

## XV PA7 Steering Group Meeting

June 13, 2018

Venue: Hotel Bôrik, Bratislava

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The 15<sup>th</sup> Steering Group (SG) Meeting of Priority Area 7 (PA7) was hosted by Slovak coordination team of the PA7 and took place in the premises of Hotel Bôrik on 13th June 2018.

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/33>

### Agenda

9:30 – 10:00	<b>Registration of Participants</b>
10:00-10:15	<b>Official welcome on behalf of Priority Area coordinators and on behalf of the European Commission (DG REGIO and DG JRC)</b>
10:15-10:35	<b>PA7 update on activities and future plans</b>
	Progress Report (01.01.2017-31.12.2017) Information on passed events and on upcoming activities Revision of the EUSDR Action Plan  <i>Discussion</i>
10:35-11:35	<b>Information on PA7 Flagship Projects &amp; possible new project proposals</b>
	DREAM (D. Gangl) Danube : Future (V. Winiwarter) DO-IT (M. Kraljic) Possibility of new project ideas (R. Delina)  <i>Discussion</i>

11:35-11:50	<b>Coffee break</b>
11:50-12:30	<b>Information on PA7 Working Groups (questionnaire evaluation) + updates from the Danube Rectors Conference</b>
	<p>WG 1 HEI and motilities + DRC (<i>I. Popovic + F. Faulhammer</i>)</p> <p>WG 2 RIS3 development + JRC (<i>D. Strbac</i>)</p> <p>WG 3 DFCN (<i>Ch. Gollubits + D. Strbac</i>)</p> <p>Information on COST Connect Day</p> <p>Information on Danube Region Multilateral Call</p> <p>Information on AT PRES 2018 priorities in R&amp;D&amp;I</p> <p>WG 4 ICT (<i>M. Kraljic</i>)</p> <p>WG 5 Research Infrastructures (<i>J. Szüdi + F. Gajdusek</i>)</p> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
12:30-13:30	<b>Lunch break</b>
13:30-14:15	<b>Capitalisation Strategy</b>
	DTP Capitalisation Strategy - updates from the thematic poles ( <i>D. Ács, P. Kiss, F. Gajdusek, TP9-tbc</i> )
14:15-15:15	<b>Capitalisation within other Programmes and Projects</b>
	<p>Information on Baden-Württemberg Cooperation Programme for Future-Oriented Science &amp; Education (<i>B. Finger</i>)</p> <p>Presentation of PA4 activities (<i>A. Vranovska + A. Kurecova</i>)</p> <p>Information on Euro Science Open Forum (<i>A. Lombardo</i>)</p> <p>Presentation of the ENRICH centres (<i>B. Kardon</i>)</p> <p>Presentation on cooperation within SFIC (<i>R. Koenig</i>)</p> <p><i>Discussion</i></p>
15:15-15:30	<b>AoB</b>
	<b>Conclusions and Follow-up</b>
15:30-17:00	<b>Possible Bilateral and Individual meetings</b>

# Minutes

## 1. Official welcome on behalf of Priority Area coordinators and on behalf of the European Commission (DG REGIO and DG JRC)

The welcome speech was addressed by Ms. Lubica Pitlova (PA7 co-ordinator) on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Ms. Pitlova welcomed all Steering Group members, all Working Group leaders and project leaders, as well as observers and guests that were present at the meeting. Ms. Pitlova informed participants about taking over the position of Priority Area Coordinator from Mr. Chudoba who resigned to this position last year.

Ms. Pitlova reminded the proposal of the **new Multiannual Financial Framework** (published on 2 May 2018); proposals for **regional and cohesion policy post 2020** (published on 29 May 2018); as well as proposal of the most ambitious **EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation programme** (published on 7 June 2018), which will definitely influence the development of the European Research Area including Knowledge Society in the Danube Region post 2020. Ms. Pitlova further noted that in 2 weeks' time (on 26 June 2018) all EUSDR priority area coordinators meet with commissioner Cretu who is responsible for regional development. The main topic of discussion will concern **revision procedures of the EUSDR Action Plan**, in order to align the priorities of the Strategy, as relevant, to those of the future EU policies.

Participants of the meeting were asked for cooperation and inputs in this regard.

Prof. Ivanka Popovic (vice-rector and newly elected rector of the University of Belgrade) welcomed participants on behalf of the Serbian coordination team.

Messages on behalf of DG REGIO and DG JRC were presented at the meeting by Ms. Jaroslava Szüdi (SK) and Ms. Dijana Strbac (RS) and they can be found in **Annex II**.

A Tour de table followed after the official welcome notes.

Ms. Pitlova presented the draft agenda, which was approved by the participants.

## 2. PA7 update on activities and future plans

Ms. Szüdi prepared a brief overview on the **past and upcoming PA7 activities**. Her presentation concerned the following points:

### ➤ Progress Report (01.01.2017-31.12.2017)

- **Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) meeting (February 2018, Sofia) PAC + NC + EC + DTP meeting (May 2018, Sofia)**
- **Horizontal cooperation with PA1a + PA4 + PA5 + PA6 (April 2018, Budapest)**
- **Visegrad 4 (HU+SK+CZ+PL) + SI meetings on R&D&I (April 2018, Budapest)**

As for the first progress report (1.1.2017-31.12.2017) of PA7 coordination team the most important outcomes were:

- organization of 2 steering group meetings and 1 DFCN meeting,
- participation and representation at various capitalisation events, e.g. COST senior officials meeting (NL); Danube INCO.net meeting + RIS3 conference (MD), 2 virtual conferences supporting UA participation in EUSDR, JPND workshop held in AT, DTP capitalisation event organized in AT, Czech innovation days, Danube participation Day and EUSDR annual forum in HU, SFIC meeting in BE, Steering Platform on R&I for Western Balkans in RS, ministerial meeting on R&I in RS etc.,
- organization of meetings with various stakeholders, e.g. H2020 MSCA, Erasmus+, CEEPUS, DRC, JRC, SAIA, etc.,
- preparation of promotion materials (project roll-ups, posters, pens, folders, badges) + disseminating information via PA7 official webpage,
- preparation of PA7 Position Paper for FP9,
- progress related to RIS3 development in DR countries.

