



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

**12th PA7 SG meeting
24th October 2016, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia**

MINUTES

Agenda

10.00 - 10.30	Registration
	Welcome speeches
10.30 - 10.45	Ivanka Popović, University of Belgrade Moritz Haller, EC JRC Matija Vilfan, Danube Strategy Point PACs: Viktor Nedović and Štefan Chudoba
10.45 - 11.00	Information on submitted PA7 report(s) (<i>Dijana Štrbac</i>)
11.00 - 11.30	Reports of Working groups
11.30 - 12.00	Updating PA7 Actions and Milestones in accordance with new PA7 targets - short presentation, guided discussion, group work (<i>Lubica Pitlova</i>)
12.00 - 12.15	Information on the PA7 activities in the next 3 years based on the project proposal submitted to DTP (<i>Jaroslava Szudi</i>)
12.15 - 12.30	Coffee break
	Information on COST related activities
12.30 -12.45	Multilateral Danube call (<i>Martina Hartl</i>)
12.45 -13.30	PA7 Flagship projects - short reports
13.30 -14.30	Lunch break



14.30 - 14.45	RIS3 in the EUSDR Downstream regions/countries - State of the art, Viktor Nedović
14.45 -15.45	EUSDR strategic projects - discussion initiated with short presentation (<i>Dijana Štrbac</i>)
15.45 - 16.00	Danube-INCO.NET progress
16.00 -16.15	Stakeholders Mapping (D2.9 of the Danube-INCO.NET project) (Bela Kardon)
16.15 -16.30	Invitation to 5th EUSDR Annual forum (Lubica Pitlova)
16.30 -16.45	AOB
16.45-17.00	Conclusions (V. Nedović, S. Chudoba)

Welcome speeches

Mr Viktor Nedovic (co-PAC, Serbia) opened the meeting, thanked to all SG members and stakeholders for attending the meeting and gave word to Ms Ivanka Popovic as a meeting host.

Ms Ivanka Popovic (Vice-Rector of the University of Belgrade) welcomed all meeting participants and gave a short presentation on the University of Belgrade. It is a public university established in 1808. Today it has 31 faculties, 11 research institutes and 12 centres. University of Belgrade has more than 99.000 students in 317 degree programs and 40 specialist and vocational programs. Its annual budget is 161 million euros (59% is public funding). The University is holder of various research grants: national (424), FP7 (108), Horizon 2020 (32), ERC (1). Number of highly cited papers of the authors from University of Belgrade is constantly improving and the University is at the moment ranked among 300 the best universities in the world. It is highly engaged in international collaboration and it has over 200 bilateral agreements of cooperation with universities from close to 60 countries. Networks and Associations in which UoB is involved are: EUA, UNICA, UNIADRION, AUF, AARC Danube Rectors Conference (DRC) Black Sea University Network (BSUN).

Mr Moritz Haller (EC JRC) welcomed the participants on behalf of EC JRC and EC DG Regio as well (since its representatives were not able to attend the meeting due to other obligations). He stated that EUSDR PA7 plays a vital role in creating innovation ecosystem in the Danube Region. According to the Innovation Union Scoreboard innovation gap in the Danube Region is widening and that is an important indicator which show us the trends in the region and also the way in which PA7 activities should be directed.

Mr Matija Vilfan (Danube Strategy Point) stated that this meeting should be a planning meeting for activities of PA7 that will be implemented in 2017. He said that it is important to find the policies on which PA7 will focus on and then actions coming from them. It is also important to interlink PA7 with other PAs in order to create joint projects and processes. In his opinion it has been achieved much in PA7 in the previous period but it should be better communicated and promoted. In the next period financing will come from Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) and also there will be available small



development fund in 2017 (Seed money facility). Because of this it is crucial to know what will be the focus of PA7 in the following period.

Mr Stefan Chudoba (co-PAC, Slovakia) welcomed participants at the 12th SG meeting on behalf of both PAC teams and thanked to the hosts for organizing the meeting in Belgrade. During his welcome speech he highlighted the role of overall cooperation among PAC teams and SG members in the past and expressed hope in the successful continuation in the future. Mr Chudoba stated that the role of education, research and innovation in these times play a crucial role in building knowledge society in our region and beyond, and must be supported by all possible means. He also thanked DSP for the overall support and encouragement and wished to all participants a fruitful meeting.

Mr Viktor Nedovic thanked to the University of Belgrade for hosting the meeting and especially to Ms Ivanka Popovic. He mentioned the event that will be organized on October 25th at the Slovak Embassy in Belgrade related to the process of Serbian EU integrations in the areas of research and innovation, smart specialisation and further developments of EUSDR related activities. He invited the present SG members to take part in the event. Mr Nedovic also stated that PA7 has to reinforce its activities and connect more with other PAs and other stakeholders.

