**EUSDR PA7 Newsletter – Wrapping Up the Year 2024 and Wishing You a Happy and Successful New Year!**

Dear Readers,

As we are slowly entering the new year, we invite you to join us in reflecting on the key activities, events, initiatives, and projects that have shaped our journey in 2024. All these accomplishments would not be possible without your help and cooperation with a diverse group of stakeholders.

On behalf of both PA7 coordination teams from Slovakia and Serbia, we extend our warmest wishes for a successful and fulfilling New Year and thank you for your continuous support!

**PA7 HIGHLIGHTS**

 **PA7 participated at the first Interreg Danube Region Programme 2021-2027 Lead Partner Seminar | 25 - 26 April 2024 in Belgrade**

Interreg Danube Region Programme (DRP) 2021-2027 Lead Partner Seminar (First call) was organized on April 25-26 in Belgrade. It provided a **good networking platform for Priority area coordinators to interact with Lead partners** of over 140 project partners coming from 60 first call projects across the Danube region**. PA7 team was present during the panel discussion focused on synergies and capitalisation within the Danube Region Strategy priority areas** explaining how capitalisation strategy enables synergy building between the DRP projects and projects funded by other financial instruments. Overall, the seminar was an excellent networking opportunity, facilitating the exchange of ideas and the establishment of collaborative relationships for the future.

More information at: <https://interreg-danube.eu/news/danube-region-projects-from-first-call-gather-for-knowledge-exchange>

**Promotion of Danube Region Researchers and Innovators – Online Stream Organized in Close Cooperation with PA4 | 18 October 2024**

**This year PA7 team organized its fifth public online stream with a renowned Danube Region Scientist** [**Helmut Habersack**](https://boku.ac.at/en/personen/person/C17BC2556CE4AE1F)**,** Univ. Prof. Dipl.- Ing. Dr.nat.techn. Dr.h.c., Head of the Institute of Hydraulic Engineering and River Research (IWA) @BOKU, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. Prof. Habersack with has over 25 years of experience in sediment transport, hydropower, river engineering / morphology / restoration, flood risk management, ecohydraulics and navigation. He is the author of over 100 SCI journal publications, 10 monographs, over 100 proceedings etc. and gave over 150 national and international (keynote) lectures. He won the “Science2Business 2015” Award and holds the title Austrian of the Year in Research (2023).

Apart from **facebook live streaming** there is a possibility to **view our stream** via the following link: <https://video.nti.sk/live?284189J1QPLQFA99>

**PA7 Steering group meetings in 2024 | 8 July and 15 November 2024 | Hybrid**

The **27th PA7 Steering group meeting** was organized as a joint meeting with PA8 Competitiveness on 8July 2024 in Ulm, Germany in the frame of the **4th event „The Danube Region at the Turn of Times – Economic Cooperation and Hydrogen Supply Chains along the Danube“**, embedded into the International **Danube Festival in Ulm (Baden-Württemberg) and Neu-Ulm (Bavaria).** Representatives of the economic ministries and science ministries in the Danube region came together to exchange ideas with experts and thus foster the transfer of knowledge and experience and also provide impetus for the development of new European projects. Four members of the **Danube Youth Council** were present at the meeting to introduce their work and inform about their future plans and contributions**. A highlight of the meeting was presentation of new Danube Flagship projects.** State Secretary Dr. Patrick Rapp from Baden-Württemberg, and State Secretary Andreja Metelko-Zgombic from Croatia concluded the meeting and praised the interdisciplinary cooperation at a meeting of the EU Danube Region Strategy. At the end of the meeting the Flagship Certificates were awarded to the Lead Partners of the Projects.

More information: <https://competitiveness.danube-region.eu/joint-steering-group-meeting-of-pa-7-and-pa-8-on-8-july-2024-in-ulm/>

On 15 November, 2024, PA7 in cooperation with the **EUSDR Austrian Presidency**, **Austrian Steering Group members from the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research** and with the kind support of the **University for Continuing Education Krems (Austria) organized 28th PA7 SG meeting.**

The meeting was organized back-to-back to the **2024 Annual Meeting of the Danube Rectors' Conference** **and the Danubius Awards Ceremony**. PA7 team was present in the conference panel discussion **University Leadership in Times of Uncertainty** with regard to the expectations of EUSDR towards universities in the Danube Region. [**The Danube Cup**](https://danubecup.eu/) initiative was introduced to all present Danube rectors as the leading network of higher education institutions fostering entrepreneurship for a connected and sustainable Danube region.

All related documents and presentations from PA7 SG meetings are available [**here**](https://knowledgesociety.danube-region.eu/steering-group-meetings/).

