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Parliamentary Dimension  
Bulgarian Presidency of the Council  
of the European Union

## Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) 15-17 February 2018, Sofia

### Background information

#### Workshop: Danube Strategy

The European Commission endorsed the final version of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), along with the accompanying Action Plan, on 8 December 2010. The Council of the European Union formally adopted the Strategy on 24 June 2011.

14 Danube Region countries took part in the EUSDR drafting process, 9 out of them are now members of the European Union (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia), while 5 are non-EU members (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ukraine, Moldova).

The Strategy is a platform for cooperation and acceptance of the EU acquis on the part of the candidate countries. The region covered by the EUSDR has a population of more than 115 million people.

The Danube Strategy is based on the three basic thematic pillars:

- 1) Connectivity and communications – transport, navigation, related infrastructure and energy;
- 2) Environmental protection, risk prevention (protection against floods in the first place) and sustainable use of natural resources;
- 3) Social, economic and institutional development, strengthening regional cooperation.

The Strategy defines 11 priority areas within which projects will be implemented. Each priority area is managed by two countries as Priority Area Coordinators (PACs).

Since the beginning of the EUSDR implementation, a number of very important projects have either been launched or additionally developed. The major projects include the master plans for rehabilitation and maintenance of navigable waterways, creation of environmental protection networks, development of joint methodologies for natural





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disaster risk assessment and management, as well as the establishment of networks aimed at boosting security on the Danube.

The Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union is committed to work towards increasing the visibility of the Danube and the Black Sea region including through improving their connectivity by making full use of the potential and the toolkit of the EU's macro-regional strategies. Important priorities are strengthening security and improving connectivity in terms of transport, communication and digital infrastructure.

In October 2017 Bulgaria overtook the Presidency of the EUSDR from Hungary for one year. The current EUSDR trio is formed by Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.

The Bulgarian Presidency of the EUSDR is focused on three priorities:

- 1) Continuity in the work of the Presidency and on further improvement of governance and coordination;
- 2) Transparency, promotion and publicity of decision-making, ongoing discussions;
- 3) Focus on tourism and cultural infrastructure and their contribution in achieving economic growth, employment and connectivity between the regions along the Danube River.