Participants were informed about overall implementation of the projects, progress on actions and deliverables, as well as the financial resources used/remaining.

Ms. Szüdi further summarized the **main conclusions of the meeting of priority area coordinators (PACs) and PACs + national coordinators meetings** organized by the BG PRES team in Sofia. At all of these meetings resonated mainly the questions of low political commitment of some member states and the need for the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan.

At last Ms. Szüdi informed about the **activities with other Priority Areas and within Platform V4 countries + SI**, and shared tips and best case practice examples from the other priority areas (e.g. [Database of projects by PA1a](#)).

In the followed discussion Mr. Bernd Finger noted in regards with the PA1a database of projects that it would be interesting to know what PA1a calls a project. Mr. Felix Gajdusek asked for clarification on the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan and Prof. Faulhammer enquired if there were already more concrete information about the new Danube Strategy Point.

Ms. Pitlova expressed that PAC7 team will try to find out more information about the database of PA1a projects and to clarify the methodology of the data collection.

Ms. Szüdi briefly updated that the Danube Transnational Programme launched a call for proposal aimed at establishing the Danube Strategy Point. The call was open from 08.05.2018 till 11.06.2018 at 15:00 CET and Slovakia (together with Hungary and Ukraine) was one of the applicants. The results of the call shall be officially announced by the end of July/beginning of August and the new Danube Strategy Point shall operate from the beginning of September.

The next presentation was prepared by Ms. Pitlova on **Revision of the EUSDR Action Plan**. Ms. Pitlova stressed that the key element of the strategy is coordination, by encouraging the increase in the level and quality of network activities, strengthening the existing regional and interregional cooperation but also fostering new cooperation.

Since in 2018 new Multiannual Financial Framework as well as proposals for regional and cohesion policy post 2020 started taking shape, the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan should duly take these developments into account.

**In this framework, new deliverables bound to 2028 need to be clearly identified.**

Ms. Pitlova introduced the preliminary revision procedure:

- *all EUSDR stakeholders should be involved following the bottom-up approach and the EUSDR governance structure*
- *the discussions should start at the level of the Priority Area Steering Committees followed by the endorsement of the National Coordinators*
- *EC through DG REGIO and the relevant line-DGs, shall also be actively involved in the entire process*
- *EC informs that Commissioner Crețu is willing to launch the process during a further joint NC-PACs meeting, which is scheduled on 26 June 2018 in Brussels*

In the context of the upcoming revision and meeting with commissioner Cretu, Ms. Pitlova asked all participants to send their comments to the following questions **before 22 June, 2018**:

- ***Do you agree that there is a need for a review of the EUSDR Action Plan?***
- ***Do you consider that the Priority Areas should be optimised?***
- ***Do you have any comments/suggestions on how the revision process should be organized based on the proposed Roadmap?***

The proposed plan for revision of the EUSDR Action plan can be found in **Annex III**.

In the following discussion Prof. Faulhammer offered to use the capacities of the Danube Rectors Conference and their expertise by the revision of the Action Plan.

### 3. Information on PA7 Flagship Projects & possible new project proposals

**Updates on the implementation of the DREAM project** were introduced by Ms. Doris Gangl. This project focuses on improving the research infrastructure and cooperation between research institutions in the Danube basin. As **main achievements** were mentioned: research channel and supply line for the AT hydraulic laboratory (between Danube and Danube canal) finished in 2014 (funded by the INTERREG V-A AT-HU 2017-2013 project SEDDON); detailed planning of the AT laboratory finished - groundbreaking ceremony of the AT laboratory in Vienna is planned on June 26th 2018; cooperation within various bi- and multilateral projects e.g. ERDF contracts/decrees were signed recently (SEDDON II - Interreg V-A AT-HU on 23rd February 2018; SEDECO - Interreg V-A AT-CZ on 6th November 2017; DREAM SK-AT - Interreg V-A SK-AT on 6th February 2018); installing sediment monitoring stations along the Danube in SK and HU are in progress.

Ms. Gangl informed participants also about the recent news achieved within the implementation of **ResInfra@DR - DTP project** from the Thematic Pole II, in which BOKU belongs to the project partners. From the **project outputs** were mentioned: 4+1 stakeholders dialogue workshops in 2017+2018; 3 guidelines (Ex ante Assessment of R&I investment; Monitoring guidance for existing ones; Socio-economic Impact assessment guidelines); 2 recommendations to Research Infrastructure policy makers and practitioners on the establishment, operation and durability; 3 trainings for R&I policy makers and potential reviewers (in total 75 trainees); reviewers registry (200 qualified profiles); Strategy for sustainable Research Infrastructures in the Danube Region; Pilot action 1: Peer learning action (9 existing/to be upgraded R&Is); Pilot action 2: Ex-ante assessments (3 cases planned RIs).

