

EUSDR PA7 13th Steering Group Meeting

Minutes

Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (SCSTI)

27 June 2017

Bratislava, Slovakia

The 13th Steering Group (SG) Meeting of Priority Area 7 (PA7) was hosted by the Slovak coordination team of the PA7 and took place in the premises of the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (SCSTI) on Tuesday 27 June 2017.

The list of all participants of the meeting is presented in Annex I.

Presentations from the meeting were sent to all participants and can be found at the PA7 official webpage on the following link: <https://www.danubeknowledgesociety.eu/files/directory/24>

Agenda - Part I

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| 9:00 – 9:30 | Arrival and welcome coffee/tea Registration |
| 9:30 – 10:00 | Welcome (15 min) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> by Marek Hajduk and Lubica Pitlova –Division of Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport (SK) by Viktor Nedovic - Priority Area 7 Coordinator (RS); Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development Tour de Table (15 min) <i>Introduction of all newly appointed members, observers and invited guests</i> |
| 10:00 – 10:20 | Introduction of Final Progress Report on PA7 implementation <i>(10 min) by Dijana Strbac and Jaroslava Szüdi</i> Discussion (10 min) |
| 10:20-10:50 | Information on new DTP-PAC7 project for 2017-2019 <i>(10 min) by Dijana Strbac</i> PA7 Workplan for 2017 <i>(10 min) by Jaroslava Szüdi</i> Discussion (10 min) |
| 10:50-11:15 | Information on the DTP Seed Money Facility Call <i>(15 min) by Jaroslava Szüdi</i> Discussion (10 min) |

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| 11:15-11:40 | DTP-Capitalisation Strategy – ways of cooperation (Thematic pole 2: RDI framework support) <i>(15 min) by Ines Marinkovic</i> Discussion (10 min) |
| 11:40-12:00 | Information on the Danube INCO.NET <i>(10 min) by Felix Gajdusek</i> Discussion (10 min) |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | Lunch |

Agenda - Part II

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|----------------------|---|
| 13:00 – 13:45 | Working Groups reports <i>(25 min together) - PechaKucha style, i.e. 5 minutes for each WG leader</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WG 1: Higher education and mobility by PAC7 team • WG 2: ICT by Niko Samec and Mladen Kraljic • WG 3: Danube Funding Coordination Network by Ulrike Kunze • WG 4: Communication with Joint Research Centre with special emphasis on RIS3 by Moritz Haller Discussion on possible new WG and their leadership (20 min) |
| 13:45-14:15 | Updates within current Flagship Projects <i>(30 min together) - PechaKucha style, i.e. 5 minutes each for Project leader</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DREAM by Angelika Riegler • Danube:Future by Sebastian Schaffer • DO-IT by Mladen Kraljic • INT-VET by Lubica Pitlova |
| 14:15 – 14:30 | Upcoming events of interest & AOB (15 min) |
| 14:30 – 14:45 | Conclusions and farewell |
| 14:45 – 17:00 | Optional bilateral meetings and discussions by coffee/tea |

MINUTES

PART I

1) Official Opening

The welcome speech was addressed by Dr. Marek Hajduk, Director General of the Division of Science and Technology on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Mr. Hajduk welcomed all Steering Group members, all Working Group leaders and Flagship project leaders, as well as observers and honorable guests that were present on the meeting. In regard to the EC's Report on Implementation of Macro-Regional Strategies, which was released a few months ago and underlines the contribution of these strategies to territorial cohesion Mr. Hajduk emphasized the need to maintain a strong political commitment for the implementation of macro-regional strategies in the participating countries, as well as to improve coordination and mutual cooperation among them. Mr. Hajduk passed the floor to Ms. Ľubica Pitlová who welcomed all participants on behalf of both PA7 coordinators. Ms. Pitlova encouraged all participants to take an active role within the PA7 and enhance support to the knowledge society development in the Danube region for mutual benefit of its individual countries, as well as of the region as a whole.

A Tour de table followed so as the new SG members and invited guests could introduce themselves, which also served as a platform to introduce the vision of all participants and a clearer overview of their interests.

Afterwards, the Agenda of the meeting was introduced and adopted.

2) Introduction of Final Progress Report on PA7 implementation

The Final Progress Report on PA7 implementation was presented by Dijana Strbac from Serbian PA7 coordination team. The aim of this presentation was to introduce undertaken PA7 activities on overall coordination and cooperation in the field of higher education, research and innovation in the Danube Region in period July-December 2016.