Press release from the Danubius Awards 2024: <https://www.idm.at/en/press-release-danubius-awards-2024/>

**Cooperation and Mutual Support to PA7 Flagship Projects**

**Danube Strategy Flagships** are projects or processes that contribute to the implementation of the EUSDR, have a clear macro-regional dimension and a multi-level governance approach. They are of high importance for the Danube Region’s economic, social and territorial cohesion and for improving the quality of life in the Danube Region.

PA7 has been cooperating with the following projects and initiatives:

**The Danube Tech Valley Initiative (DTVI);****Multilateral Danube Call;****The Western Balkans Info Hub**provided by the Horizon Europe-fundedproject**POLICY ANSWERS;****RIS4DANU** and **Excellence-in-ReSTI. This year HARMONMISSIONS project was added to the list of Danube strategy flagships.**

The complete [**lists of the 2024 Danube Strategy Flagships**](https://danube-region.eu/download/list-of-flagships-2022/?wpdmdl=10782&refresh=63486779c3d1e1665689465) (recognized by all Priority Areas) can be found [**here.**](https://danube-region.eu/projects-and-funding/eusdr-strategic-projects/)

**DANURELY-WS DRP SMF Project | Danube Youth Leadership Roundtable |
26-27 November 2024 in Bratislava**

**The DANURELY-WS** project was developed by the Global Water Partnership – Central and Eastern Europe (GWP-CEE) to create strategically aligned youth-targeted activities supporting the EUSDR Strategy Action Points of the Priority Areas Water Quality (PA4), Environmental Risks (PA5), Knowledge Society (PA7) in a mid-term, and through partners and Danube Youth Council Members is linked to Waterways Mobility (PA 1A) and People and Skills (PA9). This initiative promises to enhance water security and resilience in our communities.

PA7 team financially supported participation of **Danube Region youth at the DANUrely Roundtable: Empowering the Next Generation in Water Management** hosted at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute (SHMU).

For more information please see the following [**link.**](https://www.gwp.org/en/GWP-CEE/WE-ACT/Projects/danurely/empowering-tomorrows-water-leaders-reflections-from-the-bratislava-roundtable/)

**EUSDR AND MRS NEWS**

**13th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region | 20-21 June 2024 in Vienna**

Under the title **‘Cooperation in the Danube Region: now more than ever! Shaping Transformation, Creating Opportunities’** the 13th EUSDR Annual Forum aimed to be a platform for joint discussions on current challenges and opportunities as well as future perspectives for the cooperation in the Danube Region. Facing geopolitical threats, economic volatility and global climate crisis, cooperation in the Danube Region has become more important than ever. Working together across borders proves to be an opportunity to develop joint perspectives for a stable, sustainable and prosperous future not only for the Danube Region, but for all of Europe.

**The Joint Statement of the the Danube Foreign Ministers:** [**Vienna Danube Declaration**](https://danube-region.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Joint-Statement-of-the-Danube-Foreign-Ministers.pdf) reaffirms the determination to stand together and enhance cooperation in the Danube Region. The comprehensive Summary Report of the 13th EUSDR Annual Forum is available [**here**](https://danube-region.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/EUSDR-Annual-Forum-2024-Documentation-A4_V4_compressed-1.pdf).

**Mediterranean Coast and Macro-Regional Strategies Week 2024: Stronger cooperation for better future | 16 – 20 September 2024 in Izola**

The 9th edition of the **Mediterranean Coast and Macro-Regional Strategies Week** focused on the exchange of best practices on **circular economy policies, the implementation of S3 strategies, the development of innovation skills and the debate on the future of Cohesion Policy** in the next programming period.

PA7 team was present in the panel discussion on **Innovative Sustainable Mission** discussing the possibilities of S3 in strengthening the macro-regions.

Please read more detailed information about the event on the following [**link**](https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/event/upcoming-events-mediterranean-coast-and-macro-regional-strategies-week-2024-stronger-cooperation-for-better-future/).

**9th Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion | 27 March 2024 | European Commission**

[**The 9th Cohesion Report**](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/cohesion-report_en) shows that the Cohesion Policy continues to **narrow the gaps in EU regions and Member States.**

The findings of the report also highlight the importance of macro-regional strategies and Interreg programs in the Cohesion Policy. Concerning cooperation across EU regions as a factor for the achievement of a more balanced territorial development, the macro-regional strategies are appreciated as fostering innovation, development, and better governance Another significant role of the macro-regional strategies is the one they play in paving the way for the EU enlargement.

**SEASON GREETINGS**

We thank you all for your support, advices, valuable recommendations and contributions throughout the year and look forward to the upcoming opportunities and challenges in 2025!

You can find us also on [**Facebook**](https://www.facebook.com/DanubeKnowledgeSociety) |[**Instagram**](https://www.instagram.com/danubeknowledgesociety/) | [**Webpage**](https://knowledgesociety.danube-region.eu/)