**Danube:Future project milestone reports** were presented by Prof. Verena Winiwarter. Danube:Future is aimed at establishing an open access knowledge base to which capacity building and research projects can contribute, thus increasing their visibility and accessibility. Prof. Winiwarter however did not speak only about success stories and achievements, but she pointed out also difficulties accompanying project implementation, e.g. **low stakeholders commitment and ownership which are crucial for Danube:Future existence**. Prof Winiwarter emphasised that in order to secure the continued in-kind support of the core universities' faculty, a solid administrative and hence, financial basis is needed. From the **main project outputs** were mentioned: organization of the DIAnet schools for PhD students and Post-Docs); consultations for EUSDR PA10 for new projects development; various networking activities within EUSDR, DRC, AARC; DANUBIUS



Award for Dr. Gertrud Haidvogl (Vice-Coordinator of Danube:Future from BOKU Wien); developing the DF knowledge-base of experts, projects, publications; 1<sup>st</sup> Danube:Future Workshop for building a new Horizon 2020 consortium, improving project visibility through the websites of EUSDR, EUSDR PA7, DRC, Universities and other organizations; publishing of the White paper on integrated sustainable development of the Danube River basin; online surveys; applications for project funds; workshops and interdisciplinary summer schools; participation at the EUSDR annual fora. **Next and last scheduled activity will be a workshop held at Danube Rector's Conference in November 2018. This workshop would engage representatives of DRC-universities who are interested to become active in Danube:Future.**

In the discussion several participants commented on the difficulties connected with low funding or no resources available, mainly when speaking about the networking activities.

PAC7 team and Prof. Faulhammer on behalf of DRC expressed their support on the continuation of the Danube:Future project.

Presentations of Mr. Mladen Kraljic on the recent development within the **DO-IT project** and **WG4 on ICT** had to be postponed and skipped at the end due to the unfavourable traffic situation.

Assoc. Prof. Radoslav Delina from the TU in Košice prepared a detailed **presentation on new project ideas** for the potential involvement of project partners from other Danube Region countries. Three main project ideas are being prepared for the 3<sup>rd</sup> DTP Call planned for 2019 and aimed at the **1) Single data infrastructure for RDI ecosystem** (Objective: to improve transparency and usage of RDI data for more efficient RDI ecosystem performance); **2) Smart, healthy and inclusive gamification** (Objective: to improve quality of life esp. of socially disadvantaged communities); **3) Cloud Enabled Business Information Service for the Danube Region** (Objective: transparent, trusted, cognitive and smart global supply chain ecosystem for Danube region). Other project ideas where the cooperation is offered belong to the following areas: Geospatial data infrastructure; Trusted public procurement service infrastructure; Trust building eService Infrastructure for public e-services and commercial supply chains; Social farming 4.0; Biotechnologies; Socially responsible finance – data driven financial security; Creative learning for young generation; Creative approaches for children to learn and motivate for science.

#### **4. Information on PA7 Working Groups (questionnaire evaluation) + updates from the Danube Rectors Conference**

## **WG 1 HEI and motilities + DRC (*I. Popovic + F. Faulhammer*)**

Prof. Ivanka Popovic from the University of Belgrade introduced two important topics of the WG1, which are visibility of universities in the region and remuneration of researchers involved in international projects (mainly H2020). It would be good to have different repositories with results of universities from the region in different fields and also to work on increasing their visibility.

Inadequate remuneration of researchers participating in international projects in certain countries of the Danube region is creating a strong pressure and it could increase a brain drain. Therefore, Prof. Popovic suggested that PA7 stakeholders should formulate a common position paper regarding the fair remuneration policies within the new EU framework programme to be more convincible and visible at the EU level. Prof. Popovic noted that although this problem does not affect all Danube Region Countries, regional solidarity is expected.

Present PA7 steering group members supported Prof. Popovic and agreed that this problem should be solved, and European Commission has to recognize that the same work cannot be paid so differently.

Prof. Winiwarter noted that OECD prepared a study on the role of regional universities, and not all are carrying out excellence. When acknowledging this we get the answer why the remuneration is different.

Mr. Balazs Kapli pointed that until now it does not look like the new framework programme will bring any revolution in regards with the financial and legal issues, and the rules of participation will not change significantly. However he remarked that the European Commission has to keep awareness that this is a very serious problem.

Mr. Bernd Finger suggested organizing a separate meeting to discuss this issue in a detailed way – to address both technical terms and political problem and find an intelligent approach together.

Mr. Peter Beňo from the Slovak NCP H2020 team supported the discussion on remuneration and suggested two option which can be potentially implemented in the new framework programme, i.e. additional remuneration and /or reimbursement of real costs.

## **WG 2 RIS3 development + JRC (*D. Strbac*)**

Ms. Dijana Strbac presented on behalf of Prof. Viktor Nedovic progress related to RIS3 development in Danube Region countries and JRCs role in that process. Ms. Strbac introduced the topic by explaining the concept of RIS3 and steps for its development. **JRC is involved in the process of RIS3 development** with the following activities: S3 awareness



events; peer reviews of R&I systems; reports on smart specialization in E&N countries; trainings and seminars; links to the EU macroregional strategies.

The second part of presentation was focused on providing participants with the concrete information on progress achieved with RIS3 development in Danube region countries. Since the beginning of 2017 Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine and Montenegro are in the process of RIS3 development, while Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republika Srpska entity) started with the process of RIS3 development in 2018.

RIS3 development in the **Republic of Serbia** officially started in November 2016 when the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted a formal decision to start the procedures for RIS3 preparation. The most important achievements in the process of RIS3 development in Serbia are the following: established Interministerial working group (WG) for RIS3 and the Operational and Analytical team; developed RIS3 Roadmap for Serbia; developed and presented preliminary document "Mapping of economic, innovative and scientific potential in Serbia"; conducted analysis of ICT sector in Serbia; organized first Innovation camp in Serbia was organized on December 14-15, 2017 in cooperation with JRC. The next steps and further planned activities include: analysis in order to reduce the number of priorities; preparation of a structure for EDP process and inclusion of new partners; conclusions from workshops and interviews during EDP; defining final list of priorities and drafting Strategy until end of 2018.

At last the **example of [stakeholder identification tool](#) (Moldova)** was introduced. This tool offers network analysis for the identification of key stakeholders for preliminary priority areas for smart specialisation in Moldova together with interactive visualizations mapping collaboration networks in Moldova.

