



**EUSDR Priority area 7:
To develop the Knowledge Society through research, education and information technologies**

**10th PA7 SG meeting and joint SG Meeting of PA 7 and PA 8 and Danube-INCO.NET
9th December 2015
Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Budapest, Hungary**

MINUTES

Agenda

09.30 – 10.00	Registration
10.00 – 10.15	Welcome speech PACs: Štefan Chudoba and Viktor Nedović
10.15 - 10.30	Reports of Working groups (Viktor Nedović, Moritz Haller, Viorel Vulturescu, Martina Hartl, University of Maribor representative)
10.30 - 11.00	Information on the proposals of planned PA7 activities based on PAC proposals submitted to DSP Štefan Chudoba - Activities proposed by Slovakia Viktor Nedović - Activities proposed by Serbia
11.00 -11.30	Up-date of PA7 Targets – discussion
11.30 –11.45	Coffee break
11.45-11.55	Information on START and TAF DRP 2015 call (Dijana Štrbac)
11.55-12.05	Opening – up bilateral activities towards multilateral cooperation (Martina Hartl)
12.05-12.30	Fostering cooperation with other European Initiatives COST Targeted Network for the Danube Region (Martina Hartl) Cooperation with Joint Programme in Neurodegenerative Disease Research (Ľubica Pitlová)

12.30-12.45 **Presentation of DSP – next cooperation** (DSP representatives)

12.45-12.55 **AOB**

12.55-13.00 **Conclusions**

13.00-14.00 **Lunch break**

14.00 - 17.00 h Joint Steering Group Meeting of PA 7 and PA 8 and Danube-INCO.NET

Identification and development of macro strategic projects and initiating of cooperation and financing (also supranational)

Chaired by Dragica Karajić

Welcome by the Priority Area Coordinators

Tour de Table of all participants

1. Smart specialization/ RIS 3 projects in the Danube region (concrete strategic macro-regional projects) by **Moritz Haller**, Joint Research Centre EU-Commission
2. "Latest information from Brussels" - Report by **Csaba Hende**, DG Regio EU-Commission
3. Danube-INCO.NET by **Elke Dall**, Centre for Social Innovation and **Martina Hartl**, Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy
4. Information on the outcomes of the 2015 EUREKA call for the Danube Region and preparation of the new call by **Irina Slosar**, Austrian Research Promotion Agency
5. Presentation and discussion of strategic projects
 - a. Key proposals for the INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme (e.g. EoI: Dual Academy by **Lubica Pitlova**, EoI: Tertiary Dual Education by **Stefan Chudoba**, PAC 7 and other current EoI)
 - b. Activities of the PA8 working groups related to technology transfer, innovation, research, etc. by **Hans-Peter Herdlitschka** and **Dragica Karajić**
 - c. Discussion on joint strategic initiatives



Welcome speech

Ms Ľubica Pitlová (PA7 Support Team, Slovakia) opened the event and thanked to all SG members and stakeholders for attending the meeting. She also expressed her thanks to the hosts – Hungarian colleagues who provided immense support in organization of the meeting. **Mr Štefan Chudoba (co-PAC, Slovakia)** in his opening speech mentioned the importance of cooperation and joint projects in the Danube region during the incoming Slovak EUSDR-chairmanship, as well as Slovak 2016 Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Ms Dijana Štrbac (PA7 Support Team, Serbia) also expressed her thanks to the SG members and other guests, and apologized for absence of **Mr Viktor Nedović** (co-PAC, Serbia) due to unexpected working obligations, but that he provided important inputs for the meeting. She read the letter from Mr Viktor Nedović in which he said that he believes that discussion will be open and fruitful, with useful inputs and that he really hopes that consensus on open issues will be easily reached.

Reports of Working groups

Ms Dijana Štrbac presented the report on Higher education and mobility WG, provided by **Mr Miroslav Vesković** (former PAC and leader of this WG) about the harmonization of the Danube higher education area from the Danube Rectors' Conference Annual Meeting. The DRC annual meeting took place in Maribor on 4-6 November 2015. More than 40 participants from the Danube countries discussed how to harmonise the Danube higher education area. It started with video message of Commissioner Navracsics about the role of university networks in supporting cooperation and making Europe stronger. He also emphasised the importance that students leave universities with right knowledge and skills, to lead fulfilling lives and help our societies and economies grow. It was pointed out that there are new challenges (like digital technologies) facing higher education and modernisation of higher education should stimulate: quality, relevance, regional innovations and internationalisation. Other topics included were: dual education system, how to implement research in Master studies, trends in Innovative Doctoral Training in Europe and particularities of Danube region, etc. She also pointed out that they had consultations with other stakeholders within WG on Higher education and mobility.

