

# EU MACROREGIONAL STRATEGIES CONFERENCE ON MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

## “KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR”

September 20th-22nd 2017, Portorož, Slovenia

### Conclusions & Recommendations

During the 2017 Mediterranean Coast and EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week the **EU MACROREGIONAL STRATEGIES CONFERENCE ON MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION – KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR** brought together for the first time media people, practitioners, academia, general public and interested stakeholders from the four EU macroregional strategies (Baltic, Danube, Adriatic-Ionian and Alpine) to discuss how to improve the visibility of macro-regional strategies in the public sphere and how to strengthen the media support to macro-regional endeavours.

As globalisation has made countries more interdependent problems must now be addressed across borders. This calls for a reflection on how macro-regions, as new functional areas, can contribute to improving the implementation of EU policies.

The emergence of macro-regional strategies (MRS) has been driven by a number of EU countries and regions as a complement to traditional national policies on territorial management. Macro-regional strategies provide regional building blocks for pursuing EU-wide policy, marshalling national approaches into a more coherent implementation at the EU level.

Without proactive communication, no effort is really seen from the outside, by the EU citizens and stakeholders.

During the Slovenian presidency of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) in 2016, a proposal **to create a single horizontal pillar for all 4 EU macro-regional strategies** was presented – **"the media/communication" pillar** – that would help creating sufficient visibility for macro-regional strategies' joint endeavours and understanding, and support for the exchange of ways of thinking and acting within the macro regions.

In this common challenge, the media play a crucial role. As the macro-regional strategies address a functional area that is bigger than regional and national areas, and smaller than the EU, the visibility and recognition of macro-regional effects crucially depend on access to all media communication channels in the region.

At the media and communication conference “KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR” **recommendations** were built around 3 topics:

1. Creation of single horizontal pillar for all 4 EU macroregional strategies on media and communication is worth trying. The need to communicate and willingness to develop communication was underlined by participating states, regions, civil society and stakeholders.

The opportunities were identified in addressing better focused target groups, with clearer, more relevant messages, achieving common branding and more innovative use of social media.

2. Based on a comparative analysis of communication strategies of 4 EU macro-regional strategies and a road map how to optimise communication three levels of possible optimization were addressed:
  - a. Common Content,
  - b. Participative Processes and
  - c. Innovative Tools.
3. *To do the right thing* content shared by all strategies and use of common communication tools should be developed and *greed*, and *to do the thing right* the use of participative process and of innovative tools should be the way. In 2018 decisions on shall we do it, who could do it and how to organize should be discussed and adopted.

To implement the recommendations it was **concluded** that the Macroregional strategies High Level Group (EU28) should:

1. Invite responsible for governance and communication in all 4 macroregional strategies to:
  - a. act in line with above recommendations
  - b. assess progress made in September 2018
2. Invite European Commission to further support improvement of macro-regional strategies visibility & communication, also with financial support.

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