Information on submitted PA7 report

Ms Dijana Štrbac presented the content of PA7 Implementation report submitted to DSP in July 2016. The report covered the period from July 2015 to June 2016. In this period PA7 continued in its efforts focused on gathering stakeholders in higher education, research and ICT in the Danube Region towards EUSDR objectives and PA7 targets. The most intensive work of PACs and the SG was focused on dissemination, networking and creation of the framework that will boost motivation and commitment of stakeholders to the EUSDR. Main policy achievements of PA7 are rising visibility of PA7 targets and actions and enhancing cooperation among DR countries focused on more effective spending of existing resources. Concrete achievements in the respective period are: German Ministry of Education and Sciences (BMBF) “Danube Call”, Establishment of Danube Funding Coordination Network (DFCN), Multilateral call for funding scientific and technological cooperation projects in the Danube Region with participation of AT, CZ, RS and SK. Besides progress on policy level, PA7 has achieved important progress in terms of: funding activities, updating PA7 targets, coordination and cooperation activities, activities for involvement of stakeholders and civil society.

Reports of Working groups

Ms Ivanka Popovic (leader of WG on Higher education and mobility) presented some points of discussion related to future activities of this WG. Potential initiatives of this WG could be related to: Erasmus KA1 – the possibility of mobility between partner countries; 1+16 - China-Central Eastern European Countries (CCEC) Conference; Enhanced visibility of social sciences and humanities; Smart specialization – national or HEI strategy; Overcoming HR shortages in certain professions by a dual education approach. **Ms Martina Hartl** stated that we should get in touch with Western Balkan Mobility initiative and Mr Viktor Nedovic gave more info on how the initiative was launched (Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan countries, Sarajevo, June 7 2016), then about the basic idea behind and the steps already done. **Ms Jaroslava Szudi** mentioned that she is a full-time professor at the University of Economics in Bratislava and therefore she has a prior interest in this WG and would like to be informed on its concrete plans and activities. Since so far members of this WG were mainly members of DRC, she was wondering if that will be the case in the future. **Ms Ivanka Popovic** said that DRC members will be members of this WG, but not exclusively – this WG will be opened to other interested



stakeholders. **Ms Martina Hartl** said that representatives of DRC should be in the future invited on PA7 SG meetings. Related to S3 in higher education, **Mr Moritz Haller** said that he can connect this WG with colleagues working on this issue in JRC.

Mr Zdravko Kacic (leader of WG on ICT) emphasized that there are two ways of considering ICT: ICT as infrastructure (in terms of building capacities) and ICT a scientific discipline. At the moment they are trying to find the best way to approach stakeholders. **Ms Lubica Pitlova** said that it is crucial to find way to connect this group more with PA7 activities. **Mr Sandor Blasko** said that newly established PA7 website could be used as a platform for sharing info for all WGs.

Ms Martina Hartl (leader of DFCN WG) informed the participants that DRRIF WG does not exist anymore and that it was established Danube Funding Coordination Network (DFCN) as a new flexible but sustainable structure of stakeholders from the Danube countries responsible for funding research and innovation. DFCN is engaged in regular exchange of information, finding cooperation opportunities, identifying potential gaps in the funding mechanism landscape and developing new joint activities. It will also work on integration of Danube countries into existing structures and networks at European and multilateral level (ERICs, KICs, ETP, JPIs, Era-Nets, strategic Working Groups and High Level Groups). The range of potential future joint activities of the DFCN involves joint calls, support to mobility of researchers, widening/twinning activities, organisation of joint events for researchers and policy-makers as well as funding agencies as part of the strategic dialogue with an within the Danube Region. Next meeting of the DFCN will be organised on November 2nd 2016, back to back EUSDR Annual Forum, Bratislava. She also invited DR countries that still did not officially nominate members to do it as soon as possible. She also presented contribution of DFCN to PA7 targets and actions.

WG on communication with JRC: Ms Lubica Pitlova said that PA7 has excellent cooperation with JRC in various fields and especially in developing RIS3 in non-EU countries. She asked Mr Moritz Haller to inform the participants more on JRC activities in this field. **Mr Moritz Haller** said that JRC is working on developing RIS3 in non-EU countries and that at the moment they have preparatory meetings. He also said that JRC and DG REGIO have targeted actions for lagging regions and that there is a project “Stairways to excellence” which has the aim to develop and exploit synergies between different funding schemes.

