

## XVI PA7 Steering Group Meeting

November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 | University of Belgrade, Rectorate building  
Studentski trg 1, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

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### Minutes

The 16th Steering Group (SG) Meeting of Priority Area 7 (PA7) was hosted by the Serbian coordination team and took place in the Rectorate building of the University of Belgrade on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 2018.

The agenda of the meeting and list of participants are presented in annexes I and II.

Presentations from the meeting were sent to all participants and can be found at the PA7 official webpage: <https://www.danubeknowledgesociety.eu/files/directory/34>

#### **Official welcome on behalf of: Priority Area coordinators, Rector of the University of Belgrade, European Commission (DG REGIO and DG JRC) and Danube Strategy Point**

The meeting was opened by **Mr Viktor Nedović**, PA7 co-coordinator. He welcomed all SG members and stakeholders from the region, thanked for attending the meeting and gave word to Ms Ivanka Popović.

**Ms Ivanka Popović**, Rector of the University of Belgrade and Leader of PA7 WG on HEM, welcomed the participants, presented briefly the University of Belgrade and expressed her hope to have a fruitful meeting.

**Ms Lubica Pitlova**, PA7 co-coordinator, also welcomed the participants and especially the new SG members from the Czech Republic and Romania, as well as representatives of the newly established Danube Strategy Point and lead partners of the new project consortia, which are in great manner contributing to the development of the knowledge society in the Danube region. She added that the meeting would offer a platform for a dialogue to exchange the views both on the side of policy makers and from the project praxis.

Ms Pitlova reminded that the recently published regulations on the different funding sources and programmes were already a good starting point to see what could be expected in the post 2020 period concerning the challenges and potentials, and a Steering group had a unique possibility to contribute to the strategic goals setting and point out the challenges which can be considered in the revised action plan. She invited the participants to make the best out of the meeting as the success of cooperation and this priority area will depend on the efforts made in the upcoming months.

**Mr Viktor Nedović** emphasised that the meeting is attended by participants from nine Danube region countries which created the capacity to discuss various issues. He welcomed especially the

new SG members, PA8 co-coordinator Ms. Judit Schrick-Szenczi and the representative of a newly established Danube Strategy Point.

A message on behalf of DG REGIO was presented by Mr Viktor Nedović and can be found in Annex III. A video message from Mr Miroslav Veskovic, DG JRC was broadcasted at the meeting. The message in written form is available in Annex IV.

**Ms Mihaela Florea**, Pillar officer in the Danube Strategy Point (DSP), also welcomed the participants and thanked for invitation to the meeting. She mentioned that she had a meeting with the PA7 coordination team at the Annual forum in Sofia where she saw the enthusiasm of the team members. Ms Florea pointed out that she investigated the available documents and the PA7 website, which helped her to understand the activities and initiatives within this priority area. Nonetheless, she noted that the new DSP is established to support coordination teams of the PAs in different aspects.

A Tour de table followed after the official welcome notes.

### **PA7 update on activities and future plans**

**Ms Dijana Štrbac** presented DTP PA7 project activities – the main results in the second half of 2018. The results were presented per work packages. Within WP1 (Management, publicity and communication) the most important results are: SG meetings (including the minutes), PAC to PAC meetings, participation at the Annual forum of EUSDR and DRC General Assembly, national hearing of EUSDR, regular updates and contributions on PA7 website, presentations given at various events, fan pages on social media ([www.facebook.com/DanubeKnowledgeSociety](http://www.facebook.com/DanubeKnowledgeSociety); #danubeknowledgesociety). WP2 (Policy development) brought the following results: Position paper on reducing remuneration gaps for researchers' remuneration in the upcoming EU-funding period after 2020; Joint proposal with PA8 and PA9: „Better embedding of the EUSDR's prosperity pillar into suitable funding instruments within the new MFF“ (pdf available); cooperation with JRC on RIS3 development; promotion of macro regional cooperation at various events at the EU level. WP3 (Cooperation and coordination) had the following achievements: COST Connect workshop, Sustainable Energy in the Danube Region; Cooperation with PA8 and PA9 in preparing a joint proposal; Danube Participation Day attended – Researchers Perspective; capitalisation events; participation at SG Meetings of PA4 and PA8. She also briefly introduced two position papers created within WP2 (ppt available).

