

SECOND MACRO-REGIONAL CITIZEN AGORA

Brussels, 17 December 2024

Towards a macro-regional civil strategy BACKGROUND NOTE

European House (EH) is a Budapest-based pro-European civil society organisation set up in 1990. Its main objective is to develop active European citizenship and identity based on shared values, foster EU ownership among citizens and promote participatory democracy. EH is an active player on European level: it promotes awareness-raising debates, contributes to EU agenda setting and fosters civic engagement. EH seeks to contribute to the creation of an active, strong, and influential civil society both in HU and Europe using synergies. EH promotes contacts and interactions among CSOs of the four EU macro-regions thereby contributing to shaping and implementing EU macro-regional strategies. A civil pillar of this process: a proposal for a macro-regional civil strategy is under preparation. This programme is assisted with an open and inclusive macro-regional civil network coordinated by EH.

The Second Macro-Regional Citizen Agora, organised together with the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), is the concluding event of the 2024 Annual Programme of European House Budapest titled „Stronger.Together – The magic of macro-regions 2024”. It builds on the results of four preparatory events organised in Budapest on 29 February – 1 March for the Danube, in Lyon on 2-3 May for the Alpine, in Zagreb on 14 May for the Adriatic-Ionian and in Visby on 29-30 October for the Baltic Sea macro-regions.

Other programme elements included a civil workshop during the 5th Macro-Regional and Sea Basin Strategies Days in Brussels in June, an active pro-European campaign prior to the EP elections, running an info stand at the „Europe, Let’s cooperate!” Interreg event in Antwerpen in March and at the International Danube Festival in Ulm in July and attending various MRS high-profile events, including the Annual Forums.

The Agora in Brussels brings together civil society actors and other stakeholders from the four macro-regions and beyond who will

- a) discuss the current situation and perspective of macro-regional strategies with a bottom-up approach;
- b) elaborate policy positions on such issues as the everyday perspective of Cohesion policy, cross-border cooperation issues or a proposal for a macro-regional civil strategy promoted by a broad network of civil society organisations;
- c) urge for meaningful youth participation across macro-regions;
- d) contribute to the next edition of the Implementation Report of the Commission on macro-regional strategies.

Special attention will be paid to the position and proposals of the EESC on these issues; the EESC Opinion on the Implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (ECO/609) serves as a reference document.

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