

XVIII PA7 Steering Group Meeting and DFCN meeting

December 4th, 2019 | University of Belgrade, Rectorate building (1st floor, room 16)
Studentski trg 1, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

Minutes

The 18th Steering Group (SG) Meeting of Priority Area 7 and Danube Funding and Coordination (DFCN) Meeting were hosted by the University of Belgrade and took place in the Rectorate building of University of Belgrade on December 4th, 2019.

The agenda of the meeting and the 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 on the following link:

<https://knowledgesociety.danube-region.eu/documents/>

Official welcome on behalf of the PACs, JRC and DSP

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

Ms Lubica Pitlova, Slovak PA7 co-coordinator, also welcomed the participants and expressed her thank to the University of Belgrade for organising the meeting. She reminded that lately important documents on EU level have been finalised, such as further parts of Horizon Europe and the new EUSDR Action plan.

Mr Miroslav Vesković (EC JRC) said that JRC has been supporting EUSDR and PA7 at least since 2013 and that it will stay committed to the development and further achievements of the Danube Strategy. He informed that Ms Charlina Vitcheva was appointed Deputy Director General of the Joint Research Centre and that she has an important experience from the macroregional strategies. In the next period, JRC will be working with the new vice president of the EC who will be responsible for strategic foresight. Mr Vesković emphasized that one of the priorities of the new EC is the Green Deal. Due to the new EC priorities, suggestion for PACs is to take a more horizontal role and to be more in contact with similar PAs.

Ms Mihaela Florea (Danube Strategy Point) also welcomed the participants on behalf of DSP team and thanked for the invitation to the meeting. She noted that more information and the news will follow during her presentation.

Ms Ivana Davidović (EUSDR National coordinator's office, Ministry of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia) said that the Republic of Serbia was actively involved in preparation and implementation of the EUSDR. Also, the Republic of Serbia has taken over the Chairmanship of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Macro-Region (EUSAIR) this year and invited the participants to the Annual Forum of the EUSAIR which will be in May 2020 in Belgrade. She also stressed the importance of making links between the MRSs and funding programmes, as well as of the cooperation between similar priority axes of different MRSs.

A tour de table followed after the official welcome notes.

DSP – status of implementation & EUSDR updates

Ms Mihaela Florea presented the updated DSP team, activities in 2019 and activities planned for next year. She explained the contribution of the Danube Strategy Point in the revision of the EUSDR Action plan and other activities – evaluation, monitoring, communication, capacity building. Ms Florea introduced the political objectives, thematic priorities and announced events of the EUSDR Croatian Presidency 2019/2020. Besides support to the Presidency, in 2020 DSP will continue to support PACs and NCs in communication, evaluation and capacity building activities (ppt available).

PA7 UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS

Information on the DTP-PAC1-PA7 project activities in the second half of 2019

Ms Dijana Štrbac presented the main results of the project along the work packages. Within WP1 (Management, publicity and communication) the most important results are: meetings attended or organised (SG, PAC to PAC, NC and PAC meetings), communication and visibility activities and participation in different events. WP2 (Policy development) brought the following results: 2 studies which will be finalized soon (“Smart specialization strategy design and implementation recommendations for non-EU countries of the Danube region based on best practices of Danube region EU countries” and “Fulfilment of PA7 objectives”), updating PA7 actions and targets, cooperation with JRC on RIS3 development, 2 meetings of PA8 WG on Technology Transfer attended. WP3 (Cooperation and coordination) had the following achievements: organised information session on research infrastructure in the Danube region in cooperation with ResInfra@Dr, attended - Excellence-in-ReSTI, Pilot Training Final Meeting & Award Ceremony, International Conference on Scientific Cooperation EU-13 Countries and Danube Region (ppt available).

Finalisation of the Action Plan revision

Ms Lubica Pitlova introduced the timeline of the EUSDR Action plan revision and presented the final versions of the new PA7 targets and actions. She explained in detail the proposed actions and targeted activities which will enable their implementation. Ms Pitlova informed that the next SG

meeting will be focused on the Implementation of the new EUSDR Action plan and that there is an initiative to organise it jointly with Priority Area 8 of EUSDR (ppt available).

