



## Young Citizens Danube Network

### Young Citizens Danube Network Declaration Budapest 2011

June 17th to June 19th 2011 saw the gathering of the young generation of the Danube area in Budapest, Hungary for the conference “*The Young Generation of the Danube Area as a Key to the European Integration*”. The aim of the conference was to exchange ideas about the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and voice youth’s dedication to actively participate in shaping the region’s and their own future.

The youth conference, hosted at the Andrásy University Budapest and facilitated by the Young Citizens Danube Network (YCDN), brought together over 60 participants and observers, over 20 YCDN Team members and over 10 guest speakers. In the course of three days they worked on four workshops, titled as follows: (A) *National identity, myths and feeling*, (B) *Protecting the environment in the Danube region*, (C) *Building prosperity in the Danube region* and (D) *Strengthening the Danube region*.

#### Participants of the conference

**recognized** the lack of youth involvement in, and underdevelopment of, the civil society in the Danube region;

**affirmed** the need for an all-inclusive youth network in the region that will encourage and facilitate youth involvement on the regional and European level;

**welcomed** the foundation of the Young Citizens Danube Network and supported its aim to assume the role of the regions youth network;

**encouraged** the Young Citizens Danube Network to expand on the youth topics touched upon in the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region

**encouraged** the Young Citizens Danube Network to seek cooperation with other youth networks and educational institutions all over Europe

**called** for relevant stakeholders to be more receptive of the youth movement

**called** for more opportunities for youth to become involved in decisions that affect them at individual and systemic levels.

In the above mentioned workshops, participants of the conference discussed and proposed the ways of youth involvement within the framework of the four pillars of the EU Danube strategy. The summary of the proposals goes as follows:

### **Workshop A: National identity, myths and feeling**

Facilitated by: Ms. Anja Ster

Guest speaker: Ms. Dr. Andrea Meissner

Participants proposed:

1. To increase academic exchange of students in the Danube region. They in particular welcomed the idea of an academic Danube Studies Program as already proposed in the Action Plan of the European Commission. Such a program should be conducted by Andr assy University Budapest in cooperation with partners such as the European Danube Academy;
2. To foster and develop internship programs for youth in the Danube region;
3. To promote minority inclusion policies by forming school exchange networks in the countries of the Danube region;
4. To focus on the common heritage of the Danube region by organizing intercultural heritage camps (or establishing the "Danube Youth Parliament") and other projects that enable active participation in reconsidering the common history of the Danube region.

The list of registered workshop A participants: Oana BRANDA, Jan BUCAR, Tereza CIZKOVA, Gabor CSOMOR, Ines GRUBER, Adriana GUERRENABARENA, Mario LEHLBACH, Jan LITAVSKI, Zoriana MELNYK, Simona OBREJA, Katharina OKULSKI, Kalman POCZA, Aleko STOYANOV and Klara SUCHER

### **Workshop B: Protecting the environment in the Danube region**

Facilitated by: Peter Kumer and Robert Randzik

Guest speaker: Ms. Ana Borisvaljevic and Mr. Jaka Kranjc

Participants proposed:

1. To implement actions that stimulate commercial production units to create better designs, trying to minimize end-of-life waste generation. Additionally, implement actions that stimulate or selectively enforce extended producer responsibility;
2. To raise general awareness and exchange of best practices in solving environmental issues in the Danube Basin among decision makers at all levels and among NGOs and the young population of the region;
3. Considering the growth of the population and energy needs in the Danube region, sustainable and reasonable solutions for energy supply must be found as soon as possible. As the use of nuclear energy is against human well-being and the use of carbon energy contributes to climate change most of electricity generation projects should be turned towards the use of renewable energy systems;

4. Although we certainly agree on the motto 'better hydropower plants than nuclear ones', we recommend to limit the size of hydropower plants planned by the EUSDR taking into account the extremely adverse consequences of large dams. Also, we underline the need to avoid high-sensitive areas for the construction of hydropower plants. Furthermore, we demand more investments in technology improving the efficient use of water energy and the development of underwater turbines;

5. At the pyramid of the renewables, we encourage projects that plan the use of those renewables with the smallest impact on the river ecosystem and environment.

The list of registered workshop B participants: Hunor BAJTALAN, Petra BALASSY, Marija GLAVINIĆ, Anna-Lena GUSKE, Matea LUKAČ, Irina MATETOVICI, Jožica MATJAŠIĆ, Aneliya PANEVA, Emanuel UTA and Irena ŽILIĆ

### **Workshop C: Building prosperity in the Danube region**

Facilitated by: Akos Toth

Guest speaker: Mr. Dietmar Meyer

Participants proposed:

1. To advocate for financing of educational programmes targeting secondary school students about the Danube region with special emphasis on sustainability;
2. To advocate for the introduction of results-oriented budgeting in all of the countries of the region;
3. To propose and promote obligatory one semester exchange programmes for university students in any of the countries of the Danube region;
4. To propose and promote internship programmes for students of economics, political economy (etc.) in Ministries of Finance in the countries of the Danube region.

The list of registered workshop C participants: Cecilia BRAUN, Tobias GERHARD, Adela GONGEA, Bálint MENYHÉRT, Elena MOISEI, Ana PERIĆ, Victoria PUIU, Natalia RENČIĆ, Marc SOIGNET and Andrea TOPIĆ

### **Workshop D: Strengthening the Danube region**

Facilitated by: Ivan Matic

Guest speaker: Ms. Edit Bauer (MEP), Ms. Ostalinda Maya Ovalle and Mr. Mihai Cazacu

Participants proposed:

1. Taking note of the fact that 70 – 90 % of the victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) are younger than 28 years we propose to initiate youth targeted and by youth implemented awareness raising campaigns on counter-trafficking. We in particular suggest for campaigns to target teenage girls and Roma communities in countries of destination;

2. To advocate for a stronger involvement of the Danube youth in providing peer assistance to youth victims of trafficking in human beings through establishing youth relief groups in most vulnerable geographical areas;
3. To support and encourage YCDN to continue facilitating youth conferences/seminars/trainings targeting young experts in issues pertaining to trafficking in human beings in the future;
4. To advocate for the establishment of a comprehensive database on groups particularly vulnerable to trafficking in human beings in the Danube region.

The list of registered workshop D participants: Arjola Arapi, Mariya BESKOVA, Sanja DZELETOVIĆ, Katheryna GORLENKO, Kathrin MERFORT, Mimi SHISHKOVA, Sorina Sein, Monika SUKNAIĆ, Daniela VACARETU and Manjola Veizi

On the basis of the preceding policy recommendations and project proposals, the YCDN will formulate its strategy for better involvement of the young generation in the Danube region. The strategy development meeting has been scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup> 2011 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

The YCDN calls for more support on all political levels and strongly emphasizes the need for institutionalizing the Young Citizens Danube Network with help of the regional, national and supranational level. This will help to create a platform for a successful youth involvement, to strengthen civil society, and to implement the Danube Strategy in an efficient and effective manner.

The YCDN in particular encourages the Priority Area Leaders to include the YCDN in their steering committees (in particular for Priority Areas 7, 9 and 10) and thus showing their dedication and will to foster involvement of the young generation.

The YCDN is grateful to all its partners who made the first YCDN conference in Budapest happen and culminate into a success. We wish to deepen this cooperation in the future for the benefit of the youth in the Danube region.

We in particular thank the participants of the conference, the best of the Danube youth, for demonstrating a strong desire to get involved, for voicing their concerns and ideas regarding our future and in particular for assuring us that this future lies in good hands.

United in Diversity. Along the Danube. In Europe.