Ms Dijana Štrbac provided a report from the EUSDR Annual forum which was held in Sofia, Bulgaria on October 18-19 2018. She introduced the thematic focus of the forum, the official programme and activities of the PA7 coordination team. The highlight was: hosting the official PA7 stand at the forum, promoting PA7 activities to the various stakeholders and meetings with relevant parties -DSP, thematic poles of DTP capitalisation strategy, project leaders, other PAs (ppt available). The PA7 also had a nominated panellist with a presentation on Cultural heritage and new technologies – online and interactive access to cultural heritage. Both days of the Forum were streamlined and the videos are available online (<https://www.7danube-forum-sofia.eu/>).

**Ms Mihaela Florea** introduced the newly established secretariat for the Danube region – Danube Strategy Point. She explained that the call for “DSP new” was launched by the Danube Transnational

Programme and that two partners will host the secretariat in period September 2018 - December 2021. The two partners are: City of Vienna (Austria) and Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (Romania). The most important activities of DSP will be: internal and external communication, support for EUSDR stakeholders, capacity building towards PACs and non-EU countries, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy. She also presented DSP offices and their staff, as well as status of their activities and contracting (ppt available).

The participants asked if the DSP staff has full time or part time contracts. Ms Florea said that all staff members, except for the communication manager have a full time contract. They were also interested in the process of EUSDR evaluation/monitoring/reporting. Ms Florea explained that the evaluation will have two main parts: governance and impact. The PACs asked if the DSP will ask for additional reports. Ms Florea answered that they do not intend to do it. Ms Judit Schrick-Szenczi asked if the previous web pages of PAs (group spaces) can be somehow deleted since we did not manage to do it so far. Ms Dijana Štrbac agreed and explained that she requested Group Spaces several times to delete the PA7 page, but no answer was received.

### **Reports of working groups (WGs)**

#### **WG ON DANUBE FUNDING COORDINATION NETWORK**

**Mr Heribert Buchbauer** presented that DFCN was set as a dedicated working group which started to implement with presidency of Germany and Slovakia, and this year it is coordinated by Austria and Serbia. He said that the multilateral call will be continued early next year in order to stimulate bilateral funding with multilateral scheme (similar to ERA-NET). Besides already involved countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Serbia), other countries are also invited to join the multilateral call.

**Mr Viktor Nedović** informed that a bilateral (Serbia-Austria) DFCN meeting was organised as a side event during the SG meeting and that it included analysis of the past period and planning activities for the next year. He also emphasised that there were attempts to involve more countries in the multilateral call this year. He had bilateral meetings with France and Italy, and from DR countries Slovenia and Croatia have expressed their interest to join the call. However, there are still no strong agreements with the mentioned countries.

Mr Nedović also mentioned a long running discussion with the COST association in order to run/establish a targeted network for the Danube region. The result of these negotiations is the COST Connect event which was held on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Belgrade. He expressed his hope that there will be an opportunity to organise another COST Connect event in the region which would include Agriculture and Food as the main thematic focus.

Apart from the mentioned topics, the DFCN has the plan to work on continuation of the following activities in the future: EUREKA Danube call and BMBF call.

**Mr Bernd Finger** had an input about using the European Social Fund (ESF) for Science and Higher Education. He stated that this is used in Baden-Württemberg for different purposes (e.g. support to young female researchers, training of employees of regional companies), so the potential of its usage for the transnational cooperation schemes in Danube region countries could be explored and elaborated more in the future. However, it should be checked if non-EU countries are eligible for ESF.

## WG ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND MOBILITY + DRC UPDATE

**Prof. Ivanka Popović** argued that the European University Alliance initiative indicates creation of a new landscape in higher education and that it should be explored how it impacts regional cooperation. She stated that all Danube region universities are not members of the Danube Rectors' Conference, and therefore, DRC is influential, but not powerful. Ms Popovic also discussed motivation of the researchers in relation to the overall living standard of a country (infrastructure, salaries, social differences, etc.). She emphasised the importance of better defining the role of social sciences since its role is often underestimated.

Prof. Popović informed the participants about the annual meeting of the Danube Rectors' Conference which was held at Comenius University in Bratislava from 7th to 9th November 2018. Prof. Ivanka Popovic, the Rector of the University of Belgrade, was elected as President of the DRC. Two new Vice-Presidents were also elected: prof. dr Friedrich Faulhammer, the Rector of the Danube University Krems and prof. dr Dietmar Meyer, Rector of Andrassy University Budapest.

