

2nd Participation Day

Shared History - Common Future

Ulm 28 October 2015

Workshop: Participation and Governance

Participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) as well as civic participation, the participation of citizens in Fora, hearings and initiatives has become a growing element of the European democratic system.

With the Lisbon Treaty, participation became an integral part of the European Union and its policies. Article 11 of the TEU and articles 15 and 174 of the TFEU defining the transparent dialogue with and participation of civil society as well as articles 300-304 of the TFEU defining the role of the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee in that respect.

The Council of the European Union called on member states to encourage a strong involvement of civil society¹ in macro-regional strategies.

With regard to Participation of CSO in EUSDR we do not deal *if* but with the question *how* to shape participation in a multiple-level policy like the EUSDR best. Building on the EU principles of participation, transparency and subsidiarity participation should take place on all levels of the EUSDR: the regional, the national, and the supra-national level.

Participation is not only a right but also places a heavy burden on CSO to follow, distant, complex process that are often no too close to the CSO agendas and competences. Furthermore participations can only take place if state actors on all levels are open trustful and reactive in their exchange with CSOs.

In the work shop we would like to discuss Participation of Civil Society in the context of macro-regional strategies, think through the current concepts and possible obstacles to participation and look at various initiatives and strategies applies in this context.

Anders Bergström, Priority Area Coordinator and Horizontal Action Coordinator in the Baltic Strategy will give an input on the local dimension of participation from the Baltic experience. Iva Taralezhkova, Board chair, Citizen Participation Forum – a Bulgarian NGO Network, will share NGOs' experience to improve citizen participation in Bulgaria by an Index measuring the environment and the results it produces as well as the findings and recommendations of the first Index Report while Stefan Lütgenau will give an input on participation in the EUSDR in general.

The three inputs are to be embedded in a vivid participative debate of the participants on their view, experience, needs and visions with regard to participation.

¹ Council Conclusions on the governance of macro-regional strategies, 13374/14, 09. October 2014.