### **WG 3 DFCN (*Ch. Gollubits + D. Strbac*)**

#### **Information on Danube Region Multilateral Call**

Mr. Christian Gollubits presented the news related to the **2<sup>nd</sup> multilateral call – planned for period between July and September 2018** with 4 participating countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, and Republic of Serbia. Potential new partner countries are Croatia, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovenia. Mr. Gollubits also gave an overview on the basic documents; areas of cooperation; duration of projects; open to all scientific disciplines and thematic areas; eligibility rules; types of grants; and evaluation criteria.

#### **Information on AT PRES 2018 priorities in R&D&I**

The last presentation within DFCN activities was introduction of the priorities of the Austrian Presidency in the Council of the EU (July – December 2018). Mr. Gollubits spoke about the main priorities (**Negotiations on Horizon Europe; Council Conclusions on ERA**

**building on the review of the ERA Advisory Structure by ERAC; Support for Sectoral Policies; e.g. High Performance Computing; European Open Science Cloud; European University Network Initiative; Defense Research, etc.).** Mr. Gollubits also invited PA7 stakeholders to take part in the following **presidency events**:

- **BE OPEN – Science & Society Festival** between 08-12 September 2018 in Vienna;
- **International Conference on Research Infrastructures** between 12-14 September 2018 in Vienna;
- **Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions beyond 2020** on 1-2 October 2018 in Vienna;
- **High-level Conference on EU Defence Research** on 10 October 2018 in Vienna;
- **Impact of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities in Europe** on 28-29 November 2018 in Vienna.

More information on the EU Austrian Presidency can be found on the official [\*\*AT PRES website\*\*](#) or on social media **#EU2018AT**.

### **Information on COST Connect Day**

Ms. Dijana Strbac briefly informed participants about the **cooperation between PA7 (DFCN) and COST Association**, who decided to join forces and organize the first event bringing together researchers from running COST actions with relevant stakeholders in the field of sustainable energy research and innovation in the Danube region. The main objectives is to encourage collaborations between relevant stakeholders and trigger alignment of resources to develop research and innovation on sustainable energy; promote synergies between activities funded through other EU programmes; and provide networking opportunities for all partners involved.

**COST Connect Day** will take place on **10 October 2018 in Belgrade, Serbia**. In case all parties are satisfied with the COST Connect event, another COST Connect event could be planned for 2019, with a primary focus on Agriculture or Agriculture-related topics.

**SG members were invited to propose the potential participants and organisations which have an interest in the topic of energy in order to be invited to attend this event.**

### **New WG 5 Research Infrastructures**

Ms. Jaroslava Szüdi together with Mr. Felix Martin Gajdusek introduced a possibility for re-creation of the WG 5, which has not been active after Romanian PA7 delegates announced

lack of financial capacities and human resources in 2017. This working group activities would be based on activities of the currently running projects within pole 2 (DTP Capitalisation Strategy) with the aim to create links between stakeholders while looking to improve the framework conditions for R&I. Particular focus will be put on policy dialogue; development of new tools and instruments; knowledge transfer, capacity building and awareness raising; better uptake of results (and more impact); outreach to EU-wide initiatives with “one voice”.

As the next step PA7 Slovak team offered to host a Pole 2/PA7 meeting in Bratislava either in last week of June or 1<sup>st</sup> week July in order to identify common possibilities to **cross-use** the projects’ outputs; to develop proposals to DTP on **joint activities**; to discuss ways to increase **TP2 projects’ outreach to PA7 goals (or revised goals)**.

## Capitalisation Strategy

### DTP Capitalisation Strategy- updates from the thematic poles

*(D. Ács, P. Kiss, F. Gajdusek, TP9-tbc)*

**Pole 1 “Innovative Ecosystems for SMEs” working together with Priority Areas 7 and 8** was presented by Mr. Daniel Acs - President of the Union of Slovak Clusters and member of Pole 1 (Made in Danube project) on behalf of Daniela Chiran, Coordinator of Pole 1 (Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum & Steinbeis 2i, Germany). In his presentation Mr. Acs summarized the main objectives of the Pole 1 within the Capitalisation strategy and emphasized the triple helix approach in Pole 1. Further the joint activities - both passed an upcoming - were introduced and participants got an overview about each project active within this pole together with the information on the most relevant issues and fields of interest.

### Pole 2 “RDI Framework Support”

In a similar way activities within Pole 2 were briefly introduced by Mr. Felix Martin Gajdusek from the Centre of Social Innovation in Vienna. In his presentation participants got acquainted with three projects active within this pole and their main thematic fields and focuses. Joint pole activities for the year 2018 and 2019 were introduced and all relevant stakeholders from the PA7 were invited to actively participate and contribute to the overall success. At the end of the presentation Mt Gajdusek pointed also on further aspects for capitalisation, which include sustainability after mid-2019; narrow focus of topics in pole 2 excluding also content which can be taken on in the PA7 Working Group; of activities in TP2, further integration of activities in pole 2; outreach to the EU-wide initiatives with “one voice”.

### Pole 3 “Entrepreneurial Learning Systems”

Pole 3 was represented by Mr. Peter Kiss from IFKA Hungary, who introduced the activities of the pole which fosters cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments that shall jointly increase the innovative capacities of the labour force in the Danube Region. This thematic pole joins three priority areas (PA7, PA8, PA9) and connects projects with the links in the following fields of skills- and capacity-building of vulnerable social groups; fostering (social) entrepreneurship and (social) innovations; promoting (digital) transformation and new business models; facilitating the uptake of the concept of open innovation; promoting (social) entrepreneurs getting better access to finance and access to markets. All PA7 stakeholders were also invited to the Summer School on Social Innovation Ecosystems taking place from 24 till 27 September 2018 in Budapest, Hungary.