WG on Research Infrastructure: **Mr Adrian Pascu** presented recent developments and relevant topics in this field. He introduced definition, concept and aims of research infrastructure. There are different approaches to this issue: developing online platforms, audit of RIs, guidelines for access, roadmaps for RIs, assessment exercise. He also presented Romanian database of research infrastructure ERRIS and some recent documents on RI topics.

Mr Viktor Nedovic suggested that all WG leaders provide inputs for PA7 website in order to promote its achievements to wider public (e.g. WG on RI could introduce using ERRIS database). Mr Nedovic asked Mr Pascu also to include in presentation of WG on RI a way on which ESFRI and other big research infrastructure within the Danube region could be used by the scientific community.

Ms Jaroslava Szudi stressed that it is crucial in the following period to more activate PA7 working groups and to connect them strongly with PA7 targets, actions and milestones. Therefore, all WG leaders will be asked to send a report on WG activities and proposals in the near future. In the next period, PACs and the coordination teams are willing to conduct a “reborn” of PA7 and it will not be possible without help of WG leaders and other SG members. Also, the PACs would like to know what WG leaders expect from them and how we could jointly produce important results.



Mr Matija Vilfan said that he completely agreed with Ms Szudi and that this is the moment in which PA7 has to do on the mentioned PA “reborn”. It is essential to decide what will be the focus of PA7 activities in the future and it should be clearly communicated. In his opinion, that is something which is missing in the submitted PA implementation report. Also, he thinks that concretisation of ICT topic in PA7 targets and actions is missing. Another recommendation is to improve visibility of PA7 in the future.

Updating PA7 Actions and Milestones in accordance with new PA7 targets

Ms Lubica Pitlova presented the current status on updating PA7 actions and milestones in accordance with the new targets. Since the time for discussion on this topic was limited during the 11th PA7 SG meeting, PAC team asked SG members to send their comments/input by the end of August 2016. Only three answers are received: Czech Republic, Austria, and Germany (BW). Besides suggesting new milestones, representatives of Austria and Germany (BW) sent the following comments: the distinction between T-A-M is not always clear, the milestones do not have a timeline, involving the Danube Rectors Conference as observing member on a regular basis to our SG meetings. **Ms Martina Hartl** said that other WGs should also add their inputs in PA7 actions and milestones. **Mr Matija Vilfan** stated that some WGs are missing from the milestones (ICT, RI). He also suggested the possibility to use 2017 as a baseline for measuring targets/actions/milestones. There is no need to measure it per year – it is better to measure it in a certain period of time.

Information on the PA7 activities in the next 3 years based on the project proposal submitted to DTP

Ms Jaroslava Szudi presented activities of PA7 coordination team related to the project proposal submitted to the Danube Transnational Programme. DTP call for the technical assistance of the EUSDR PACs was launched on 12th September 2016 and was opened until 21st October 2016. Although the PA7 Coordination team hesitated whether to submit project proposal, at the end the PA7 proposal for technical assistance in 2017 – 2019 was submitted. In the submitted project proposal, it was stated that a society based on knowledge needs competitive research and education infrastructure, innovation supporting and facilitating institutions, and high performing ICT. These challenges will be dealt with within the framework of the new project, aiming also to ensure coherence and continuity with the activities performed within PA7 by now and to help overcoming the disparities in our priority area within the Danube Region.

The project includes a set of 3 WPs and various activities, which are aiming at supporting PA7 in implementing the EUSDR and in delivering results under the EUSDR Targets and Actions. Selected topics for future PA7 strategic focus are: strengthening cooperation among education and research institutions and industry in the DR; enhancing Danube Coordination Funding Network (DFCN) aiming at the better coordination of available financial resources in the Danube region; supporting common R&I projects taking into account countries smart specialization.

In order to achieve the main objective of the project, i.e. "to ensure the implementation of a stable and effective governance system for PA7", project partners selected three main specific objectives to be achieved: to support the SG in implementing EUSDR; to support communication and growing visibility of PA7 and dissemination of PA's achievement; and to



enhance coordination between PA's actors and to encourage involvement of key stakeholders in key PA7 activities.

The two project partners agreed to work on achieving them through the implementation of 3 Work Packages: WP1: Management, Publicity and Communication; WP 2: Policy Development; and WP 3: Cooperation and Coordination of the PA7.

At the end of presentation, Ms Jaroslava Szudi emphasized that without SG voice and active participation it will be difficult to coordinate PA7 in the next three years and invited SG members to give their full contribution in the following period.

Ms Lubica Pitlova thanked to Ms Jaroslava Szudi, Ms Dijana Strbac and DSP for their efforts in preparing and submitting PA7 project proposal. **Mr Viktor Nedovic** joined these words of appreciation.