Information on the new DTP PA7 project proposal 2020-2022

Ms Nina Bratkova (Slovak Centre Of Scientific and Technical Information) presented the PA7 project proposal for the period 2020-2022 prepared by the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information and University of Belgrade, and submitted to the DTP in October 2019. She explained in detail the content of all three work packages: Management and Communication, Policy development, and Cooperation and Coordination. Ms Bratkova also informed that the activities of the new project proposal are in line with new PA7 actions and targets and showed it in her presentation (ppt available).

Mr Mike Nagorkin suggested including experts/investors/projects outside the Danube region in capitalisation activities in the next project period. In that way experience from other countries with different innovation ecosystems can be transferred to the Danube region.

Mr Miroslav Vesković suggested to make contacts with the network of Danube Academies of Sciences and to involve them in PA7 activities (besides Danube Rectors Conference).

REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS (WGs)

WG on Danube Funding Coordination Network

Ms Martina Hartl presented the report from the Danubius Awards 2019. The award was established in 2011 by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research (BMWF) and the Institute for the Danube region and Central Europe (IDM) with the intention to honour persons with extraordinary achievements in their scientific output in relation to the Danube region.

Ms Hartl also invited to the Training & Mutual Learning Workshop “Gender equality in research and innovation national and international policy for the Danube region and Balkan region”. The event is part of the Horizon 2020 project GENDERACTION and will be organised at the University of Belgrade on March 10th and 11th, 2020.

WG on Higher Education and Mobility + DRC update

Mr Viktor Nedović on behalf of Ms Ivanka Popović presented the most important updates in this working group. He informed that the DRC Annual Meeting and General Assembly was held in Bucharest on November 6-8, 2019. The most important conclusion was that the network needs to adapt to the changing higher education landscape in Europe. He also presented Danubius Award winners in 2019. Mr Nedović introduced statistics of the DR countries related to participation in H2020 projects, ERC projects and Web of Science publications. He informed that the Republic of Serbia has initiated an ERC Visiting Fellowship programme in order to support researchers in applying for this prestigious grant (ppt available).

WG on RIS3

Mr Viktor Nedović informed that on October 15th, 2019 JRC organised a regional event in Belgrade (with around 200 participants) with the idea to create a regional value chain to be (co)financed by the EC in the future, based on priorities identified in national smart specialisation strategies. Non-EU countries cannot apply for ESIF, but are developing national support for RIS3. Serbia has presented RIS3 priorities on this regional event in Belgrade and next year measures identified in EDP will be implemented. Within PA7, there is a study in preparation, related to offering recommendations to the non-EU countries in the field of RIS3 implementation, governance and evaluation on the basis of best practices in the EU countries. The Smart specialisation strategy of the Republic of Serbia is finalised and was sent to the Government for adoption. In January 2020 a public debate will be organised. The status of other Danube region countries in the creation of RIS3 is the following: Montenegro has adopted its smart specialisation strategy in 2019, Ukraine and Moldova are in the phase of EDP, while North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are starting the process.

Mr Miroslav Vesković informed that all non-EU countries of the Danube region are part of the JRC S3 platform and that the Croatian EUSDR Presidency is keen to support at least one thematic platform.

Mr Darko Petrušić (Ministry of Science of Montenegro) said that Montenegro is at the moment trying to become part of two thematic platforms – Agrofood and Energy.

Mr Viktor Nedović informed that Serbia is recognised as a country with a good RIS3 methodological framework and that therefore, it will be UN pilot country for STI maps for achieving sustainable development goals. The kick-off meeting for this activity will be organised by the United Nations next week in China.

WG on ICT

Mr Tomaž Kern and Mr Mladen Kraljic presented the results of WG on ICT in 2019 and plan for the next year. They are searching for committed members of this working group with a goal to include 8 universities, 4 business members and 4 support offices. The work plan of the group is in line with PA7 targets and it is planned to initiate 4 projects until autumn 2020 (ppt available).