### Pole 9 „Educational Governance“

Pole 9 representatives apologized for not being able to participate at the PA7 SG meeting in person, but Ms. Agnes Sebestyen sent a material to be disseminated for participant. Information received from the pole 9 can be found in **Annex IV**.

## 5. Capitalisation within other Programmes and Projects

### Information on Baden-Württemberg Cooperation Programme for Future-Oriented Science & Education (*B. Finger*)

Mr. Bernd Finger presented **the new cooperation possibility in Baden-Württemberg with the aim to promote the exchange of expert personnel from the field of university administration from the EU-13 states and the partner countries of the Strategy for the Danube Region with Baden-Württemberg**. The programme will enable the participants from the EU-13 states and the partner countries of the Strategy for the Danube Region to gain insight into the higher education and research environment in Baden-Württemberg and to establish or deepen their relationships with partners from Baden-Württemberg. Both sides shall have the opportunity to get to know the other research environment better and to develop ideas for joint projects. More details about the cooperation programme, as well as information on the application procedure can be found on [PA7 official website](#).

### Presentation of PA4 activities (*A. Vranovska*)

Ms. Andrea Vranovska from the Slovak coordination team of PA4 informed participants about the focus of PA4 “Water Quality” and main events and on-going projects within the framework of this priority area. At last Ms. Vranovska introduced the future plans among which she mentioned preparation of a project proposal „Water – think about using it forever!“ based on e-learning methods to improve public awareness on rational water utilisation and water sources protection respecting the impacts of climate change.

### Information on Euro Science Open Forum (*A. Lombardo*)

Mr. Alessandro Lombardo from the Central European Initiative informed participants about the **Euro Science Open Forum (ESOF)**, a biennial pan-European event created by the Euro Science association and dedicated to interdisciplinary scientific research and innovation.

CEI strongly supported the candidature of Trieste in 2020: indeed, one of the reasons why the city won the competition was the willingness of the Euro Science association **to involve the countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and of the Danube Macro-Region** (also to stimulate applications to host a future ESOF edition from this part of Europe, since all previous editions were held in Western European countries).

Moreover, in addition to the main event in 2020, a rich “PROESOF” programme of preparatory events will be implemented in 2018 and 2019. This will include a series of regional and international events to be organized principally in the north east of Italy and in Central and Eastern European countries.

A **call for proposals** was recently launched to collect ideas for events to be included both in PROESOF and ESOF scientific programmes.

### Presentation of the ENRICH centres (*B. Kardon*)

Mr. Bela Kardon from the Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development in Hungary informed participants about the **ENRICH initiative - a global network of centres and hubs that promote the internationalisation of European science, technology and innovation**. ENRICH is promoted by the European Commission through Horizon 2020.

Mr. Kardon presented the ENRICH community that offers services to connect European research, technology and business organisations with three global frontrunner innovation

markets: Brazil (in Brasilia), China (Beijing and Chengdu) and the USA (San Francisco and Boston). Main objectives of ENRICH include: a.) Improving the framework conditions for international cooperation in Research and Innovation; b.) Cooperation between European STI organizations; c.) Enhancing the impact of results from research and innovation projects. ENRICH supports European Institutions (Research, Innovation and Business Actors) to maximize their benefits from activities in these three foreign markets as they offer consultancy services, training and capacity building and networking support. At this point, all services for clients are free of charge.

Mr. Kardon encouraged all participants to spread the word about the initiative and offered his assistance by informing participants of e.g. event & trade shows about the initiative.

### **Presentation on cooperation within SFIC (*R. Koenig*)**

Mr. Ralf Koenig from the FFG Austria introduced **the potential business models of the ENRICH Centres and possibilities on how to become a stakeholder of a selected centre**, what may be very relevant for the potential stakeholders from the Danube Region countries.

## **6. AoB**

### **Presentation on cooperation possibilities with Ukraine (*G. Mozolevych*)**

Mr. Mozolevych as a new steering group representative nominated by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine prepared a brief overview on the good practice cooperation in the field of knowledge society development in Ukraine. He introduced Ukrainian Partner Academia Network supported by the United Nations Development Programme in Ukraine and funded by the European Union. This network was developed in 2012 with the goal to document, systematize and disseminate knowledge and experience gained in the area of community-based sustainable local development.

Prof. Faulhammer emphasized the excellent cooperation with two Ukrainian universities (from Odessa and Uzhgorod) active within DRC network.

## **7. Conclusions and Follow-up**

Ms. Pitlova informed participants of the XVI PA7 SG Meeting about its main conclusions:

- PA7 SG members approved the activities realized by PA7 coordination teams, by PA7 working groups, flagship projects and thematic pole leaders
- PA7 SG members agreed with the process of **revising the current EUSDR Action Plan**, with the first step of **providing their answers to the following questions**:



- *Do you consider the priority areas within EUSDR should be optimised?*
  - *Do you have any comments, proposals on the process how the revision process should be organized?*
- PA7 coordinators will appreciate to receive your feedback **before 22 June 2018** (before the meeting with Commissioner Cretu takes place)
  - Danube Rectors Conference will be involved in the process of the revision of the Action Plan and in the process of helping to find a sustainable solution for the PA7 flagship project Danube:Future
  - SG members were informed on the possibilities of new project ideas (within DTP 3rd call, H2020 upcoming Calls, EEA Norway Funds, ...), programmes (Baden-Württemberg Cooperation Programme for Future-Oriented Science & Education) and various initiatives (AT PRES priorities, COST Connect Day, Multilateral Call, Euro Science Open Forum, ENRICH centres, SFIC cooperation) and were asked for consideration of these possibilities and possible further dissemination of these ideas among the researchers in their countries
  - SG members discussed the issue of remuneration of researchers within the framework programmes (H2020 and Horizon Europe) and agreed on drafting a common position in order to raise the issue and make it visible at the EU level
    - *this position should express solidarity and support countries tackling with this challenging issue*
  - PA7 SG members were asked to provide their inputs regarding the simplification and rationalisation (effectiveness) of PA7 (and EUSDR as such)

Ms. Pitlova thanked all participants for their active involvement at the meeting.

