
EUSDR Priority Area 7:

To develop the Knowledge Society through research, education and information technologies

6th STEERING GROUP meeting
September 23-24 2013, City Hall, Ulm, Germany

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

Voting members of Priority Area 7 Steering Group:

1. Miroslav Veskovic, University of Novi Sad, Serbia - PAC
2. Stefan Chudoba, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Slovak Republic - PAC
3. Christian Matheis, Ministry of Science, Research and Art, Stuttgart, Germany
4. Hans Joachim Scholz, Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst, Germany
5. Buchbauer Heribert, BMWF- Federal Ministry of Science and Research, Austria
6. Viorel Vulturescu, Ministry of National Education, Romania
7. Kateřina Smejkalová, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Czech Republic
8. Frigyes Hausz, (substitution for Mr. Béla Kardon) Ministry of Human Resources, Hungary

Other participants – representatives of relevant stakeholders:

1. Ann-Jasmin Krabatsch, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy
2. Lombardo Alessandro, CEI, Italy
3. Subotic-Gantar Sanja, University of Novi Sad, Serbia
4. Elke Dall ZSI- Centre for Social Innovation, Austria
5. Jiri Balik, DRC president, Czech Republic
6. Sergio Paoletti, University of Trieste, Italy
7. Peter Langer, European Danube Academy Ulm, Germany
8. Margit Wollner, European Danube Academy Ulm, Germany
9. Ivo Gönner, Lord Mayor of the City of Ulm, Germany
10. Achim Bubenzer, University of Applied Sciences of Ulm, Germany
11. Gerhard Meier, University of Applied Sciences of Ulm, Germany
12. Csilla Csapo, University of Applied Sciences Ulm, Germany
13. Paul Langer, Ulm, Germany
14. Lubica Pitlova, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Slovak Republic
15. Gollubits Christian - BMWF- Federal Ministry of Science and Research, Austria
16. Vilmos Németh, National Innovation Office, Hungary

MEETING AGENDA

VI Steering Group Meeting

23 - 24 September 2013 | Ulm, Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Day one Monday 23 September 2013

Venue: City Hall, Marktplatz 1, 89073 Ulm

16.00 – 19.00 Guided City Tour
including a visit at the University of Applied Sciences Neu-Ulm,
guided by Mr. Peter Langer and Prof. Dr. Meier

Meeting Point: City Hall, Marktplatz 1, 89073 Ulm

19.00 – 21.00 Dinner at the “Ratskeller”

Meeting Point: City Hall, Marktplatz 1, 89073 Ulm

Day two Tuesday 24 September 2013

Venue: City Hall, Marktplatz 1, 89073 Ulm

08.30 – 09.00 Registration

09.00 – 09.20 Welcome speech

- Lord Mayor of the City of Ulm and President of Council of Danube Cities and Regions, Mr. Ivo Gönner
- PACs: Dr. Stefan Chudoba and Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković
- Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg
- European Danube Academy, Ulm, Mr. Peter Langer

09.20 – 09.40 PA7 annual report (June 2012 – June 2013) and feedback

Introduction by Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković, PAC

09.40 – 10.30 Working Groups inputs, introduction by Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković, PAC

- Higher Education and Mobility - Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković
- Research and Innovation – Dr. Viorel Vulturescu
- ICT – Ms. Tea Glazar / Prof. Dr. Joze Gricar
- DRRIF and coordination of national funds – Mr. Heribert Buchbauer
- Collaboration with JRC with special emphasize on RIS3 – Dr. Stefan Chudoba

10.30- 11.00 Coffee Break

11.00 – 11.30 Roadmap for Action, introduction by Dr. Stefan Chudoba, PAC
Update of the document, plans for future actions

11.30 – 12.00 PA7 flagship project, introduction, Prof. Dr. Miroslav Vesković, PAC

- Presentation of DANUBIUS – Dr. Viorel Vulturescu
- Presentation of Danube: Future – Prof. Sergio Paoletti

12.00 – 12.30 Preparation for the EUSDR Annual Forum 2013, Bucharest October 2013
Discussion

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch Break

13.30 – 14.15 Relevant news and updates:

- Danube Programme 2014-2020
Role of PA7 in the Danube Programme
- Formalization of strategic partnership with JRC