Ms Popovic introduced two more topics relevant for higher education and mobility in the region:

- Co-publications in the region – from 1996 to present day – only one paper was published as co-authorship of all Danube countries; there is a need to increase this type of research cooperation in the region (ppt available);
- Remuneration of researchers in EU programmes – the issue is related to brain drain, fairness and non-equal treatment of researchers; there is a need to recognize research excellence and not to demotivate researchers from Eastern Europe; we do not have to agree on this issue but we have to address it.

**Ms Jaroslava Szudi** proposed that DRC could engage in improving the co-publishing rate in the region by motivating universities which are members of DRC to create special issues of their dedicated journals. These special journal issues should be focused on the most significant challenges and specific problems characterized for the Danube Region. Ms Szüdi mentioned that PA5 has already piloted and co-financed a Thematic Issue of the Journal of Environmental Geography (JoEG) in cooperation with the University of Szeged. More information is available on the following link: <https://www.danubeenvironmentalrisks.eu/news/call-for-papers-climate-change-adaptation-in-the-danube-region>.

## WG ON RIS3 DEVELOPMENT

**Mr Viktor Nedović** stressed the importance of excellent cooperation with JRC which provided expert support in the process of RIS3 development. Current state of the art is the following: Serbia and Montenegro are in the advanced phase of RIS3 development (close to finalisation). Serbia is implementing the entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) at the moment. On October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 there was a high level event organised in Belgrade which marked the launching of the EDP process. The event was attended by Mr Vladimir Šucha, Director-General of JRC. On November 6-8<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Brussels TAIEX organised the event "Multi-country workshop on smart specialization". This event included sharing experiences among selected countries in the field of RIS3 development. The following Danube region countries were present: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Moldova, Ukraine.

JRC still plans to organise two regional events in 2019: 1. January-February (Montenegro) and 2. March (Serbia).

Mr Nedović stated that non-EU countries are faced with problems in the RIS3 implementation since they do not have access to ESIF. Therefore, these countries will try to find other financing sources. Serbia will use budget lines of the Innovation fund for RIS3 implementation. Also, Serbia is in the process of creating the Science Fund. The law on the Science Fund was adopted last week by the Government of the Republic of Serbia and next week it will be discussed in the Parliament. This Law foresees 11 working programmes of the future Science Fund and 4 of them will rely (in its implementation) on the priorities of the future smart specialization strategy. He also said that creating adequate funding environment in the country goes in parallel with discussion with EC related to the possibility to use IPA funds for the purpose of RIS3 implementation.

**Mr Igor Serotila** stated that Moldova is also in the process of RIS3 development. After preparing the preliminary analyses, the focus is now on organising EDP process and integrating RIS3 in national policy.

#### WG ON RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

**Ms Jaroslava Szudi** explained that this WG is being re-established since it was not active after Romanian PA7 delegates announced a lack of financial capacities and human resources to lead it (in 2017). Activities of this WG will be based on activities of the currently running projects within Thematic pole 2 (DTP Capitalisation Strategy) with the aim to create links between stakeholders while looking to improve the framework conditions for RI. Particular focus will be put on policy dialogue; knowledge transfer, capacity building and awareness raising; better uptake of results/outreach (and more impact).

PA7 Slovak team hosted a Pole 2/PA7 meeting in Bratislava at the beginning of July 2018 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.

Ms Szudi introduced the definition and types of research infrastructure, as well as the relation between WG on RI and PA7 actions. She also presented Thematic pole 2 of DTP capitalisation strategy, its projects and identified synergies. The focus was put on achievements of TP2 and RI related targets in the near future (ppt available).

**Mr Viktor Nedović** said that it would be useful to include JRC in this WG since they have various activities related to opening research infrastructure to people working in academia and research organisations, industry, SMEs and more in general to the public and private sector.

#### WG ON ICT

**Mr Mladen Kraljic** reported to the participants the activities undertaken within WG on ICT related to participation at relevant events and discovering/fostering cooperation on projects related to PA7 activities. He also presented the most important activities of this working group in the next period: revitalisation of its WG activities, organising quarterly meetings, cooperation with JRC, cooperation with South East European and Western Balkans university network, involving enterprises,

supporting project proposals related to ICT (Interreg, Horizon), coordinating efforts with different knowledge transfer networks (ppt available).

### **Revision of the EUSDR Action plan**

**Ms Lubica Pitlova** explained the purpose and focus of Action plan revision. She also introduced the PA7 targets and the link between actions, targets and milestones. In order to streamline the discussion, Ms Pitlova presented PA7 success stories and the framework for future actions/projects. Participants were informed about the proposed roadmap and guidance towards the revision procedure (prepared by the Bulgarian Presidency) and asked to provide answers to the questions raised (ppt available).