3) Information on new DTP-PAC7 project for 2017-2019

In the following presentation Ms. Strbac introduced the new PAC7 Project for the years 2017-2019 that is being implemented in the framework of Danube Transnational Programme (DTP). The DTP provides co-financing to the activities carried out by the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). According to the implementation of Specific Objective 4.2, a dedicated call for the financial support of the EUSDR PACs has been launched on 12th September 2016. This first call for proposals addressed to EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) was open until 21st October 2016.

The project proposal prepared by PAC7 teams was successfully submitted and approved by the DTP Monitoring Committee on 8 December 2016.

In this regard Ms. Strbac explained the challenges addressed by the project, strategic focus of PA7, methodological approach, specific objectives and work packages leading to their fulfilment.

During the open discussion the financing issues of the project were briefly explained. Dr. Ulrike Kunze (DE), supported by other participants, underlined the importance of continuation of DFCN activities, which can be successfully pursued in the future also due to this project.

Dr. Buchbauer (AT) welcomed the thematically focused work packages of the new PA7 project and noted that the combination of PAs work and the Danube INCO.NET project in the previous period was a good example how cooperation can work well and bring valuable results. At the same time Dr. Buchbauer proposed that similar activities should be further supported by the European Commission (EC).

German and Austrian delegates also highlighted a support for a policy dialogue - coordination of policies and fostering discussion among policy makers and other relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Haller (JRC) commented on the planned activities within Work Package 2 – Policy dialogue of the new DTP-PAC7 project (and one of PA7 main targets) oriented on the development of RIS3 strategies in the whole Danube Region – especially in non-EU countries. He mentioned that a complementarity and continuation between already undertaken actions is needed. A focus on education/training for the newcomers shall be provided and the knowledge gained should be reinforced and taken beyond.

4) PA7 Work plan for 2017

Jaroslava Szüdi prepared an overview of the PA7 Roadmapping and Work plan preparation included in the Annexes of the Final Progress Report on PA7 implementation and related to the activities of the new DTP-PAC7 project. The idea of the work plans and roadmaps as such is excellent however the PAC7 team and SG were facing several difficulties with its preparation due to the limitations given by the EUSDR Action Plan – as all activities undertaken for the progress of PAs targets shall be related to the actions adopted by the EUSDR Action Plan - COM(2010) 715.

PA7 coordinators on behalf of the whole SG reported several times to the EC that some actions in the Action Plan (connected mainly to ICT and research infrastructures) are either very ambitious or not relevant to the PA's mission. In this sense PACs regularly updated the PA7 roadmaps reported in Annual reports. This was later also transferred in the PA7's updated set of targets in May 2016. The DSP however asked PA7 coordinators to insist on the original actions that nowadays do not seem very realistic. Detailed information on preparation of the Roadmap and Work Plan can be found at the following link (p. 13-14): https://www.danube-region.eu/attachments/article/616560/EUSDR%20PA%20Reporting%202016_guidance_FIN_AL.pdf.

During the discussion on this point some SG members (DE, AT, HU, SL) expressed their support to the PAC7 team with regard to the activities leading towards better coordination of research funding in the Danube region. They also expressed their support for the implementation of concrete joint activities within running and forthcoming initiatives, e.g. support of mobility of researchers, RIS3 strategies development, dissemination of information about dedicated calls within other PAs/DTP/other programmes, etc. PA7 meets the objectives of the EUSDR within the scope of its capacities (personal and financial). As for the targets and actions it is necessary to maintain flexibility and adapt to the current challenges. SG members present at the meeting agreed that PA7 should continue with its work and re-approved the updated roadmap, which can still be updated and elaborated.

German and Austrian SG members (supported by HU) expressed concerns with the increased administrative burden related to PACs work that needs to be taken care of in the future so that priority areas could focus on real work and impact – searching for cooperation possibilities, stakeholder engagement and successful projects implementation leading to a stronger and more prosperous region. SG members empowered PAC to submit a letter to the EC explaining the above mentioned issues on behalf of all participating countries.

5) Information on the DTP Seed Money Facility Call

Jaroslava Szüdi presented brief information on the planned DTP Call – Seed Money Facility and its features. Specific topics related to the PA7 were explained to the audience. The official launching conference on Seed Money Facility organized by DTP will take place in Vienna on 27 September 2017. The link for registration for the event is as followed: http://www.danube-region.eu/communication/events/600221-dtp-seedmoney-facility-official-launching-conference/event_details

6) DTP-Capitalisation Strategy with (Thematic pole 2: RDI framework support)

The possibilities on cooperation between the Thematic pole 2 and PA7 were outlined by Ms. Ines Marinkovic – leader of the Thematic Pole 2 from the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI, AT). DTP has designed its own Capitalisation Strategy, which is valorising and building upon the knowledge resulting from projects working in a common thematic field. Several possibilities for common capitalisation activities were mentioned. The next step is to organize a meeting to properly discuss what capitalisation means/can bring, and plan the future concrete steps.