WG on Research Infrastructure

Ms Martina Hartl on behalf of Mr Felix Gajdusek informed that the project ResInfra@DR was completed on June 30th, 2019. The focus of the project was research infrastructures and comprised a long list of ministry and agency partners. The ResInfra@DR Joint action plan consists of 5 activity groups including in total 17 detailed described actions, which have been consulted with stakeholders from almost all DR countries. This collection can be used as a blueprint for further actions in the Danube Region. With connection to Priority Area 7, the following activities were identified as being central:

- a Research Infrastructure landscape analysis,
- the Training of RI staff,
- the development of an RI information service system,
- the development of basic principles for open access and practical solutions & operating models for RI.

The plan of this WG for the next period is to organise online meetings, participate in relevant events, maintain an online database for reviewers and develop thematic links of RI in the region (ppt available).

TP 3 Entrepreneurial Learning Systems and DTP projects aimed at educational programs for entrepreneurs (Finance4SocialChange and DanubeChance2.0)

Mr Mike Nagorkin (IFKA Public Benefit Non-Profit Ltd.) informed that previously Entrepreneurial Learning Systems with 9 DTP projects were focused on the development of knowledge, skills and competences of employees through cooperation with entrepreneurs. Currently, with only 4 DTP projects left TP3 is working on educating entrepreneurs on the different stage of their maturity - covering the full life cycle of enterprise. He presented links between TP3 projects and PA7 targets, capitalization workshops organized and their most important conclusions. Mr Nagorkin also introduced Finance4SocialChange and DanubeChance2.0, two projects focused on educational programs for entrepreneurs and coordinated by IFKA (ppt available).

INDEED PROJECT (Innovation for dementia in the Danube Region)

Ms Lea Pfaffel (Technical University of Munich) introduced the DTP project INDEED focusing on creating a training programme for staff in health and social care in the following ways: upskilling their competence in dementia, strengthening professional networks in dementia care and enhancing their knowledge about entrepreneurship for creating innovative, dementia-related services. She also explained the current phase of project implementation and sustainability of project results (ppt available).

Technology critical elements as emerging pollutants in the sediments of the Danube River

Ms Tatjana Trtić-Petrović (Vinca Institute, University of Belgrade) presented the study focusing on determining technology critical elements (TCE) in the surface sediments of the Danube River conducted together with colleagues from the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research, Dubna, Russian Federation. Descriptive analysis has shown about 3 times higher concentration of neodymium and dysprosium. Also, the analysis has shown an increase in concentration of some TCE in the part corresponding to the accumulation of sediments (ppt available).

Potential of green extraction techniques for the smart agro-food waste management from the Danube region

Ms Aleksandra Cvetanović (Faculty of Technology, University of Novi Sad, winner of Danubius Young Scientist Award for 2019) presented her research related to extraction techniques of the agro-food waste. Large quantities of agro-food waste contain diverse molecules representing potential biological activities. Therefore, developing an eco-friendly and effective strategy for using and managing biomass waste is critical. Subcritical water extraction has proven as most promising extraction technique for the bioactive compounds isolation (ppt available).

Danube Funding Coordination Network (DFCN) Meeting

Multilateral calls - the status quo

Ms Martina Hartl informed about the Multilateral Danube call with the following countries participating: Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia and France as a pilot. In total, around 60 proposals have been submitted. Evaluation of the projects has started. Project selection is envisaged for February 2020, while projects should start in March 2020. The programme remains open for new rounds and extended cooperation (ppt available).

EUREKA Danube Region call

Ms Martina Hartl presented results of three EUREKA Danube region calls (2015, 2017, 2018). She said that the initial interest of the community has been high but there is a frustration by the community due to low success rates and very long approval duration (2018 Call is not yet closed as funding is not fully available yet).

Mr Viktor Nedović asked if only SMEs can participate in this programme. **Ms Martina Hartl** said that EUREKA is actually SME instrument and that universities can be only subcontracted by the SMEs. However, this depends on the national rules, so certain flexibility is possible.