The process of consultations regarding the new leader of the WG on HEM is finished and Serbian PAC proposes for this function **Prof. Dr Ivanka Popovic**, Vice-Rector for Science of the University of Belgrade and Full Professor at Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy of the University of Belgrade (Department of Organic Chemical Technology). Besides her remarkable scientific and teaching career, she was involved in numerous international and national projects and initiatives which qualify her as an appropriate candidate for this position. The formal email regarding her nomination will follow.

Ms Martina Hartl (BMFWF, Austria) said that the question of choosing WG leader is certainly very important and that it would be excellent to have dedicated WG leaders who would present their working plan to the SG. She also proposed to Slovak colleagues that, since the next EUSDR Annual forum will be held in Bratislava, to include more actively Danube Rectors Conference in the topics of the AF.



Mr Moritz Haller (JRC) presented the cooperation of JRC with PA7 in terms of scientific support to the Danube Strategy. He mentioned events organised by the JRC: S3 Workshop in Vienna, JRC Annual event in Ulm, Workshop on scenarios of regional development in Ispra, Workshop „Regions as knowledge users and facilitators“ in Odessa. Upcoming events are: Thematic seminar on Hydropower energy (21-22 Jan, Istanbul), JRC-COST workshop "The role of city-regions for a low carbon-economy" (4 Feb, Brussels), S3 Design Learning Workshop (18-19 Feb, Chisinau), Visit of Danubius Young Scientists (Spring 2016). He also stressed achievements of the S3 platform, JRC policy briefs and active participation in Danube-INCO.NET project.

Mr Adrian Pascu (National Authority for Scientific Research and Innovation, Romania) gave presentation on WG on Research and Innovation on behalf of his colleague and leader of this WG, **Mr Viorel Vulturescu**. He presented the results of the DREAM flagship project and Romanian platform ERRIS (erris.ro). Engage in the Romanian Research Infrastructures System - ERRIS reunites the majority of Romanian infrastructures focusing on the research services they provide.

Ms Martina Hartl presented results of the WG on DRRIF and coordination of national funds within the Danube Region. She explained DRRIF WG progress, four meetings held so far and next steps. There is a plan to analyse potential for a joint collaboration in ERA-Net activity in 2016, to develop “lessons learned” of the pilot Call in EUREKA, the German BMBF Call, the first Call of the DTP and coordination with the Danube-INCO.Net project and its activities, especially in WP2 (Policy Dialogue) and WP6 (Scaling up of funding mechanisms). She has also emphasised striving towards a more even participation of countries, further activities towards the potential use of COST in the EUSDR context and lobbying activities towards the 2018-2020 WorkProgramme.

Mr Zdravko Kačič (University of Maribor, Slovenia) presented results of the WG on Information and Communication Technologies. He pointed out two workshops organised within the DO-IT project (in Vienna and Ulm). In his opinion Danube Region has critical mass in the ICT area and ICT can be considered as a horizontal priority. Their goal in the future is to raise awareness about the ICT importance in the Danube Region.

Mr Csaba Hende (DG Regio) gave presentation on macro-regional strategies and EU programmes. At first, he reminded of the Joint statement signed on the margins of the 2015 Annual Forum in Ulm by the Ministers responsible for EU funds as well as the Council conclusions of the past highlighting that all eligible funds are eligible. He explained how political decision should be implemented, the role of SG and programme/managing authority. Projects of macro-regional scope within a given programme can either be the result of jointly coordinated actions within the macro-region, or be complementary actions, part of the same (larger) macro-regional project. Tools foreseen include earmarking budget, ex-ante definition of projects (e.g. infrastructure) or allowing for bonus points for projects of macro-regional interest. He stressed that coordination between Managing Authorities and the macro-regional governance actors (National Coordinators or Pillar/Priority/Policy Coordinators) is a must. It is therefore crucial for the former to liaise with the latter who - thanks to their extensive knowledge of the



strategy - can offer valuable advice regarding projects likely to contribute to macro-regional objectives. Related to this, **Ms Helena Hirschenberger** (University of Novi Sad, Serbia) asked for a meeting with relevant stakeholders in order to analyse what could be done in sense of project prioritization (and labelling facility developed within Danube-INCO.NET project).