Joint event with the JRC in Vienna, Austrian Ministry of Science and Research, 11th September 2013

14.15 – 15.05	PA7 project updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master of Danube Studies, European Danube Academy in Ulm – Mr. Peter Langer (10 min)• Danube Universities, University of Applied Sciences of Ulm - Prof. Dr. Achim Bubenzer (10 min)• Danube Institute, Andr�ssy University Budapest - Prof. Dr. Ellen Bos (tbc) (10 min)• Update on the progress of the DREAM project on national and Danube Region level – Prof. Dr. Helmut Habersack (tbc) (10 min)• Update on the progress of the DANUBE INCO.NET – Ms. Elke Dall (10 min)
15.05- 15.15	Coffee Break
15.15 – 16.15	Final Conclusions
16.15 - 18.00	Visit to the University of Ulm - Prof. Dr. Harald C. Traue (collaborative research centre)
18:00 - 19:00	End of Meeting

Notes from the meeting

The Steering group meeting was opened by Mr. Peter Langer`s who welcomed PA7 Steering Group in the city hall room where city parliament meet. Mr. Langer mentioned that some of the most important and first impulses to the EUSDR were made in Ulm being the biggest city on the Danube river in Baden-Wuerttemberg: Danube festival in 1996, founding of the Council of Danube cities, also the establishment of the European Danube Academy/EDA.

PA7 coordinators, Mr. Chudoba and Prof. Veskovíc together with Mr. Christian Matheis, SG member and host of the meeting, also welcomed the SG members and emphasized that SG meetings have been held in several places along the Danube River, moving from east to west. Some of the next meetings should be held in some of the countries that have not yet taken active participation in the SG activities (Moldova, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia) and should be motivated to do so in the future.

Mr. Chudoba, reminded the group of the pillar C meeting held in Bratislava in May, activities that took place within the 2013 and the upcoming EUSDR Annual meeting in Bucharest to which all the SG members are invited. He has also emphasized the importance of updating the Roadmap document and the shared responsibility of the whole Steering Group towards its implementation. After the welcoming words Ms. Pitlova presented the PA7 Roadmap analyzing milestone by milestone where the objectives were set in a clear and simple way, the deadlines and responsible persons updated. Ms. Pitlova emphasized in the presentation that the roadmap was created two years ago and therefore it is necessary to be flexible regarding the deadlines set. The ppt will be sent to the SG for further consideration and prior the Annual EUSDR Forum that is to be held in Bucharest on 28-29 October, the updated roadmap should be adopted by the SG. During the presentation a discussion took place on the deadlines and persons/group responsible for the delivery of the outcomes specified in the roadmap.

Ms. Dall informed the group that the contact with JRC, IPTS Seville is maintained and that there are means specified in the Danube-Inco.Net project for the S3 (Smart Specialization Strategy) peer review. The report on this activity will be provided through the project by November 2013.

Mr. Buchbauer suggested that the analysis should be left to the scientific project consortium rather than the SG members and in the roadmap text should be clearly stated that the task would be delivered by Danube-Inco.Net project team.

Prof. Veskovíc added that the task should be realized not only in coordination with JRC IPTS, but also with PA8, since S3 is a regional development concept on which PA8 is working intensively.

Further on it was emphasized that the support of the centers of excellences has to be done in complementary way and that more pressure has to be made in that direction. Also, SG was reminded that the non-EU countries do not have ex-ante conditions for the IPA funds in terms of S3, however a lot has been done in the meantime in order to create at least a soft conditions to encourage them to develop their S3s. Identification of funds for research and innovation can be done through a feasibility study within DRRIF, but the current specific situation of the DRRIF has to be born in mind.

While presenting milestone 4: Call for tender feasibility study of DRRIF, Ms. Pitlova informed the group that a pressure has been made on the procurer regarding the language used for the applications and therefore the public procurement process had to be repeated since it was not delivered according to the Slovak law. She was asked then to explain the wording in more details.