BMBF Western Balkans R&D cooperation programme 2019

Ms Ulrike Kunze (German Aerospace Center, Project Management Agency) announced that the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is starting a Western Balkans R&D cooperation funding programme. It is the first BMBF cooperation funding programme exclusively for the Western Balkans and it was published in the German Official Gazette on December 4th, 2019. The programme aims to strengthen the R&I systems in the Western Balkans, reduce brain drain, strengthen the research and management competence of young scientists, to improve the competitiveness and innovation potential of the Western Balkans, initiating joint R&D projects in

order to develop marketable products, services or technologies with partner institutions in Germany. She also explained funding objects and procedures (ppt available).

Romanian platform for research infrastructure

Mr Adrian Curaj (Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding) gave a comprehensive presentation on research infrastructure in context. At first, he presented main activities and results of the ResInfra@DR project. Then, he provided an overview of the Romanian Roadmap of Research Infrastructures 2017 which sets the national priorities and earmarks funds for both national and pan-European RIs including ESFRI ones. Mr Curaj highlighted that ERRIS is becoming a platform connecting the supply of research infrastructure services to the demand from business and research organisations in the Danube Region (ppt available).

COST Connect – suggestions for the continuation of collaboration

Mr Viktor Nedović informed that he initiated the organisation of a COST Connect workshop in the area of Agrofood and that he is still waiting for the response. Next year, Serbia will be host of two important conferences: UNIFood and 3rd Black Sea Food Federation Congress. COST Connect could be organised as a side event of one of those conferences.

Horizon 2020 calls - Danube relevant topics

Ms Martina Hartl informed that there are no topics within Horizon 2020 specifically mentioning the Danube region. However, she listed relevant ERA-Net activities, Widening activities, Others, ERC and MSCA. She also said that negotiations regarding Horizon Europe are still ongoing and that the main issue on budget is still unresolved. The synergies chapter including Structural Funds was agreed at the Research Council Meeting on 29th of November 2019. The chapter on International Cooperation and Association is still not concluded (ppt available).

Future of DFCN – discussion

The DFCN is a network initiated in order to better coordinate multilateral and bilateral funds. However, there is an open issue of the low level of embedding macro-regional strategies into funding programmes.

Ms Lubica Pitlova said that it is very difficult to maintain activities or networks which are not financially supported.

Mr Miroslav Vesković suggested being in touch with different DGs and looking for diverse funding sources.

Participants agreed the following:

- The DFCN continues to be a PA7 working group with organising DFCN meetings once per year back-to-back with the SG meetings.
- The Multilateral Danube call is considered as one of the main achievements of this WG and therefore it should be continued; the invitation to relevant national institutions of those countries not participating will be repeated.

Ms Lubica Pitlova and Mr Viktor Nedović thanked all participants for their active involvement and closed the meeting.

Annex I – Agenda

December 3rd, 2019

19:00 **Networking dinner** (*Venue: Restaurant “Kolarac”, Knez Mihailo Street 46, Belgrade*)

December 4th, 2019

PA7 SG Meeting

REGISTRATION AND WELCOME

8:00-8:30 **Registration**

8:30-9:00 **Official welcome on behalf of the PACs, JRC and DSP**

PACs - Prof. dr Viktor Nedovic, Ms Lubica Pitlova

JRC – Prof. dr Miroslav Vesković

DSP – Ms Mihaela Florea

9:00-9:15 **DSP – status of implementation & EUSDR updates – Ms Mihaela Florea**

PA7 UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE PLANS

9:15-9:30 **Information on DTP-PAC1-PA7 project activities in the second half of 2019**

Ms Dijana Strbac

9:30-9:45 **Finalisation of the AP revision**

Ms Lubica Pitlova

9:45-10:00 **Information on the new DTP PA7 project proposal 2020-2022**

Ms Nina Bratkova

REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS (WGs)

10:00-11:00 **WG DFCN – AT + RS (Ms Martina Hartl - report from the Danubius Awards)**