Information on the proposals of planned PAC activities based on PAC proposals submitted to the DSP

Ms Jaroslava Szüdi (PA7 Support Team, Slovakia) presented Slovak project proposal for PA7 activities submitted to DSP. She stated that the most important objectives of their proposal is building funding network (as resulting from the DRRIF feasibility study) and strengthening cooperation among education and research institutions and industry in the Danube region. There are four project activities (Governance, Supporting common R&I projects, Funding network, Strengthening cooperation among education and research institutions and industry in the Danube region) which were explained including a table with main project milestones.

Ms Dijana Štrbac presented Serbian proposal for future PA7 activities. She stated that Serbian coordination complements with Slovak proposal and focuses on: funding possibilities for research and higher education, horizontal interlinking with other PAs, activities of PA7 WGs, collaboration with the JRC on nexuses and RIS3 platform and wider promotion. The proposed project activities were presented: Technical management of PAC activities and SG coordination, Organization and support to Working Groups, Supporting common R&I projects and scaling up funding mechanisms, Promotion of PA7 actions/targets & Strengthening collaboration, Financial control and audit.

Update of PA7 Targets – discussion

Ms Ľubica Pitlová presented current PA7 targets, Slovak proposal of new targets and recommendations for formulating targets given by the European commission. She also gave overview of current level for certain indicators that could be used for formulating new targets.

Ms Helena Hirschenberger presented Serbian proposal for new PA7 targets (prepared by Mr Viktor Nedović and the support team) and moderated discussion.

Ms Martina Hartl said that creating new PA7 targets is an important strategic decision and that it will have significant impact on further activities of PA7. She also stated that we should not “revise” targets from the Strategy Europe 2020 because that is a document adopted at a highest level and that those objectives are set out in a very sophisticated process.

Ms Janeta Toma (DSP) stated that it is really difficult to create measurable targets and that it is very important that PA7 targets are measurable, specific and that contribute to the strategic objectives of the EU. Also, PA7 targets will be involved in the selection criteria of funding programs.

Mr Štefan Chudoba mentioned that the targets should be attainable, concrete and realistic formulated after receiving the opinions of all SG members. He also noted that the role of PACs should be mainly about giving support to the European Commission (in its targets, activities, calls, etc.), and therefore proposing the targets from this position is not very appropriate. PAs should be based on collaboration, communication and mutual learning.

Mr Csaba Hende stated that the decision on PA7 targets should be joint decision of all SG members. Mr Csaba Hende and Ms Janeta Toma also said that there will be probably an extension of the deadline for delivering targets which will be announced after the NC meeting on December 10th.

Mr Zdravko Kačič considered that it is crucial that the targets are measurable.

Mr Mladen Kraljić (University of Maribor, Slovenia) said that we should not relate our targets to some specific area (e.g. ICT).

Mr Moritz Haller said that the targets should be strategic and not to look like a work programme of certain PA. He said that the target „RIS3 developed in all Danube countries by 2020” seems quite good and therefore all SG members agreed to accept it.

Mr Adrian Pascu said that targets should be realistic and that it is important to analyse current level of a specific targets.

Ms Martina Hartl suggested to discuss and exchange the information and streamline the targets with other PAs. Therefore, it might be useful to organise EC-PAC meeting on which they would agree on the level on which they will formulate their targets.

Information on START and TAF-DRP 2015 Call

Ms Dijana Štrbac presented these calls in 2015. She first gave general overview and timeline of the call and then summary of submitted and selected projects for both calls. In the START call there are two selected projects addressed to PA7 and in the TAF-DRP there is one selected project related to PA7. Pre-selection process within PA7 was conducted in three steps and included invitation to all SG members to take part in the procedure. SG members from six Danube Region countries participated in the pre-selection process.