Ms Martina Hartl proposed to check approved DTP projects and see how to relate with them.

Information on COST related activities, Multilateral Danube call

Ms Martina Hartl informed the participants on current status related to COST targeted network for the Danube Region. After the expert workshop in Novi Sad, proposal outline submitted to COST at the end of May 2016. In the early July she received an answer that current TNs must be analysed before launching any new TN and that final answer could be given after the CSO meeting (beginning of December 2016). She invited all SG members to lobby at their representatives in CSO in order to get approval for COST targeted network for the Danube Region. She also invited DSP to offer us full support in this process since they have cooperation with COST.

Ms Hartl presented the outcomes of Multilateral Danube call which was a pilot call for opening up bilateral activities in the DR with four participating countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Serbia). The call had a very good response (40 submitted project proposals in Austria and similar in other countries). Selection process will be conducted in December 2016 and projects will start on January 1st 2017. From the Austrian side, new call for 2017 is envisaged and all Danube countries are invited to join.

At the end, Ms Hartl presented a request for a PA7 letter of recommendation. Project proposers from Austria (Technical University of Vienna) are planning to submit project proposal "Down to Earth – Earthen Architecture in the Danube Region" to the next DTP call and would like to receive PA7 LoR. "Down to Earth" tackles the preservation and revitalisation of earthen architecture by collecting and distributing knowledge, public participation, developing strategies and recommendations for a transnational legal framework and spreading corporate knowledge about earthen constructions as a tool for sustainable and energy-efficient buildings. The project has partners from Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Serbia. PACs and SG members agreed to review the project description document and to issue LoR by November 15 2016.



PA7 Flagship projects

INT-VET: Mr Chudoba and Ms Pitlova updated the SG members on the recent project activities, which are at this stage related mainly to the dissemination activities of the project's successes. Participant of the upcoming EUSDR 5th Annual forum on 3-4 November 2016 will have an opportunity to attend Workshop No. 1 – one of its parts will be focused on sharing of the practical information from the implementation of dual vocational education in Slovakia.

RIS3 in the EUSDR Downstream regions/countries - State of the art

Mr Viktor Nedovic has informed the audience that there is cooperation with JRC in developing RIS3 in Danube Region countries. JRC has targeted three countries in 2016 which are part of the Danube Region and still do not have RIS3 (Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine) and offered support in the process of RIS3 development. On the level of the Republic of Serbia, it is established inter-ministerial working group which consists of all stakeholders relevant for RIS3. The first meeting with JRC representative was organised in Belgrade on October 11th 2016. In November 2016 will be organised the first workshop/meeting between JRC and three targeted countries in Seville, Spain. This meeting will also attend countries observers: Albania, FYR Macedonia and Tunisia. He also added that the process of RIS3 development was a topic for conversation with colleagues from the governments of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina and that he expects very soon progress in these countries as well. **Ms Matija Vilfan** said that PA8 has WG which deals with the RIS3 and we could connect with them.

EUSDR strategic projects

Ms Dijana Strbac informed the participants on current status in using EUSDR strategic project labelling tool. At first she briefly introduced strategic project's purpose, scope, criteria, identification and selection process. During the 11th SG meeting there was a lively discussion on this issue and she presented main outcomes from this meeting. After the meeting, PA7 coordination team organised a survey by email and asked SG members for their suggestions in strategic project labelling. The following answers were received: DFCN should be on the list of EUSDR strategic projects (as a "process contributing to the priority area"); Project Excellence-in-ReSTI (submitted to the DTP first call, invited to the 2nd stage, contributes to the establishment of support centers for R&I stakeholders); Project ResInfra@DR (also submitted to the DTP first call, invited to the second stage, contributes to improving the cooperation of research infrastructures); Coordination of S3 development and implementation, exchange and training on this topic; Danube-INCO.NET could be / should be labelled as a strategic project and if this could lend it some "power" in the argument to be "continued" or for a potential follow-up call.

In order to open a floor for discussion, two groups of questions were prepared: 1) relationship between strategic and flagship projects, 2) next steps and approach of PA7 in this process. SG representatives per countries were asked to give their opinions.

