

PRESS RELEASE

CARPATHIAN CIVIL SOCIETY PLATFORM

Inter-regional civil society hub for social inclusion in the Carpathian region
International Conference in Eger, June 13-14, 2019

Close to 100 representatives of 72 civil society organizations from the Carpathians meet at an international conference in Eger on 13-14 June 2019. The conference is the closing event of the Carpathian Civil Society Platform project, where civil professionals from Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania co-create the cooperation platform across the five counties, and establish the frames of future cooperation.

Carpathian Foundation has launched its *Carpathian Civil Society Platform* project in 2018, with **ETP Slovakia, Carpathian Foundation-Ukraine** and **Carpathian Gate Foundation** from Poland as its partners. The aim of the project is to set up an inter-regional civil society hub of the rural organizations that work for the most marginalized communities in order to strengthen their collaboration and effectiveness. It's aimed to improve the influence and weight of civil sector through capacity development by creating a platform for networking, exchange of experience, knowledge and best practices.

During the 18-months long international cooperation, similar network building process has been realized in North-East-Hungary, Eastern-Slovakia, South-East-Poland and Western-Ukraine. After having set up the local hublets by local workshops in each country, the participating organizations had the opportunity to meet in Kosice October 2018 at an inter-regional event. The platform was enlarged through additional workshops in the beginning of 2019; in addition capacity building trainings were organized for the participants. Mini-grants were also provided to organizations, in the frame of which for example short videos or new websites were created for them.

The international conference in Eger is an important milestone of the project, where civil society organizations working in the Carpathian countries can meet again, and during a series of workshops they will have the chance to begin to elaborate the basics of their future cooperation, joint projects, and they can also discuss the details of the sustainability of the platform.

The conference will be opened by **H.E. René van Hell, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Hungary**, and the keynote speeches will be delivered by Iveta Radicova, former Prime Minister of Slovakia, Marit E. Jacobsen, Deputy Head of Secretariat of the Norwegian Barents Cooperation, and Harald Egerer, Head of UNEP Carpathian Convention. Then Sándor Köles, the president of Carpathian Foundation-Hungary will give a short presentation of the project, followed by a panel discussion of the leaders and experts of the four partner organizations where they will share the experiences of civil network building.

During the workshops participants will start joint work in five thematic groups (generational poverty, social inclusion, culture, community development and shrinking civic space). On the second day of the conference the members of the thematic groups will design joint projects, and discuss tasks related to the continuation of the platform.

During the two-day conference participants will have the opportunity to get an insight of local culture: they will go on a city tour together and will take part in the Carpathian folk dance evening, which helps them to get to know each other better and to establish effective cooperation.

Acknowledgements

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More information on the project: <http://www.karpatokalapitvany.hu/en/tartalom/carpathian-civil-society-platform>

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