WG on Higher Education and Mobility + DRC update

WG on RIS3 – Prof. dr Viktor Nedovic

WG on ICT – Prof. dr Tomaž Kern, Mr Mladen Kraljic

WG on Research Infrastructures –Mr Felix Gajdusek

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

CAPITALIZATION WITHIN OTHER PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS, PRIORITY AREAS

11:30-12:30 **Thematic Poles of DTP Capitalisation Strategy and other projects**

TP 2 RDI framework support – Mr Felix Gajdusek

TP 3 Entrepreneurial Learning Systems – Mr Mike Nagorkin

DTP projects aimed at educational programs for entrepreneurs (Finance4SocialChange and DanubeChance2.0) - Mr Mike Nagorkin

INDEED PROJECT (Innovation for dementia in the Danube Region) – Ms Lea Pfaffel

"Technology critical elements as emerging pollutants in the sediments of the Danube River" - Dr. Tatjana Trtic-Petrovic, Vinca Institute, University of Belgrade, Serbia Dr. Otilia Culicov, JINR Dubna, Russia

„Potential of green extraction techniques for the smart agro-food waste management from the Danube region" - Dr. Aleksandra Cvetanovic, Faculty of Technology, University of Novi Sad, winner of Danubius Young Scientist Award for 2019

Expectation: information on the projects or DTP Thematic poles and their relations towards the PA7 actions/targets; how the projects results can be used and further disseminated; what new activities for PA7 would TPs propose for the upcoming programming period.

12:30-13:30 Lunch break

Danube Funding Coordination Network (DFCN) Meeting

13:30 – 13:45 **Multilateral calls - the status quo**

13:45 - 14:00 Short information on the Danube Call of the BMBWF, EUREKA, other bilateral and multilateral activities in the Region

14:00 – 14:15 **BMBF Western Balkans R&D cooperation programme 2019 – Ms Ulrike Kunze**

14:15 – 14:30 **Romanian platform for research infrastructure – Mr Adrian Curaj**

14:30 – 14:45 **COST Connect – suggestions for the continuation of collaboration – Mr Viktor Nedović**

14:45 - 15:30 **Horizon 2020 calls - Danube relevant topics (discussion)**

- Relevant ERA-Net activities
- Will some countries use the widening measures still available?
- Horizon Europe association – any further news and needs

15:30 – 16:00 **Future of DFCN – discussion**

- How are countries preparing for the next Structural Funds Funding Period and how is the EUSDR integrated and anchored in those plans?
- What kind of potential is there to further align activities?

Annex II – Participants

	First and last name	Institution	Country
1.	Martina Hartl	Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy	Austria
2.	Judita Klosaková	MEYS	Czech Republic
3.	Mihaela Florea	DSP	DSP
4.	Lea Pfaeffel	Technical University of Munich, School of Medicine	Germany
5.	Ulrike Kunze	German Aerospace Center, Project Management Agency	Germany
6.	Jonas Metzger	Ministry of Science, Research and Arts Baden-Württemberg	Germany
7.	Mike Nagorkin	IFKA Public Benefit Non-Profit Ltd. for the Development of the Industry	Hungary
8.	Darko Petrušić	Ministry of Science	Montenegro
9.	Jelena Šaranović	Ministry of Science	Montenegro
10.	Adrian CURAJ	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding	Romania
11.	Miroslav Veskovic	EC DG Joint Research Centre	EU/Serbia
12.	Jasmina Pešić Jotić	University of Belgrade	Serbia
13.	Tatjana Trtić-Petrović	Vinča Institute of Nuclear Sciences	Serbia
14.	Aleksandra Cvetanovic	Faculty of Technology, University of Novi Sad	Serbia
15.	Viktor Nedović	University of Belgrade	Serbia
16.	Dijana Štrbac	University of Belgrade	Serbia
17.	Ivana Davidovic	Ministry of European Integration of the Republic of Serbia	Serbia
18.	Nina Bratkova	Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information	Slovakia
19.	Lubica Pitlova	MINEDU	Slovakia
20.	Tomaž Kern	University of Maribor	Slovenia
21.	Mladen Kraljić	University of Maribor	Slovenia