Mr. Chudoba and Ms. Pitlova explained that there was a lot of pressure from some SG members to make it possible to apply only in English, without translating the application into Slovak language as it was foreseen in the first procurement process. This has created a problem since by Slovakian law all the applications had

to be submitted in Slovak language and could be submitted also in English, which was not the case since there were three applications submitted only in English language and only one in English and in Slovak language. Now the new conditions are being prepared so that the applications can be submitted in both languages.

Mr. Buchbauer added that there was a strong wish in SG to have the public procurement process also in English, since SG is an international consortium. Since that was not possible it is necessary to accept the situation as it is.

Prof. Veskovic explained that in the moment when the money has been received it was decided that it would be best that Republic of Slovakia delivers the procurement process being the EU country. Therefore it is necessary to support the Slovakian colleagues to deliver the process best way possible in due time.

During the presentation of the roadmap it was decided that the peer review of the projects should not be a task of the SG members, but should be done either through the feasibility study or through DANUBE-INCO.NET project.

Prof. Veskovic suggested annexing the roadmap with the statement that the document should provide involvement of different EU institutions: European Commission, Joint Research Center, other PACs, especially in pillar C, but also NCPs and national ministries. Also, it is necessary to clearly state that each country should try to fulfill obligations taken on themselves and the pressure on the ministries should be executed in this regard. Since the Danube macro region is part of the wider European Union area all the actions should be in accordance with European conditions and regulations throughout the whole Danube macro region.

The Mayor of the City of Ulm, Mr. Ivo Gonner has joined the meeting and welcomed the members. He stated that the City of Ulm has been working a lot on the issues of the Danube strategy since the 90`s. Firstly, the contact with the Danube regions and countries was developed and maintained, through the establishment of the Council of the Danube Cities and the strategy was later on supported through other well known actions of the state Baden-Wuerttemberg. The impact of the Danube strategy citizens feel directly through the improvement of the housing, medical, social, education and employment possibilities. The implementation of the Strategy will be a challenge for a long period of time and strong administration is needed for the implementation of the macro regional policies since the politicians are being alternated and the administration remains. Therefore an educational program that will support this kind of professionals is being developed by the consortium of several countries within the Danube region and on the initiative of the European Danube Academy/EDA from Ulm.

Prof. Veskovic has presented the Annual report where concrete actions and examples were pointed out. It was stated that the EUSDR is getting more recognized and the number of stakeholders is constantly growing. Within the Priority Area 7 much has been done, both by PACs but also the SG members. There is a comprehensive list of the activities that took place in 2013, among which some of the most important are: 5 working groups have been established, the agreement with JRC was signed, S3 was proposed by JRC and their involvement within the EUSDR has been rapidly growing since, also the first common pillar C meeting was held. Some insights into reaching the targets set has been provided as well. Unfortunately, even though the targets were primarily set by the high officials, they are not being developed as expected. Increase in more developed countries is highly evident in many of the targets set, while the non member states and less developed regions have recorded decrease. Also the brain drain issue is still evident in these underdeveloped countries.

EC representative, Ann Yasmin Krabatch from DG Regio provided some general comments on the Annual report provided to the EC by the PACs` Supporting teams. The task of the DG Regio is to track what is going on in the field and it was evident through the reports of the PAs that all actors within the Danube

Strategy need to improve the communication with the stakeholders and work more on its promotion. In that regard, the Priority Area 7 should improve the website.

The PAC Support team will send to the SG members the report together with the comments received from the EC and will make it available on the official website as well.

Prof. Veskovic provided input on working group Higher education and mobility, established in spring 2013. The group is consisted of the most important people in respective fields and all the invitees have accepted to participate in the working group and provided relevant inputs. It was stated further on that there is evident interest of many stakeholders to increase their activities within the EUSDR, such as DRC who is now the legal entity with 55 universities participating, covering the two thirds of students in the Danube region. DRC will have its permanent secretariat and will have the possibility to apply for EU funds with project proposals. DRC president has been present at the SG meeting as well.

ICA and it's branch CASSE are becoming more and more active, following very similar pathway and structure as DRC. In May 2013 an annual meeting was held in Zagreb, and the next one will be held in Novi Sad in May 2014. The joint degree has been established in life sciences and agriculture within the network. Danube Universities is a new concept where joint degrees will be delivered for renewable energy within a Danube consortium. Since there will be a lot of networks named Danube, it is important to specify fields of focus in order to differ among each other.