Opening – up bilateral activities towards multilateral cooperation

Ms Martina Hartl presented current status of bilateral activities in the Danube Region and concept of opening-up. Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Serbia are prepared to start such an initiative in 2016, Croatia has expressed its interest and we still welcome countries to join in. There is a pilot call envisaged for 2016. The application and selection process will be as simple and as transparent as possible. Preparatory Workshop is foreseen for the first half of 2016 to work out the details for the call.

COST Targeted Network for the Danube Region

Ms Martina Hartl presented concept note of COST targeted network in terms of background, aims, relevance for COST and potential areas and geographic scope. In the next period it is necessary to establish more elaborated COST contacts, limit the topics to 4 (voting procedure), organise preparatory expert workshop. More detailed concept should be presented at the CSO in April 2016, final proposal by early fall; approval hopefully end of 2016.

Cooperation with Joint Programme in Neurodegenerative Disease Research

Ms Eubica Pitlová presented Joint Programme in Neurodegenerative Disease Research (JPND). It is one of the EU initiatives of Joint programming (to solve grand societal challenges together through research). JPND is the largest global ND research initiative led by EU countries, with 30 participating EU member states, associated countries and third countries. The initiative would like to include more countries in its activities.

Conclusions

Ms Eubica Pitlová summarized the topic opened during the meeting, stated that the SG agreed on one target and that on the basis of a meeting discussion further communication regarding the targets will be continued via email.

Ms Dijana Štrbac emphasised the stand of Mr Viktor Nedović regarding the process of updating of targets. She said that Serbian proposal for new PA7 targets is formulated on the basis of recommendations from the EC, but the final decision should be made by the SG and that PACs will follow their directions. Therefore, it is important that representatives of all Danube Region countries take part in the procedure that will be finalised during the next week.

Joint Steering Group Meeting of PA7 and PA8 and Danube-INCO.NET

Ms Dragica Karajić (PA8 co-PAC, Croatia) opened the session, thanked to all participants and explained the main topics of PA7 and PA8. In her opinion the linkage of these two PAs is human capital development.

Mr Štefan Chudoba expressed his pleasure to have a joint meeting with PA8 and remarked that there is a lot of space for joint projects between these two PAs.

Ms Dijana Štrbac thanked to the participants for their presence on behalf of Serbian PA7 team, excused Mr Viktor Nedović for not being able to attend the meeting and expressed hope that this meeting will give important results. She read a letter from Mr Viktor Nedović in which he stated that he is convinced that this joint meeting will bring new synergy, joint activities and projects ideas developed.



Mr Hans-Peter Herdlitschka (PA8 co-PAC, Baden-Württemberg) in his opening speech emphasised that we need more strategic projects in order to exploit various funding sources. He kindly requested that all participants introduce themselves.

Mr Moritz Haller presented JRC scientific support to the EUSDR (facts & figures, objectives, thematic and horizontal flagship clusters). He also mentioned previous events organised by the JRC and upcoming events, as well as S3 platform achievements and policy briefs. **Mr Ales Gnamus** (IPTS, JRC) presented RIS3 achievements, updates, new web platform, etc.

Mr Csaba Hende gave presentation on macro-regional strategies and EU programmes (equivalent to the one presented on the PA7 meeting).

Ms Elke Dall (ZSI, Austria) and **Ms Martina Hart** presented Danube-INCO.NET project results and the ways in which PA7 and PA8 can cooperate in upcoming initiatives/activities.

Ms Irina Slosar (FFG, Austria) presented outcomes of the 2015 EUREKA call for the Danube Region, preliminary findings and lessons learnt.

Mr Sándor Blaskó (DSP) gave presentation on activities of Danube Strategy Point – its work packages and team members, activities in the last 6 months, TA support for PAC activities, and news on EUSDR web site.

Ms Eubica Pitlová presented project proposal submitted as EoI for DTP call - Danube Alliance for Secondary Dual VET.

Mr Štefan Chudoba presented EoI for project Danube InnoShip - Stimulating innovative interconnection of university education and research activities with automotive sector companies in Danube region.

In the end, **Ms Dragica Karajić** and **Mr Hans-Peter Herdlitschka** emphasised activities of the PA8 working groups related to technology transfer, innovation and research. Next year they are organising two business forums – in Austria and in (Belgrade) Serbia.