

## Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy

**Bucharest, 7 – 8 March 2019**

### Workshop B

### EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

#### Introduction

Within the framework of the four EU macro-regional strategies, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is the second largest dimension and it is based on the cooperation model developed by the EU Baltic Sea Strategy (adopted in 2009).

EUSDR is adapted to the specificity of the Danube region and comprises a number of fourteen states: nine EU Member States: Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany (through Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg Länder), Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and five non-EU states: Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine).

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is a Community instrument for macro-regional cooperation of the riparian states for the economic and social development of the Danube macro-region by strengthening the implementation of EU policies and legislation in the region.

EUSDR is a political initiative of Romania and Austria, promoted by a joint letter at prime minister level (June 2008) and addressed to the President of the European Commission.

The European Commission has drafted a Communication on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and an Action Plan, presented on 8 December 2010 and adopted by the EU General Affairs Council on 13 April 2011. The European Council endorsed the Danube Strategy on 24 June 2011.

#### Objectives and fields of action of EUSDR

EUSDR is structured around four major pillars (according to the targeted objective) and eleven priority areas (coordinated by two states or Länder in the region).

#### Pillar I: Interconnection of the Danube Region

1. Improving mobility and inter-modality;
  - 1.a. inland waterways (coordinators Austria / Romania);
  - 1.b. rail, road and air routes (Slovenia / Serbia coordinators);
2. Encouraging and developing sustainable energies (coordinators Hungary / Czech Republic);
3. Promotion of culture and tourism, direct contacts between people (coordinators Bulgaria / Romania).



## Pillar II: Protecting the environment in the Danube Region

4. Restoration and maintenance of water quality (coordinators Hungary / Slovakia);
5. Environmental risk management (coordinators Hungary / Romania);
6. Conservation of biodiversity, landscapes and air and soil quality (coordinators Bavaria / Croatia).

## Pillar III: Increasing Prosperity in the Danube Region

7. Developing knowledge-based society through research, education and information technologies (coordinators Slovakia / Serbia);
8. Supporting the competitiveness of enterprises, including the development of clusters (coordinators Baden-Württemberg / Croatia);
9. Investing in people and capacities (coordinators Austria / Moldova).

## Pillar IV: Strengthening the Danube Region

10. Improving institutional capacity and cooperation (coordinators Austria / Slovenia);
11. Work to promote security and address serious crime issues (coordinators Germany / Bulgaria).

## Objectives proposed by Romania

During the EUSDR presidency, under the motto "Strengthening Cohesion for a Common Prosperity in the Danube Region", Romania aims to optimally exploit the conditions offered by the partial overlap of this mandate with that of the Presidency of the EU Council by creating new opportunities for revitalization of the EUSDR Strategy, through the development of new cooperation processes between the actors involved in its implementation.

The main objective proposed by Romania is the re-launch of EUSDR, both politically and technically.

At political level, it is desirable to reintroduce the EUSDR Strategy on the national political agenda of the participating States, and at the technical level, it is intended to revise and upgrade the EUSDR Action Plan by means of the related mechanisms.

In this respect, Romania will co-ordinate, with the support of the EUSDR Secretariat, a complex multi-level consultation process at national and regional levels, in cooperation with DG Regio / COM.

Another important objective is to increase the visibility of EUSDR by promoting successful local, national and regional projects with the aim of demonstrating the added value of the regional cooperation framework to eliminate development gaps and to increase interconnectivity among states participating in macro strategies-regional EU.

## The four priority themes and directions of action

*Talks: proposals to make those directions of action more efficient*



1. Improving connectivity and mobility in the Danube Region by promoting transport, tourism, digitization and people-to-people contacts;
2. Reinvigorating and consolidating EUSDR in the process of updating the Action Plan by creating synergies between all stakeholders in the Danube Region and the European Commission as well as by operationalizing the Focal Point for Technical Assistance;
3. Exchanges of experience and best practices on the EUSDR Priority Areas on legislative issues, in close collaboration with public administrations, social actors, academia and businesses;
4. Developing transnational clusters through the exchange of good practices between entities participating in EUSDR.