Also, a meeting on double and joint degrees was held in Regensburg in September organized by BAYHOST and the conclusion of the meeting was that the double and joint degrees should be established better and stimulated more within the Danube region.

The report from Ms. Sorantin regarding the CEEPUS network shows good results. But even though mobility imbalance is much better handled within CEEPUS in comparison with other mobility schemes in European Higher Education Area, obstacles to stimulate brain circulation are still evident. Mobility balance is not proper and all SG members` efforts to work in that direction would be very much appreciated.

Mr. Vulturescu reported on WG Research and Innovation and explained that DANCERS is a FP7 project for Danube region, where apart from the partners from the Danube region partners from other parts of EU participate: Germany, Ireland, France, etc...providing support for the project and the region. The presentation of the project is delivered. The ppt is attached for more details. It was explained that the purpose of the metadata base is to process the data collected. By March the group will have a preliminary report on gaps in the region, and the SG is asked to provide input for the metadata base, it has to be done in cooperation in order to have them synthesized.

Prof. Veskovic mentioned that the big infrastructure facilities are more and more expensive and that the biggest will be opened in few years in Czech Republic, Germany and Slovak Republic, but will be opened to all interested parties. It was suggested to work on twining and teaming within the region and to communicate with the facilities outside the Danube region.

Mr. Chudoba, leading WG for Communication with Joint Research Centre with special emphasize on RIS3, informed the SG on collaboration with the JRC and its scientific support to the EUSDR provided through 4 vertical priorities/ 4 FS projects and one horizontal S3. He has also shortly presented the project of Slovak agricultural S3 made in cooperation with the JRC. The SG was informed about the Technology transfer center established in cooperation with Danube Technology Transfer Centre, PA8 Flagship project.

Prof. Veskovic agreed that cooperation with JRC works very well and reminded the SG members of the meeting on Danube Innovation Partnerships that is to be held in Bucharest, back to back to the EUSDR Annual Forum. Priority Area Coordinators and SG members are invited to participate in the workshop organized by the JRC.

Mr. Buchbauer, coordinator of the WG for DRRIF and Coordination of National Funds within the Danube Region informed the SG that a group of people was established for project reviews and that the top down approach has been tried out. 17 countries were invited out of which 14 had accepted to participate in the process and close cooperation with the German colleagues on a federal level has been established. The WG kick-off meeting will be held in Austria but the dates are not set yet. The work that is being delivered is related to the regional coordination of funds for research and innovation, not only the DRRIF.

Prof. Veskovic concluded that after the clear overview of the work delivered within the Working Groups it is evident that the SG has moved forward. The idea when establishing the Working Groups was that there is a team working on these issues, not only a person in charge of coordination. The question of motivating people to participate in the work of the WGs was raised. All the coordinators of the WGs have responded positively regarding the motivation and active engagement of the WGs members.

Prof. Veskovic emphasized that WGs have a lot to do in regard of the roadmap. The PAC Support Team from Slovakia has done a great job regarding the update of the roadmap, but it is necessary to remain flexible on the dates defined in the document. The group has decided to adopt the updated roadmap by voting electronically after the meeting.

Prof. Veskovic has also informed the Steering group about the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects/TAF-DRP and explained that we were asked from PA10 to apply with two applications. SG has unanimously by electronic voting accepted the *DREAM_start* and *Master of Danube studies* projects, while the third project *Educational and Social Potential of Children from Marginalized Roma Communities (MRC) for the Improvement of their Educational Path* will have the advantage in the next call. It should be born in mind for the next call that the project applications should not exceed 20mil Euros.

In order to obtain the PA7 FS label and therefore inform the SG members of the initiatives, the projects DANUBIUS by Viorel Vulturescu and Danube:Future by Sergio Paoletti, have been presented.

After the questions and comments Prof. Veskovic reminded the SG members on Rules of Procedure for voting. The group is asked to decide whether to vote at the meeting or to vote electronically in the next two weeks. It is agreed to vote at the meeting, since there were 50% +1 present representative, but the voting took place after the lunch when Slovakian PAC has returned from the meeting he had had to attend meanwhile.