Mr Miroslav Lovric (Croatia) said that scientific community should be involved in the process of strategic projects labelling. **Mr Adrian Pascu (Romania)** said that flagship projects should automatically become strategic projects. **Mr Balasz Kapli (Hungary)** said that it should be



analysed funding sources. **Mr Bela Kardon** said that we should not search for strategic projects. On the contrary, we should be visible and they will come. In the ideal situation, if some funds would be available for strategic projects, we would have many applications. **Mr Stefan Chudoba** mentioned another project that could obtain a status of a strategic project, because of its significance in the DR in relation with developing of its education systems and building the knowledge society within DR countries. The preliminary focus of this project will be the inclusive education in our countries. The SG members and all relevant partners will be informed about the project and asked for opinion and help by building the core partnership. **Ms Martina Hartl** said that in her opinion, we should have three levels in finding strategic projects: inviting all flagship projects to apply for strategic project label; awarding SP label to project proposals that are searching for funding; awarding SP label to approved projects that need promotion. **Ms Nada Milosevic** (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia) presented herself since it was her first participation on PA7 SG meeting and stated that she as a national contact point for Horizon 2020 could see a lot of opportunities for finding truly strategic projects for EUSDR PA7.

Mr Matija Vilfan said that the discussion is going in the right direction, but that we are making a huge effort where there is no point of doing it. He believes that we should find projects that reflect focus of our PA and give them SP label. One approach could be that each WG chooses one project for awarding SP label. In his opinion, it should not be awarded more than five projects with SP label. He informed the participants that so far no project has received SP label and that the next NC meeting is in February 2017.

Danube-INCO.NET progress, Stakeholders Mapping (D2.9 of the Danube-INCO.NET project)

Mr Bela Kardon presented results of Danube-INCO.NET project in terms of policy dialogue, coordination of funding, analysis and support and tackling priority challenges energy/bio-economy. Results in the area of policy dialogue are: Report on the coordination of EUSDR Priority Areas and establishment of Working Groups; Stakeholder mapping report published end of September 2016; A series of policy recommendations for the inclusion of non-EU Member States into ERA and the Innovation Union; Results of first and second Danube-INCO.NET policy dialogue workshops on “Innovation Union and ERA in the Danube Region”; 1st Draft of the White paper “Priority Areas Cross-fertilisation perspective on Innovation and Technology Transfer”; Position paper about Spreading Excellence and Widening Participation Work Programme of H2020. Related to the coordination of funding the following results are relevant: establishment of Danube Funding Coordination Network; Report on development of coordination of joint funding mechanisms; planning Joint Workshop with Joint Programming Initiative Urban Europe. In the area of analysis and support results are: studies (Co-publication and Co-patenting Analysis, Study on cooperation barriers, Analysis of research and innovation projects in the region and transferability of results), Policy mix peer review carried out for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, established several Danube Transfer Centres; S3 Design Learning Workshop (Chisinau, 18-19 February).



In the 2nd part, Mr Kardon presented the outcomes of the report “Mapping of relevant stakeholders describing activities, positions and good practices including recommendations for synergies” prepared in the frame of the Danube-INCO.NET. The main goal of this report is to support the better exploitation of existing initiatives and programmes, an enhanced dialogue among stakeholders, as well as more targeted actions in the field of R&I and education with an overarching aim of supporting the implementation of the related actions of EUSDR. The report examined over 40 stakeholders among others: networks, associations, organizations of an intergovernmental feature, international organizations, EU programmes and initiatives as well as other relevant international actors. Main aspects of policy recommendations were made relating to the following issues: reinforced policy dialogue among regional stakeholders to exploit synergies and achieve mutual goals, enhanced involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of EUSDR, extending joint programmes to connect and exploit their potentials of the Region, practical support to the RI community, strengthened dialogue among the academia – industry – government.

Invitation to 5th EUSDR Annual forum

Ms Lubica Pitlova presented Slovak Presidency of the EUSDR in 2016 in terms of key priority topics in R&D, R&D events and invitation to the 5th Annual forum of the EUSDR. She explained the agenda of the Forum and especially Workshop 1 – Knowledge society. She invited all participants to take part in the Forum and other mentioned events.

Ms Martina Hartl announced that Annual meeting of the Danube Rectors’ Conference will be held on November 9th in Krems, Austria. The Danubius Award Ceremony is scheduled for this occasion too.

Conclusions

Mr Viktor Nedovic said that during this meeting was opened a lot of issues and that was a good starting point for various activities in the following period. The participants agreed on the following:

- It is necessary to activate PA7 WGs and more connect them with PA7 activities. Leaders of all WGs will receive a template by email in which they will have to present their future activities.
- It is highly important active participation of all SG members in PA7 activities (meetings, discussions, email communication).
- Updating PA7 actions and milestones will be continued via email in communication with all SG members.
- Approach of PA7 in EUSDR strategic project labelling will be created on the basis of the meeting discussion and SG members will be informed via email.
- SG members will receive via email more info on project proposal “Down to Earth” and will be asked for the opinion on awarding this project proposal with PA7 LoR.