7) Danube INCO.NET project and follow-up activities

Mr. Felix Gajdusek – project coordinator from the Centre for Social Innovation (ZSI, AT) presented the main outcomes achieved within the Danube INCO.NET project, which was a coordination and support action funded under the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) and addressed the EUSDR in the field of research and innovation (R&I). Furthermore the

presentation contained information on the project's main challenges, uncovered topics and raised the questions on how to potentially work together on these topics in the future, how to learn from the failures and how to promote and disseminate the impact after 3.5 years of the project.

The project made significant efforts to ensure that events, publications and policy recommendations related to R&I cooperation in the Danube Region are thoroughly disseminated. The main project results can be found on the following webpage: <https://danube-inco.net/about/projectresults>

PART II

In the second part of the SG meeting participants were informed about the progress achieved within working groups and currently running flagship projects.

1) Working Groups (WGs) reports and future plans

Information from the following WGs were addressed by their representatives in PechaKucha format:

WG 1: Higher education and mobility by PAC7 team

Ms. Dijana Strbac explained that they unfortunately did not manage to get any inputs from WG leader (prof. Dr Ivanka Popovic), but that prof. Dr Viktor Nedovic will try to get updates as soon as possible and evaluate the results achieved.

WG 2: ICT by Mladen Kraljic

Mr. Kraljic presented the main activities, achievements and challenges of the WG2. The main recommendation (within PA7) would be to focus on ICT as a field of science and research. Mr. Kraljic also mentioned that some activities of this WG belong in some ways rather to the capacity building and the possible linkages can therefore be discussed together with PA10 in the future.

WG 3: Danube Funding Coordination Network by Ulrike Kunze

Dr. Kunze similarly introduced the activities undertaken within PA7's most active WG, whose main aim is to support joint scientific, technological and innovation activities in the Danube Region by coordinating national, bilateral and regional efforts to foster multilateral cooperation. The main recommendations include: a stronger commitment from countries participating in actions or calls; implementation of a clear project and call management (Secretariat?) and functioning communication channels between funding agencies during all phases of the call and/or better harmonisation and coordination throughout the joint actions.

WG 4: Communication with Joint Research Centre with special emphasize on RIS3 by Moritz Haller and Dijana Strbac

Mr. Haller introduced the main mission of JRC, which is to support EU policies with independent evidence throughout the whole policy cycle. JRC supports PA7 to fulfil its main targets via organization of various events and provision of supporting data, tools or projects for the mutual benefit of citizens, businesses and environment. Mr. Haller further explained the role and activities of JRC within refinement and implementation of RIS3 strategies in lagging regions, possible cooperation within PAs on the future Roma Atlas project, as well as opportunities for young talented researchers from the Danube Region offered within JRC institutes.

Ms. Dijana Strbac briefly presented, on behalf of Mr Viktor Nedovic, progress related to RIS3 development in Danube Region countries and JRC role in that process. In 2016, JRC targeted three Danube Region countries for support in the process of creating Smart Specialisation Strategy: Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova. In each of these countries are created teams which will be working on RIS3 development. Mr Nedovic is leader of Serbian team. In January 2017 is organised a seminar for teams from these three countries and also for the countries observers (Albania, Macedonia, Tunisia). On this seminar was developed a Roadmap for RIS3 development for all three targeted countries. Also, it was defined what kind of expert help is needed for each country. In April 2017 in Chisinau was organised a technical meeting between teams from three targeted countries, JRC staff and experts. During this meeting was defined which data are necessary for preliminary analyses. On July 3-5 2017 in Belgrade will be organised another meeting on which experts will present preliminary results and then will be organised bilateral meetings with team members from Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine. Third day of the meeting will attend representatives of Montenegro which means that this DR country will also start cooperation with JRC related to RIS3 development. When it comes to the activities in Serbia related to this, it was created interministerial working group, prepared roadmap is transferred into plan of activities and operational and analytical teams were created.

Since Serbian PAC is strongly involved in these activities and WG on Communication with JRC is led by Slovak PAC, the proposal was that Serbian PAC overtakes the leadership role of this WG.

WG 5: Research and Innovation by PAC7 team

Mr. Vulturescu (RO) informed PAC7 team in written form that the Romanian team does not have capacities to cover the tasks of WG5 and asked SG to take an appropriate decision on the continuation or possible closure of this WG.

After discussion with thematic pole 2 leader Ms. Ines Marinkovic, the PAC7 team considered the possibilities of making WG5 more active in a potential connection with the DTP-capitalisation strategy.



Another meeting on this issue will be organized in either Bratislava or in Vienna in the near future. The SG will be informed about its results in written form or at the upcoming SG meeting.