**Mr Bernd Finger** noted that he has a general comment related to the PA7 structure and functioning. The PA7 has WGs, actions, targets, it is cooperating with DTP TPs, which is a very complicated system of strategic orientation. There is a need to streamline and simplify these complicated strategic orientations. The starting point for the revision procedure could be working groups and their activities.

**Ms Lubica Pitlova** agreed with Mr Finger and added that the new action plan should be realistic, feasible and based on existing experiences and success stories.

**Mr Felix Gajdusek** said that in terms of research infrastructure the new actions should include opening the existing RI, learning from experience and creating new RI. **Ms Jaroslava Szudi** complemented that the actions related to this might also include popularisation of science.

**Mr Friedrich Faulhammer** argued that PA7 should become more focused and should simplify its structure. Also, it should rely more on the role of universities and relevant projects, such as Danube:Future. DRC received the mandate for continuing support for Danube Future project. Similar to this, PA7 could develop certain initiatives and then allow other institutions to implement them. He also said/added that PA7 should address brain drain, foster preparation of common project proposals and support new governance models in the region (e.g. the New Danubian governance model developed within EDU-LAB project). The focus should be on already existing initiatives and projects under the umbrella of PA7.

**Mr Mladen Kraljic** mentioned the PA7 flagship project Danube open innovative technologies (DO-IT) and the possibility to implement it in the future. Also, the new PA7 actions could include options for coordination of national smart specialization strategies.

**Ms Judit Schrick-Szenczi** explained the purpose of joint proposal of PA7, 8 and 9 related to better embedding of the EUSDR's prosperity pillar into suitable funding instruments within the new MFF (2021-2027). She said that so far the priority areas used mainly DTP as a funding support to the projects related to EUSDR, which proved as not sufficient. Therefore, this proposal is suggesting better embedding of the EUSDR into the mainstream programmes in a multi-stage procedure: 1. Opening of Operational Programmes (OPs) of the EU mainstream programs towards MRSs (embedding of a meaningful chapter underlining the support given by the appropriate programme regards synergies) and 2. Identification of available options in order to foresee EUSDR related facts

within the appropriate funding instruments, based on the (new) Action Plan of the EUSDR and the activities of the Priority Areas.

**Ms Lubica Pitlova** asked participants about their opinion on optimisation of PA7 in terms of joining it to some other PAs from the prosperity pillar. **Mr Bernd Finger** stated that it would not be a good idea since it would not be in accordance with the structure of corresponding institutions in the DR countries. **Mr Felix Gajdusek** said that PA7 should be more involved in the activities of other PAs and somehow “grasp knowledge aspects” across PAs.

Participants noticed that topics related to ICT and digitalization are not well covered with PA7 activities. Also, this requires stronger cooperation with PA8 in this aspect

### **Capitalization within other programmes, projects, priority areas**

**Ms Jaroslava Szudi** introduced the capitalization topic and cooperation of PA7 with 4 thematic poles of DTP capitalisation strategy: TP1, TP2, TP3 and TP9. She also briefly explained the activities and projects of each TP (ppt available).

In the next part of the meeting 3 new projects contributing to the PA7 activities and to the TP9 “Educational governance” were introduced by their lead partners:

**Ms Snezhana Kostova** introduced DSPF project “Increasing the well-being of the population by R&ICT based innovative education” (RONNI). The project is being implemented in 2018 with the aim to promote application of R&ICT in education in order to overcome learning difficulties and raise the educational level of the young generation of the citizens. All project activities are improving the quality and attractiveness of educational system using R&ICT and therefore contribute to EUSDR PA7 (ppt available).

**Ms Nina Bratkova** presented SMF project Driven by Danube which aims to close the knowledge gap, caused by shortage of highly skilled and competent professionals in new materials R&D and reuse of hardly recyclable material, within the automotive industry by implementing elements of dual education and joint research centers. The project contributes to the PA7 in the field of upgrading research and education outcomes, and stimulating excellence in R&D. Ms Bratkova invited participants to the expert workshop which will be organized within the project in Pécs, Hungary on January 23-24, 2019 (ppt available).

**Mr Jürgen Raizner** introduced DSPF project European Early Innovators Initiative (EEII) which aims to support young scientists in developing entrepreneurial skills. The project will contribute to diminishing gaps in the current situation from Danube region when it comes to innovation and research in terms of market needs. EEII will contribute to PA7 targets by supporting young researchers in the region and their inventive and innovative potential. The project EEII also aims to prepare the strategic support action “European Early Innovators Program – EEIP” (ppt available).