#### ANNEXES:

1. *List of participants*
2. *DG Regio and DG JRC contributions*
3. *Action Plan proposed revision timeline*
4. *Thematic Pole 9 information*

## Annex I

No	DELINA, Radoslav	Institution	Country
1	ACS, Daniel	President of the Union of Slovak Clusters	Slovakia
2	BEŇO, Peter	H2020 NCP, Centre of Scientific Information	Slovakia
3	DELINA, Radoslav	Technical University, Košice	Slovakia
4	FAULHAMMER Friedrich	Danube Rectors Conference	Austria
5	FINGER, Bernd	Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts, Baden- Württemberg	Germany
6	GAJDUSEK, Felix	Centre of Social Innovation, Vienna	Austria
7	GANGL, Doris	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna (BOKU)	Austria
8	GOLLUBITS, Christian	Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy (BMWFW)	Austria
9	HRUBA, Renata	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports	Czech Republic
10	KÁPLI, Balázs	National Research, Development and Innovation Office	Hungary
11	KARDON, Béla	Regional Centre for Information and Scientific Development	Hungary
12	KISS, Peter	IFKA Ltd.	Hungary
13	KÖNIG, Ralf	Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG)	Austria
14	KRIVJANSKÁ, Anna	Centre of Scientific Information of the Slovak Republic	Slovakia
15	LOMBARDO Alessandro	Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat	
16	MOZOLEVYCH, Grygorii	Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine	Ukraine
17	PEŠIĆ-JOTIĆ, Jasmina	University of Belgrade	Serbia
18	PITLOVA, Lubica	MINEDU Slovak Republic	Slovakia
19	PODOLINSKY, Štefan	MINEDU Slovak Republic	Slovakia
20	POPOVIĆ, Ivanka	University of Belgrade	Serbia
21	RUSINOVA, Iveta	MINEDU Slovak Republic	Slovakia
22	SZUDI Jaroslava	MINEDU Slovak Republic	Slovakia
23	ŠTRBAC Dijana	University of Belgrade	Serbia
24	VRANOVSKA Andrea	Water Research Institute	Slovakia
25	WINIWARTER, Verena	BOKU, Vienna	Austria

## Annex II

### DG REGIO addresses PA7 SG members

DG REGIO apologies for not being able to attend, but the current staff resources do not allow to take part in SG meetings.

- PA7 as a cross-cutting priority plays a key role for the implementation of the EUSDR. We encourage you to keep up with the excellent work done up to now. We work on a daily basis in contact with the JRC, which is the DG in charge of knowledge society within the Commission, and we take that you liaise also directly with them. The last two Annual Fora were organised jointly with the JRC.
- We praise your efforts made at ensuring a wide participation of EUSDR countries to PA7 meetings and activities in the future.
- In 2018 the Commission will publish its 2<sup>nd</sup> report on the implementation of MR.S and in this context any experience/information which you deem it important in that context will be very welcome to hear.
- 26 June the PACs and NCs will meet Commissioner Cretu, where she will give some input encouraging the revision of the EUSDR 2010 Action Plan. The revision exercise will be a unique opportunity for the Priority Area to position itself in the post 2020 period funding sources. It is very important that the Steering Group members come with clear ideas for the future with strategic goals concerning your area of responsibilities. These strategic goals that you would like to achieve together in the future should be reflected in the revised Action Plan, so the future programmes and project developers will have an updated point of reference, if they would like to realize Macro Regional projects.
- The very recently published regulations on the different funding sources and programmes (regional development, Horizon Europe, etc.) give already a good starting point to see what can you expect in the post 2020 period concerning your challenges and potentials, so now the homework is given to each Steering Group and for the whole Steering Group together. Setting your strategic cooperation goals in the view of the future possibilities which can be laid down in the revised action plan.
- We invite you to make the best out of this unique moment as the success of our cooperation and this very priority area will depend on the efforts made in the upcoming months.

## DG JRC addresses PA7 SG members

Distinguished colleagues, dear friends,

it is my pleasure to greet you on behalf of the Directorate General Joint Research Centre.

For several years JRC has been providing scientific support to the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region. During that time, the Scientific Support to the Danube Strategy, through the activities of the seven scientific clusters led to over 40 scientific publications and technical reports. It involved around 4.500 stakeholders and organised 50 thematic workshops, collected and made available more than 10.000 data sets. The initiative created durable thematic scientific networks of national experts, universities and research institutions, led and stimulated by the JRC. The JRC has carried out collaboration activities and facilitated the access to relevant data. Strategic partners strongly supporting and requesting scientific support are: the National Academies of Science and Art (Danube Academies Conference), the Danube Rectors' Conference, the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, Priority Area Coordinators and national representatives as members of different Steering Groups including PA7 Steering group. The concept of scientific cluster proved to be successful in overcoming sectoral divides and fostered better links between priority areas. By offering strategic scientific support, scientific clusters also provide the momentum and ensure coherence with EU policies and positions. They support through capacity building while leaving the clear sense of ownership to countries and regions within the macro-regions. The main aim of NEXUS approach, stimulated through the JRC Scientific support to the Danube strategy, has been to address the scientific challenges faced by the Danube Region from an integrated and cross-cutting perspective taking into account the interdependencies between various policy priorities.