Ms. Ann Yasmin Krabatch, DG Regio informed the SG that the Task force held several meetings out of which the last was held in June. The next meeting is going to take place in Stuttgart in October, and will focus on energy, environment transport and research and development. Discussions on the ways of financing the EUSDR will be held and the PACs need to be present at the meeting.

Mr. Buchbauer informed the group that the JRC high level event will be held in Krems, Austria in May next year and a meeting was held in September in order to arrange that. It is planned to organize the separate SG meetings for PA7, PA8 and PA 9, the next day common pillar meeting and the third day the high level JRC event.

Mr. Vulturescu reported on Balkangeo.net project conference held in September in Novi Sad within which the meeting with JRC was held, and several project presentations took place at the conference relevant for the JRC nexuses.

Several project updates were presented to the SG, starting with the project Master of Danube Studies, presented by Paul Langer and Prof. Dr. Gerhard Mayer. For further details please refer to the presentations enclosed.

When the delegation of the Slovakian Priority Area Coordinator returned to the meeting Prof. Veskovíc invited the SG to vote on presented projects' FS labeling. The voting for the DANUBE:FUTURE and DANUBIUS projects took place and the requests for obtaining the PA7 FS both of the projects were unanimously accepted. Now the PA7 has 4 Flagship projects: DRRIF, DREAM, DANUBIUS and DANUBE:FUTURE.

Mr. Bubenzer then presented the project Danube Universities, where it was emphasized that the final goal of the project is the establishment of the network but also starting a common degree.

Mr. Matheis mentioned that compared to other project ideas the above mentioned project seems small, but nonetheless it is a good way to enhance the student mobility. The process of accreditation should be started in Germany but also in other countries as well. The request for letter of recommendation for the Master of Danube Studies and Danube Universities projects will be sent to the SG members after the meeting in order to vote whether they should receive the official support from the SG or not.

Mr. Christian Gollubits shortly informed the group of the state of the art of the DREAM project and activities that took place within the project while Ms. Dall presented the DANUBE.INCO-NET project, focusing on societal challenges such as innovative society and energy efficiency and renewable energy. Mr. Vulturescu added that the DANCERS project is represented in DANUBE.INCO-NET consortium and vice versa, saying that the projects are very tightly connected. It was also stated that the DANUBE.INCO NET consortium will work on the FS labels together with PACs, based on the proposals of the SG members.

Prof. Veskovíc thanked to the hosts of the meeting and informed the present representatives that Baden Wuerttemberg is currently presiding the network 4 motors for the EU represented by Catalonia, Baden Wuerttemberg, Lombardy and Rhone-Alps. The conference held in Novi Sad on 2 July, at the initiative of the presiding committee of the network and in the organization of the University of Novi Sad, was very successful on political and academia level. Most developed EU regions shared expertise with some of the Danube regions (neighboring regions of the countries: Croatia, Hungary, Romania & Serbia). Also, he has suggested inviting Mr. Sucha as a permanent member of the SG to participate at the SG meetings regularly due to good and very important communication made with him and the JRC. Also participation in the SG meetings on a regular basis of the representative of the DG Research and Innovation would be most welcome.

Prof. Veskovíc further on emphasized that the SG has progressed a lot, but there are a lot of things to be improved as well. There are still only 8 countries active in the SG work and 6 countries that should be activated. The presence of Czech Republic is very much appreciated, and there are participants from Slovenia, Montenegro and Croatia who are participating on irregular basis, while others like B&H, Moldova and Ukraine never participated. Prof. Veskovíc had personal contacts with some of them trying to motivate them for participation and this should be done more in future. Bulgaria has representatives from NGO and still is not clear who is the official representative. Moldova has been very active until one point and suddenly stopped all further communication with the PAC Support Team.

Mr. Buchbauer added that his ministry has a very good communication with the representatives of B&H and Moldova and will try to stimulate them to participate and further on suggested to find the way to finance the presence for the participants who cannot do that on their own.

Next meeting will probably take place at the beginning of the next year, and there is a possibility to organize it together with the DANUBE-INCO.NET kick-off meeting. Slovenia, Bulgaria and Croatia have not yet organized the SG meeting and the SG members were asked to spread the word to them if get in contact with the representatives of these countries.