The next project proposal was initiated by Moldavian representative related to the RIS3 strategies:

**Mr Igor Serotila** introduced the new project idea proposed by the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. The future project would have the following aims: aligning visions for transformation and reform

processes within the Danube region via evidence-based decision making and RIS3; harmonizing best practices, expertise and guidance in implementation of RIS3; consolidating knowledge society paradigm and strengthening deployment of specialisation in regions; increasing overall cooperation and communication within Danube countries; developing a Danube vision for R&I systems transformation (ppt available).

### **Position paper on remuneration**

**Ms Lubica Pitlova** informed that on the basis of the discussion held during the 15<sup>th</sup> SG meeting, PA7 coordination team drafted the Position paper on reducing remuneration gaps for researchers' remuneration in the upcoming EU-funding period after 2020 (particularly in Horizon Europe). Researchers are performing the same activities within the projects but are not paid in the same way in different countries. Such remuneration system is a very demotivating factor for scientific communities and researchers from the lower-performing countries, many of which are situated in the Danube region. Therefore, a fair, simple and flexible remuneration system is crucial in order to increase the participation in the programme and to prevent a brain drain. She also highlighted that V4 +SI Horizon Europe Task Force proposed to keep the project based remuneration as identified in Article 32.1 of the Horizon Europe proposal and to complete Article 32.1 with the level of minimum hourly rate applicable for all participants from the EU Member States (ppt available).

The SG members have received the PA7 position paper by email in October 2018 and were asked for approval. Austria and Germany are the two countries that raised objections.

Ms Pitlova asked the participants to express their opinions regarding the position paper. **Ms Ivanka Popovic** (Serbia) strongly supported the initiative. **Ms Anca Ghinescu** (Romania) said that they also acknowledge this gap, support the initiative and think it is a good solution to move forward. **Mr Igor Serotila** (Moldova) also supported the initiative. Mr Mladen Kraljic (Slovenia) supported the initiative too and said it would be a good tool to fight against the gap between East and West. **Mr Friedrich Faulhammer** (DRC) said that he is expressing the opinion on behalf of Danube Rectors' Conference (and not on behalf of Austria) and in that respect he is supporting the idea. Namely, majority of DRC members face this problem and therefore DRC as organisation will support the remuneration position paper. They are also willing to write a letter of support to this initiative, if necessary. **Mr Stefan Kern** (Germany) said that the Federal Ministry of Education and Research acknowledges the issue, but he has to comply with the position of Germany not support the position paper in the present form (together with Austria). **Mr Viktor Nedovic** (Serbia) said that Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development strongly supports this initiative.

The participants agreed to publish the position paper stating Danube region countries which support it, i.e. excluding Austria and Germany.

### **COST Programme**

**Mr Bart Veys** presented COST (Cooperation in Science and Technology). He explained that it is the longest-running European framework supporting cooperation and networking among researchers, engineers, scholars and innovators by enabling them to jointly develop their own ideas and new initiatives across all fields in science and technology, including social sciences and humanities. Mr Veys also explained COST priorities, actions and participation of Danube region countries in COST



actions. He presented/introduced the goals of COST Connect events and mentioned that one of these events was organised on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2018 in Belgrade focused on “Sustainable Energy in the Danube Region” (ppt available).

**Mr Viktor Nedović** said that the COST programme is a very important tool for researchers in the region and expressed his hope for a continued cooperation with the COST Association. **Ms Jaroslava Szudi** also said that COST is a unique tool for support and networking among researchers, specifically addressing inclusiveness target countries, young researchers as well as female researchers, and that PA7 will try to initiate further cooperation with the programme.

### **AoB**

**Mr Bernd Finger** informed that a Baden-Württemberg Cooperation [Programme for Future-Oriented Science & Education](#) is being implemented. The programme enables 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. There is a plan to organise another call next year.

### **Conclusions**

**Ms Lubica Pitlova** informed the participants of the 16<sup>th</sup> PA7 SG meeting about its main conclusions:

- PA7 SG members approved the activities implemented in the second half of 2018.
- The SG members decided to revise the PA7 action plan; the revision should be based on experience and results of the existing WGs.
- The new PA7 actions should be based on networking, coordination activities and horizontal cooperation with other PAs.
- The SG members will prepare relevant inputs for the revision and help with distribution of the online survey to the stakeholders in their countries.
- The SG members support the embedding of the EUSDR’s prosperity pillar into suitable funding instruments within the new MFF. SG members call on the European Commission and managing authorities in respective countries to support this embedding.
- The SG members support ongoing projects in SMF and DSPF, DTP capitalisation strategy and cooperation with COST Association.
- The SG members endorse the project idea proposed by the Academy of Sciences of Moldova on RIS3 development and appreciate the efforts that have been made.
- SG members agreed to publish and distribute the Position paper on remuneration of researchers listing the countries which support it (i.e. all Danube region countries except Austria and Germany).

