

Report of the Working Group on “Sustainability” of the Working Community of the Danube Regions:

At the 20th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on “Sustainability“ on April 17 and 18, 2013, approx. 180 experts from all over Europe gathered in Tulln.

(Further information, photos and a short film are available to the general public under www.unserboden.at.)

At the Annual Meeting, especially best-practice examples regarding the following topics were dealt with:

- **“Social integrative and know-how intensive farming”**
- **Soil and flooding: Results from “SONDAR SK-AT“ EU-project**
- **Measures against soil erosion: “SONDAR CZ-AT“ EU project**
- **Training of 28 Soil Ambassadors from the Danube region inclusive of Awarding of Diplomas**

Key projects of this Working Group are the projects of **“Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region”** and **“Social Production”**, subsidized by the European Union, which cooperate with the neighbouring countries Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary in **practical implementation projects** and in **establishing a sustainability network** in the Danube region.

In the future, long-term implementation of the approach of **“SCIENCE – ALLIANCE – AWARENESS”** shall be expanded together with existing partner networks (Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region, social and economic network of “social production for the environment”, and CASEE – scientific network of the Life Science Universities in the Danube region), and safeguarded and designed with a strong focus on implementation, starting from Lower Austria (leading in respect of sustainability).

Activities of the Working Group on “Sustainability“ of the Working Community of the Danube Regions

- Through various measures of the initiative **„Our soil – we stand upon it!”**, more than 80,000 persons have already come into contact with the “value of soil” in the Danube region.
- Approx. 30,000 children and young persons have committed themselves to **“Painting with the Colours of the Earth”**, and have created thousands of pieces of art. The exposition of “Soilart – arts and commitment to our soil” is travelling through the Danube region.
- Lower Austria has the highest density of members of the **European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA)**. Through activities of the project series of **“SONDAR”**, until 2014 approx. 60 new memberships of the Soil and Land Alliance will be acquired in the Danube region.

- The project of „**Cycle in the Classroom**“ will equip approx. 20 schools in Lower Austria, Slovakia and Hungary with raised herb beds and worm compost boxes, which will also travel through schools in the Danube region in the future.
- A well-targeted development and procurement of goods and services by social enterprises for companies and public institutions has been launched within the project of “**Social Production**”. Until next year, in Eastern Austria and West Hungary 1,000 contact consultations shall take place, and more than 100 creative products and services shall be procured. The European platform of “socially produced” shall initiate further lighthouse projects in the Danube region.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

for the meeting of senior officials on October 9 and 10, 2013 in St. Poelten, Lower Austria.

Planning and preparatory works of this Working Group:

Integration of key project of the Working Community of the Danube Regions of **SONDAR (Sustainable Operations Network in the Danube Region)** into **EUSDR – EU Strategy for the Danube Region** within the following fields of priority:

Priority 6 (biodiversity, landscapes, air and soil quality)

Priority 7 (science & education)

Priority 8 (competitiveness)

Priority 9 (people and occupation)

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