2) Updates within current Flagship Projects

Information from the following projects were received in a PechaKucha style:

DREAM project was introduced by Ms. Angelika Riegler. The project focuses on improving the research infrastructure and cooperation between research institutions in the Danube basin. The main objectives are to derive monitoring strategies, modelling and engineering solutions to improve measures to reach a win-win situation between economic use and environmental protection of the Danube River.

Danube:Future was presented by Mr. Sebastian Schaffer. This project offers solutions for pressing environmental issues and works towards a sustainable future of the region focusing on cultural and natural heritage. Its objective is to develop interdisciplinary research and education in the Danube River Basin, in particular strengthening a long-term humanities' perspective.

Information on **DO-IT** project was addressed by Mr. Mladen Kraljic. DO-IT project is primarily focused on fostering a symbiotic relationship between research institutions, industry, other support institutions and local communities through open innovative technologies. The main objective is to establish 3 pillars: 1) innovation support ("one-stop-shop"); 2) R&D regional infrastructures; and 3) R&D for the development of new value-added products and services.

INT-VET project was introduced by Ľubica Pitlová. This project was implemented with the support of Erasmus+ program from 10/2014 until 01/2017 with the main aim of introducing elements of vocational education and training (VET) in the Slovak Republic based on the experience of DE and AT partners, as well as promoting a national VET system reform, setting up a competence centre for dual VET (Danube Academy), mobilizing SMEs and companies for dual apprenticeships and implementing an experience exchange for apprenticeships.

DANUBIUS by Viorel Vulturescu (in written) – Danubius project has been listed as an ESFRI project in 2016 roadmap and on 1 December 2016 its Preparatory Phase started (3 years). More information can be found at: <http://www.danubius-ri.eu/>.

3) Conclusions and AOB

SG members and other PA7 stakeholders are invited to take part at the following events:

- 27 September 2017: **DTP Seed Money Facility Call** – kick-off event in Vienna
- 17 October 2017: **Danube Participation Day** in Budapest
- 18 – 19 October 2017: **6th EUSDR Annual Forum** in Budapest
- **14th PA7 SG meeting** – the date and venue will be circulated after discussion with Mr. Balázs Kápli, as there is a possibility to host the meeting back to back with the Hungarian Presidency of the EUSDR

Summary of other important tasks and issues:

- **Capitalisation Strategy** – PA7 team together with Thematic Pole 2 leader will organize a meeting to clarify the potential future cooperation within the pole for the mutual benefit of all sides;
- **Continuation or closure of WG1 and WG5** – at the upcoming SG meeting a decision by SG will be taken on whether these working groups will continue and if yes, in what forms. A more concrete vision for their continuation will be introduced.
- **Inform DG Regio representatives** - PAC team with the endorsement of SG members will inform DG Regio representatives on the issue of the current work plan and roadmapping.

Annex I

| COUNTRY | NAME | SURNAME | EMAIL | POSITION |
|----------|--------------|------------|---------------------------------|--|
| SK | Lubica | Pitlová | lubica.pitlova@minedu.sk | PA7 SK team |
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| SK | Jaroslava | Szüdi | jaroslava.szudi@minedu.sk | PA7 SK team |
| DE | Matthias | Hack | Matthias.Hack@bmbf.bund.de | DFCN co-chair and member, PA7 SG observer |
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| DE | Ulrike | Kunze | Ulrike.Kunze@dlr.de | DFCN co-chair and member, PA7 SG observer |
| AT | Christian | Gollubits | christian.gollubits@bmwfw.gv.at | PA7 SG and DFCN substitute member |
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| CZ | Renata | Hrubá | renata.hrubá@msmt.cz | Czech 'Republic PA 7 and DFCN observer |
| DE | Anna | Lechner | Anna.Lechner@stmbw.bayern.de | PA7 SG member |
| ME | Milena | Milonjić | milena.milonjic@mna.gov.me | Ministry of Science of Montenegro |
| HR | Miroslav | Lovric | Miroslav.Lovric@mzo.hr | PA7 SG member |
| RS | Viktor | Nedović | viktor.nedovic@mpn.gov.rs | PA7 co-coordinator |
| RS | Dijana | Štrbac | dijana.strbac@pupin.rs | PA7 RS team |
| BE (JRC) | Moritz | Haller | Moritz.HALLER@ec.europa.eu | JRC representative (PA7 observer, WG4 - cooperation with JRC) |
| HU | Balázs | Kápli | balazs.kapli@nkfih.gov.hu | PA7 SG member |
| AT | Sebastian | Schaffer | s.schaeffer@idm.at | Danube-Future / speaker |
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