It is important moment for the EUSDR since Commissioner Crețu has invited the National Coordinators and Priority Area Coordinators of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region to a discussion on the revision of the 2010 Action Plan. During 2018 new Multiannual Financial Framework (published on 2 May 2018) as well as proposals for regional and cohesion policy post 2020 will start taking shape, the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan should duly take these developments into account, in order to align the priorities of the Strategy, as relevant, to those of the future EU policies. In this framework, deliverables as well as targets bound to 2028 are to be clearly identified. We hope that work done through scientific support to the Danube region and capacity building will ensure that this process will be based on a bottom-up approach from the Policy Area Coordinators to the EU Commission.

The raison d'être and main added value of macro-regional strategies is in cooperation, going across sectors and bringing together different actors. Understanding and tackling such cross-sectoral challenges through policy measures and policy dialogue requires appropriate data and knowledge which can be provided by different expert groups and scientific research organisations and their networks. A strong human capital base is needed not only to be able to provide expert knowledge in one field but to be able to think and act across disciplines.

As it was stated in the STUDY ON MACROREGIONAL STRATEGIES AND THEIR LINKS WITH COHESION POLICY, MRS like any other governance arrangement, undergoes certain phases of development. In this report, three phases of development and operation are defined: phase I (early, set-up), phase II (starting to operate) and phase III (maturing). The same phases are applicable to single PAs in MRS.

Phase I has primarily an effect on capacity. Capacity affects first concern individuals and later institutions. Capacity is a prerequisite for performance. As the MRS (or PA) moves in phase II, it moves from capacity development to performance. In the maturing phase III, external stakeholders and the region as a whole are performing. It is very important for the PA7 (as part of the EUSDR) to understand in which phase it is and how to move forward from capacity development to performance.

As it is emphasised in the first joint Report on implementation of the four macro-regional strategies, adopted by the Commission on 16 December 2016, monitoring systems is important of MRS in order to be able to assess how well the planned objectives have been met. This requires clearly defined indicators and targets as well as a sound monitoring system capable of measuring, steering and reporting on each macro-regional strategy to inform decision-making. The process of developing monitoring system foresees close involvement of the national coordinators and strategy's stakeholders, in order to obtain structured feedback during the development phase and I am sure PA7 and its Steering group is taking active role in that.

I wish you successful meeting and looking forward to seeing you soon.

Miroslav Veskovic

## Annex III

### Proposed Revision Plan of the EUSDR Action Plan

26 June 2018	Joint NCs and PACs meeting with Commissioner Corina Crețu in Brussels
July – September 2018	Identification of the needs of revision of the Action Plan by PAs
September - December 2018	<p>Launching the consultation phase on the relevant EUSDR levels. The new DSP should coordinate and provide guidelines about the process.</p> <p>Consultation process at PA Steering Groups level with the support of the new DSP</p> <p>Organising discussions between PACs with the support of the new DSP</p>
1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2019	<p>A feedback from the Steering Group consultation process presented by each PAC during the PAC meeting organised by RO Presidency.</p> <p>Consultation process at NCs level</p> <p>A feedback from the PACs consultation process presented by the new DSP during the NCs meeting organised by RO Presidency</p> <p>Finalising the consultation phase with the support of the new DSP</p> <p>Submitting the results of the consultation phase to the Commission</p>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2019	<p>Drafting phase – a revised version of the EUSDR Action Plan should be drafted by the Commission in consultation with the NCs and PACs</p> <p>Collecting comments on the revised version of the EUSDR Action Plan</p>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Q 2019	Publication of Commission Staff Working Document



## Annex IV

### Overview of activities within the DTP Thematic Pole 9 on Educational Governance

Ágnes Sebestyén, Project director, EDU-LAB, European Foundation for Education

Implemented activities in the period of September 2017 – April 2018

#### 1. Capitalization session at the transnational stakeholder meeting in Maribor

The 2<sup>nd</sup> EDU-LAB stakeholder seminar and workshop taking place in Maribor on the 14-15th of September 2017, involving more than 80 relevant stakeholders from the Danube Region, included a capitalization session starting with a presentation of the Thematic Pole by Ágnes Sebestyén and of the DTP project Learning Doing by Marina Trampuš. Furthermore, relevant priority areas of the European Strategy for the Danube Region (PA-8: Competitiveness of enterprises, PA10: Institutional Capacity & Co-operation) were represented by their priority area coordinators Ms. Dragica Karajić (PA 8) and Ms. Nina Čepon (PA10). Furthermore, the priority area coordinators and the representative of the project Learning by Doing participated actively in the following stakeholder workshops.



#### 2. Capitalization workshop on Educational Governance at the DTP EUSDR 6th Annual Forum

The workshop was the first joint event of the EUSDR Priority Areas 7 and 9 and the DTP Thematic Pole 9 and therefore largely and actively attended. Under the title “Linking education to employment – best practices in the Danube Region” the goal of the capitalization workshop was to highlight synergies between the DTP Thematic Pole 9 and the EUSDR Priority Areas 7 (Knowledge Society) and 9 (People and Skills). Both the representative for PA 7, Ulrike Sedlmayr (Kultur Kontakt Austria) and for PA9, Jaroslava Szüdi (Ministry of Education, Science, Research

and Sport of the Slovak Republic), presented the scope of the PAs. Together with PA 8 (Competitiveness of Enterprises) they aim at creating wealth in the Danube Region by focusing on different sectors and aspects of education. Their common ground is tackling brain-drain and increasing employability by fostering practically oriented education.



Furthermore, selected best practice examples for cooperation between the education and employers were presented by experts/partners belonging to the network of the projects EDU-LAB and Learning by Doing.

### **3. Presentation at the General Assembly of the Danube Rector's Conference in Zagreb, November 10, 2017**

On behalf of the Thematic Pole 9, Ágnes Sebestyén held a presentation at the General Assembly of the Danube Rector's Conference, highlighting the purpose and goals of the Thematic Pole and discussing possibilities of closer cooperation.

