa UA.

The DRS will hold a final concluding conference in 2014. This conference will convene high ranking representatives from the EU Commission, the government of Baden Württemberg, Land Vienna, Vojvodina, mayors of Danube Cities that hosted the DRS as well as representatives from SME, the cultural sector and civil society.

This conference will at the same time serve as a prelude to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Forum of the EUSDR in Vienna and is closely coordinated with the Austrian NCPs (Federal Chancellery, Foreign Ministry), the City of Vienna as well as the PAC 10.

On the occasion of the conference the final report of the DRS will be presented and discussed in the framework of the EUSDR and the new financial framework 2014-2020.

Eisenstadt, 5 November 2013

Stefan August Lütgenau