Ms. Pitlova and Mr Nedovic thanked all participants for their active involvement and closed the meeting.

Annexes:

1. Meeting agenda
2. List of participants
3. DG REGIO address to PA7 SG members
4. DG JRC address to SG members

## Annex I: Agenda of the meeting

**November 22nd, 2018**

### REGISTRATION AND WELCOME

- 14:30-15:00 Registration and refreshment**  
**15:00-15:30 Official welcome on behalf of the PACs, UoB, DG Regio, JRC and DSP-new**  
*Prof. dr Viktor Nedovic, Ms Lubica Pitlova, PA7 Coordinators*  
*DG Regio*  
*JRC – Prof. dr Miroslav Vesković*  
*DSP – Ms Mihaela Florea*

- 15:30-15:45 Tour de table – introduction of new participants**

### PA7 UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS

- 15:45-16:15 Information on DTP-PAC1-PA7 project activities in the second half of 2018**  
*Ms Dijana Strbac, Ms Jaroslava Szüdi*
- 16:15-16:30 Information from the Annual Forum**  
*Ms Dijana Strbac*
- 16:30-17:00 Introduction of the new Danube Strategy Point**  
*Ms Mihaela Florea*
- 17:00-17:15 Coffee break

### REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS (WGs)

- 17:15-18:00 WG DFCN – AT + RS**  
\*Using the European Social Fund (ESF) for Science and Higher Education – Mr Bernd Finger  
**WG on Higher Education and Mobility + DRC update** – Prof. Popovic and Prof. Faulhammer  
**WG on RIS3** – Prof. dr Viktor Nedovic  
**WG on ICT** – Mr Mladen Kraljic  
**WG on Research Infrastructures** – Ms Jaroslava Szüdi, Mr Felix Gajdusek
- 19:00 Networking dinner (*Venue: Restaurant Kolarac, Knez Mihailo Street 46, Belgrade*)

**November 23rd, 2018**

- 08:30-09:00 Registration**  
**09:00-09:45 Revision of the EUSDR Action plan (information and discussion)**

## CAPITALIZATION WITHIN OTHER PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS, PRIORITY AREAS

**09:45-10:15 Thematic Poles of DTP Capitalisation Strategy – exploring possibilities for joint actions**

**TP 2 RDI framework support – Felix Gajdusek**

**TP 9 Educational governance – Vedrana Knezevic**

Expectation: information on the projects in the pole and their relations towards the PA7 actions/targets; how the projects results can be used and further disseminated; what new actions for PA7 would TPs propose for the upcoming programming period

**10:15-10:45 Seed money facility and Danube Strategy Project Fund – introduction of the projects and discussion**

**SMF project Driven by Danube – Ms Nina Bratkova**

**DSPF project EEII – Mr Jürgen Raizner**

**DSPF project RONNI – Ms Snezhana Kostova**

**New project idea proposed by the Academy of Sciences of Moldova – Mr Igor Serotila**

**10:45-11:00 Position paper on remuneration – information and discussion**

11:00-11:15 Coffee break

**11:15-11:45 COST programme – Mr Bart Veys**

**11:45-12:00 AOB and Conclusions of the meeting**

**12:00-12:30 Farewell light lunch**

## Annex II: List of participants

No	First and last name	Institution	Country
1.	Friedrich Faulhammer	Danube Rectors Conference	Austria
2.	Martin Felix Gajdusek	Centre for Social Innovation, ZSI	Austria
3.	Heribert Buchbauer	Federal Ministry of Education Science and Research	Austria
4.	Bart Veys	COST Association	Belgium
5.	Snezhana Kostova	Institute of Robotics, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences	Bulgaria
6.	Daniel Hanspach	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS)	Czech Republic

