

Call-Declaration of Danubian Local Communities, Universities and NGOs supporting the CLDR initiatives and major projects

CLDR Romania, association representative at national and European levels, established in November 2014, and affiliated to the **Council of Danube Cities and Regions (CoDCR)**, appreciates that the deployment of the new edition of the *Annual EUSDR Forum* in Ulm (29-30 October 2015) and the *Danube Participation Day* would deserve to be commonly better valued with the most appropriate institutional partners from the Danube Member States, especially with the members of the so-called trilateral group composed from Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania.

In this respect, as the high representatives of the local communities and the corporate members of the Urban Platform - Vienna agreed in December 2013, we estimate that now is highly needed a more opened, thematically consistent, integrative and transparent approach, developed in the spirit of an extended territorial co-operation, highly required by the **European Commission - DG REGIO**, the **EUSDR Institutional Co-operation Coordinator - Municipality of Vienna** and **CoDCR**. At this time, it is the right moment of achieving a real Danube added-value and of fulfilling a beneficial cross-road between the concept of Europe's Industrial Renaissance through the SMART specialisations and the implementation of both EUSDR and strategic Investment Fund, supported by the President of the European Commission and the European Investment Bank.

Our organisation and its prestigious corporate partners believe that the Romanian state together with local communities and relevant pro-Danubian civil society organisations should picture themselves in a **much more homogenous, coherent and disciplined way** than it was the case until now. In order to reorient mainly towards major complex projects aimed to find rapid solutions to current or emerging challenges, CLDR kindly requests from the European Commission - DG REGIO, and from the Romanian Government - the President of the National EUSDR Forum/Romanian Ministry of European Affairs, that the local necessities and aspirations to be better consolidated and integrated in a unitary perspective.

In view of the forth-coming EUSDR Forum in Ulm, as well as of the previous numerous forums and large consultations from the last three years, with the Danubian Embassies, we succeed to reunite a short list of project proposals, which the Romanian Government should support and promote, especially in the context of the institutional lobby exercise to be deployed in Ulm. This is even more necessary, as it resulted after consultation with the partner associations of Danubian communities from Bulgaria and Serbia, as we plan to promote within the ARGE Donau Conference hosted by the next Ulm Forum.

- **"Danube Perls"** - Advancing the natural, cultural, historic heritage of the Danube through accessibility – proposed by CODATU Association in partnership with CLDR and other Danubian partners
- **"Danube ComIn"** – Building a regional identity through Danubian cities – proposed by Health & Social Tourism Association in partnership with CLDR and other Danubian partners
- **"Danube Traverses"**– Composition of traffic infrastructure of the Lower Danube – proposed by the Technological Center Sofia in partnership with CLDR and other Danubian partners
- **"Danubian Knowledge and Innovation University"** – proposed by "Romania de Maine" Foundation in partnership with CLDR and other Danubian partners

- **"Danube Satellite Center"** – Using satellite surveillance system for identification of non compliant waste landfills contaminated sites for the Danube Region – proposed by the National Agency for Environmental Protection in partnership with CLDR and other Danubian partners.

Following our recent visit payed to main European decision-makers in Brussels, we clearly understood that each **flagship or major project** should be supported by at least one priority area or Member State. In this respect, we already submitted a **Memorandum** to the **Ministry of European Funds**, which will represent the Romanian Government to the EUSDR Forum in Ulm, and we recommended a structured consultative mechanism with the **EUSDR Consultative Council** and mainly **CLDR Romania**. It will be highly regrettable if Romania would not enjoy this wonderful opportunity and will not announce in time the future priority projects, obviously after consultations with civil society relevant organisations and academia.

Also, as we are delighted to benefit of the personal support of more Members of the Parliament from the **Belgrade Pro-Danube MEPs Group** in Romania and in the European Parliament, we consider that the support from the Romanian central and local authorities for at least two strategic Romanian initiatives within the **Strategic Investment Plan** - "Danube Traverses" and "Danube Pearls" - remains highly needed and relevant for the European institutional lobby which we have to initiate.

However, we could not ignore that in the last nine years the absorption rate of the **Structural Funds in Romania** was the lowest in the European Union. In order to improve this process and radically change the situation, which increases the gap between upper and lower Danube areas, the territorial co-operation is to be stimulated and encouraged, mainly at general political level and by good practices promoters and knowledge transfer accelerators, as for example **Steinbeis Foundation**, hopefully in closer co-operation with the Romanian Academy and the EUSDR International Honorary Chair "Jean Bart".

Through this common statement, on the occasion of the future CoDCR Congress in Ulm, we are committed to express, in the bottom up spirit of the Danube Strategy, these requirements and aspirations and succeed to win together a more enlightened place for the entire Danube macro-region.

For conformity,
Secretariat of CLDR Romania
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