

Dear Sir and Madam,

Dear colleagues!

In the Commission's Communication on the EU-Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 10 (Institutional Capacity and Cooperation) has been entrusted with a special action, namely the establishing of a Civil Society Platform. The Commission states: "Action- to establish a Danube Civil Society Forum as a pillar of Civil Society participation in the Strategy. Such projects could offer experience within the field of civic as well as cross-border and trans-national networking. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and its equivalents in partner countries should play a key role, especially regarding business, employment, labour and social issues".

In the last few month, PAC 10 has had a series of contacts with the Commission and relevant European stake-holders in the domain of Civil Society, which resulted in the development of a blue-print for the integration and institutionalisation of such a platform in the Danube Strategy.

If Civil Society is to play an effective role in the development of a socially and economically successful strategy in the Danube Region, we have to integrate the strategically important organisations into the mainstream of the working structure of the Danube strategy.

Therefore, we propose that PAC's invite thematically relevant organisations of the Civil Society, working on a transnational or European level, to be members of the steering committees or workshops of their priority Areas.

These organisations should work as an interface between the strategic top-down approach represented by NPC's, PAC's and Steering Committees, the project-oriented Working Groups and the bottom-up role of Civil-Society Organisations in Member Countries and at European level and support the integration of the specific interests of civil society in the development of the Danube Strategy at the core of the strategy's organisation.

The platform will consist of those organisations that take part, at the invitations of the PAC's, in the strategy for the Danube Region.

PA 10 would take on, together with European Institutions and umbrella Organisations of the Civil Society, the organisation of a platform meeting once a year, where the different civil-society organisations would report on their work within the different Priority Actions of the Danube Strategy.

We would like, together with the Commission, to present the Platform at the first annual conference on the EU- Strategy for the Danube Region in Regensburg, on 27.-28. November 2012, and start setting the platform up in the first half of 2013.

Could you therefore please inform us as soon as possible about the following :

- Does the Steering Committee or Working groups of your Priority Area include members from one or more thematically related Civil-Society Organisations?
- If yes, could you please name them?
- If no, could you identify one or more Organisations which could become part of your organisational structure?

For your support, we enclosed a list of relevant Organisations active in the Danube Region.

PA10-Coordinator Kurt Puchinger and myself are looking forward to working together with you on this cross-cutting yet central aspect of the strategy.

Sincerely yours,

Daniela Urschitz

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