7.	Ulrike KUNZE	German Aerospace Center   Project Management Agency	Germany
8.	Judit Schrick-Szenczi	Priority Area Coordinator for PA 8 of the EUSDR	Germany
9.	Bernd Finger	Ministry of Science	Germany
10.	Stefan Kern	Federal Ministry of Education and Research	Germany
11.	Igor Serotila	Academy of Sciences of Moldova	Moldova
12.	Jürgen Raizner	Steinbeis Transfer Management S.r.l.	Romania
13.	Roxana Boboruta	Steinbeis Transfer Management S.r.l.	Romania
14.	Anca GHINESCU	Ministry of Research and Innovation	Romania
15.	Mihaela Florea	Danube Strategy Point	Romania
16.	Jasmina Pesic Jotic	University of Belgrade	Serbia
17.	Dijana Štrbac	University of Belgrade	Serbia
18.	Ana Kalušević	University of Belgrade	Serbia
19.	Ivanka Popovic	University of Belgrade	Serbia
20.	Viktor Nedović	University of Belgrade	Serbia
21.	Ivana Davidović	Ministry of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia	Serbia
22.	Dušica Semenčenko	Institute „Mihajlo Pupin“	Serbia
23.	Lubica Pitlova	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic	Slovakia
24.	Jaroslava Szüdi	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic	Slovakia
25.	Nina Bratkova	Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information	Slovakia
26.	Urban Bren	University of Maribor	Slovenia
27.	Mladen Kraljic	University of Maribor	Slovenia

### **Annex III: DG REGIO address to PA7 SG members**

Dear PA 7 Steering Group Members,

DG REGIO apologies for not being able to attend, but the current staff resources do unfortunately not allow us to take part in SG meetings. Nevertheless, we would like to give a written input and hope that you will have a fruitful discussion and a successful follow-up.

- DG REGIO has stressed before, and would like to reassure, that PA7 plays a leading role for the implementation of the EUSDR. We encourage you to continue and consolidate the initiatives and the work done so far. DG REGIO will keep in touch with the JRC, which is the DG in charge of knowledge society within the Commission, and we welcome that you also built up efficient ties directly with them.
- We appreciate your efforts not only to ensure a wide participation of EUSDR countries to PA7 meetings and activities, but also to involve important non-governmental actors like e.g. the Danube Rector's Conference.
- At the end of 2018, the Commission will publish its 2nd report on the implementation of MRS. We would like to thank for the input that we have received and invite you to share your experiences with us in the future as well.
- In the meeting on 26th of June in Brussels, where Commissioner Cretu welcomed the PACs and NCs, she shared a very open and clear opinion about the revision of the future of the macro-regional strategies in general and on the EUSDR Action Plan in specific. This revision coincides with the discussion about different funding sources and programmes which are of great relevance for the strategy (European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Horizon Europe, etc.). Thus, it is a unique opportunity for PA 7 to position itself in the post 2020 period. It is very important that the Steering Group members find clear common ideas about future strategic actions which might go beyond those which are already stated in the existing Action Plan. These revised actions should be reflected in the new Action Plan, together with project examples where appropriate and with "smart" targets, and should also take into account how to embed them into existing funding resources (e.g. DTP, ERDF, ESF, Horizon Europe) as good as possible. Cooperation with other PAs is also very welcome.
- We strongly encourage you to take this unique opportunity, as the success of keeping or even increasing the high level of cooperation in PA 7 will depend on the dedication given to this.

## Annex IV: DG JRC address to SG members

Dear colleagues members of the Steering group of the PA7 of the Danube Strategy,

Unfortunately I am not able to be with you in Belgrade during XVI PA7 SG Meeting, but JRC is keen to continue to be active part of the PA7 SG. I met some of you recently during the EUSDR 7<sup>th</sup> Annual forum in Sofia and the Annual event of the Danube Rectors' Conference in Bratislava. It was an opportunity to share the vision of the future of PA7 as part of the EUSDR and the role of JRC in it.

An important task is in front of you in the next 6 months, to discuss the revision of EUSDR Action plan and the role of PA7 within. This process should have mainly bottom up approach involving as wide as possible range of different stakeholders from the region and beyond. Of course the experience of EUSBSR in changing the action plan should be taken into account, but also the experiences of other MRSs as well. Representatives of countries (regions) which participate in more than one MRS should be the best possible links to experiences of other MRSs. JRC would be glad to closely follow the process and, when it is considered needed and appropriate, share its expertise with you. During the EUSDR 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum in Sofia we discussed the process with coordinator of the new DSP.

Since 2011 when EUSDR was established certain things have changed not only within the Danube macroregion but Europe and worldwide. Those things should be recognised and taken into account.