### **4. Capitalization session at the EDU-LAB SCOM in Belgrade**

With the participation of Ms. Gabrijele Grujić (Assistant Minister for Strategic Planning, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development), Msc. Mirjana Kovacevic (Director, Sector for Education, Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry) possibilities of joint responses were discussed to the challenges and opportunities coming with the laws on Higher Education that had been recently adopted in Serbia. Furthermore Prof. Dr. Zoran Cekic, Rector of UNT University Belgrade, member of the Danube Rector's Conference introduced the goals and activities of the Danube Rector's Conference to the participants to set the common ground for establishing synergies with the projects included in the DTP Thematic Pole 9. Finally, Alina Felder, project assistant intern and IVY Volunteer at EFE presented the capitalization activities conducted within the DTP's Thematic Pole 9 on Educational Governance by then.



**5. Participation at the 14th Steering Group Meeting of Priority Area 7 (Knowledge Society) in Belgrade on November 28, 2017**

Representatives from four related Thematic Poles (Poles 1, 2, 3 and 9) were invited to the meeting to present their activities and suggest future actions for within the DTP Capitalisation Strategy. Within the discussions after the presentation of each pole, it became clear that the DTP Capitalisation Strategy is not fully developed yet and problems in its implementation relate to the lack of a clear definition of objectives and a lack of allocated financial and personal resources. Nevertheless, many ideas were gathered, that will lead for example to a greater visibility of the capitalisation activities in the future and to closer cooperation. For the case of Thematic Pole 9, a representative of the PA7 working group on Higher Education will attend the next EDU-LAB Stakeholder workshop. At this very meeting the partners within TP9 will discuss further activities and how to broaden the thematic pole to further DTP and non-DTP projects.

**6. Presentation at the PA8 Steering Group Meeting by Vedrana Knezevic on March 8, 2018, Budapest – Concept for a working group on dual education**

**7. Capitalization session at the kick-off conference of the Project VET-Schools, Zagreb, 18-19.04.2018**

The kick-off conference of the project “VET Schools Partnership Network Baden-Württemberg-Croatia - Fostering dual vocational education and training” funded by the Ministry of State Baden-Württemberg included a capitalization aiming to highlight synergies with the DTP Thematic Pole 9:

- Dr. Sebestyén (project director, EDU-LAB) held a presentation on “VET in the EUSDR: synergies with EUSDR Priority Areas, DTP Thematic Poles and DTP/INTERREG projects”.



- Ms. Knezevic (project manager, Learning by Doing) gave an overview of the project learning by Doing focusing on the topic of Work Based Learning (WBL) in Vocational Education and Training (VET).



As part of the cooperation, during the second day of the kick-off conference, one of the partners of the project Learning by Doing, the Chamber of Commerce from Varazdin, represented by Mrs. Ksenija Miksaj held a capacity building workshop on work-based learning for the participants of the project VET-Schools. Ms. Miksaj also presented the best practices established within the project Learning by Doing aiming at improving capacities of all relevant VET actors through reinforcing regional, national and transnational partnerships in order to ease the existing VET systems in the Danube countries.

#### **8. Round table discussion within the framework of the delegation visit of Baden-Württemberg, 19.04.2018, Zagreb**

The round table organized within the framework of the delegation visit from Baden-Württemberg focused on the possibilities of development and change of the educational systems in the Danube Region by linking them systematically with labour market. Based on best practice examples for implementation such as the projects Learning by Doing, EDU-LAB and VET-Schools, the participants of the panel discussion discussed modalities of capacity building in order link educational offers in the secondary and the tertiary sector to the demands of the labour market in sustainable way to create better chances for young people in the Danube Region.



The participants included Jan Ebben, Project Manager Dual VET, German-Croatian Chamber of Industry and Commerce (AHK) and Ivanka Springer, Strategic advisor, Ministry of Labour and Pension System Croatia, while the DTP Thematic Pole 9 projects were represented by (Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schuster, Chairman of the European Foundation for Education, the Lead Partner of EDU-LAB) and Vedrana Knezevic (Project manager Learning by Doing, Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry). The discussion was moderated by Dr. Caroline Hornstein Tomić representing the Foundation Knowledge at Work/ Zaklada Znanje na djelu (one of the partners involved in EDU-LAB).

#### **9. Capitalization session at the 3<sup>rd</sup> EDU-LAB SCOM an partner meeting in Vratsa, on April 23-24. 2018**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> EDU-LAB steering committee meeting and partner meeting also included a capitalization session in the framework of which Ms. Iliana Philipova, CMC, Vice President, Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Enterprise Europe Network presented briefly the Learning by Doing DTP project and gave an overview of the similarities between the intervention logic of EDU-LAB and Learning by Doing project. Presentations by Ms. Nesrin Doneva (Communication manager - Regional Department of Education - Vratsa) and Ms. Mariela Petkova (Communication manager - Chamber of Commerce and Industry Vratsa) on established best practices followed the upcoming day at the 3<sup>rd</sup> EDU-LAB Partner Meeting.

#### **10. Synergies with other projects:**

- a. DTP project Excellence-in-ReSTI: Excellence in research, social and technological innovation project management
  - i. Joint communication activities and events (planned for October 2018)
  - ii. Sharing of results and outputs (e-learning courses, country analyses etc)
- b. VET Schools Partnership Network Baden-Württemberg-Croatia - Fostering dual vocational education and training
  - i. Sharing best practices

ii. Joint training events and communication activities

**11. Communication activities**

- a. Production of capitalization flyer offering an overview of the objectives of the Thematic Pole and highlighting synergies between the projects belonging to it.
- b. Reports regarding the listed capitalization activities have been published on the EDU-LAB website, newsletter and social media sites