In his previous State of the Union Speech President Juncker made reference to East and West stating that Europe must breathe with both lungs. Otherwise our continent will struggle for air. The Danube Macroregional Strategy with all its stakeholders is connecting element between East and West, North and South, Big and Small, Member States and Accession Countries, Developed and Countries in Transition.

As stated by the JRC Director-General Vladimir Šucha:

"Territorial management at all levels requires informed decisions based on access to authentic and timely data and information. The creation of macro-regions offers opportunities to understand the status and connect social, economic and environmental phenomena without being restricted by political boundaries. Given shared cultural traditions and development challenges, macro-regions also provide an opportunity for a broad range of stakeholders to collaborate in sharing and using their knowledge. "

MRSs are also an endeavour to develop innovative, socially, economically and environmentally responsible regions that can then well integrate into the European framework. They are thus reinforcing the commitments of the Europe 2020 strategy towards the three dimensions of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and balancing economic and societal needs with sustainable environmental management.

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.

In this context, human and institutional capacity can be seen as a prerequisite for institutional cooperation, and hence for macro-regional cooperation with a view to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in different macro-regions. This is one of the most important reasons why the action plans of all the macro-regional strategies specifically insist on sector specific and cross-sectoral capacity building at the individual and institutional level.

Several times representatives of JRC emphasised that the great challenges of our time in environment, science, society and economy cannot be understood and tackled by any one academic field alone. For science to play a decisive role in addressing these problems in their full complexity, one must focus efforts toward multi-scale, integrated, interdisciplinary approaches, that look between and beyond borders and sectors.

The JRC has been supporting the Danube Region with a set of instruments and competences including several environmentally oriented nexus clusters, the smart specialisation platform, research and innovation monitoring and training on intellectual property and technology transfer.

During few years, the Scientific Support to the Danube Strategy, through the activities of the seven scientific clusters led to over 50 scientific publications and technical reports. It involved around 5.000 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.

These partners often highlighted the needs of the region for capacity building through the nexus (cross-sectoral, holistic) approach and through clustering of macro-regional research potential.

The JRC thus provides scientific support to the EUSDR in two ways. Firstly, it addresses the scientific needs related to the implementation of the EUSDR through harmonisation of datasets and filling the existing data gaps. It is thus helping decision-makers and other stakeholders to identify the policy needs and actions needed for the implementation of the Strategy. Secondly, it contributes to knowledge capacity building through sharing methods, tools and skills and to the reinforcement of ties and cooperation amongst the scientific communities. This also encourages a change of mind-set stimulating a more holistic approach to innovation and taking public authorities, businesses and academia on-board to work together to create regional innovation ecosystems through an entrepreneurial discovery process.

It is broadly recognized that research questions in environmental science should be driven by societal needs, and co-developed by social and biophysical scientists working closely together with those who apply scientific knowledge in decision making. The latter include, in particular, land planners and river basin managers. At the same time, scientific and technical knowledge is the seed

of innovation in processes, services and products needed to reach the objectives of the EUSDR: protecting the environment, connecting the region, building prosperity and strengthening institutions, cooperation and security.

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. Even though there is an emphasis on the clear sense of ownership and responsibilities to countries and regions within macro-regions, the initiatives and actions defined by MRSs need momentum and would benefit from a stronger coordination at the political and expert level within and between the involved countries to deliver the expected results. Such momentum needs to come from the countries and should involve partners and civil societies operating in the macro-region. Important support also comes from International and European institutions including the European Commission and the JRC as part of it.

But as it is claimed in the STUDY ON MACROREGIONAL STRATEGIES AND THEIR LINKS WITH COHESION POLICY FINAL REPORT, each MRS goes through 3 phases:

Phase I has primarily an effect on capacity. Capacity effects first concern individuals and later institutions. Capacity is a prerequisite for performance;

As the MRS 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 would be important to use this STUDY and taking into account the analyses presented understand where the EUSDR is, what are the obstacles to move from one phase to another and what is the role of research and innovation in overcoming those obstacles and what can be done together.

In preparation for the EUSDR 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum in Bucharest, JRC is very keen to prepare analyses of RIS3 for the whole Danube macroregion providing that most of the EU non-member states finalise their S3 in due time.

The Danube macroregion is moving forward but I want to emphasise that the success of the region is not solely a result of its infrastructures, but also of the skills and dedication of its scientists. Therefore, the crucial role of research organisations and universities must be recognised and supported. But the research organisations and universities should grab that responsibility and opportunity as well.

I am looking forward to working together and wish you very successful and productive meeting waiting eagerly for your conclusions and guidance for actions.