

Contributions of EUSDR PAC 10

To the 2nd report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies

1) Achievements:

D-LAP (Danube Local Actors Platform) as a stakeholder-platform to intensify cooperation between Civil Society Organizations of the Danube Region and to integrate local and regional administration to the process. D-LAP has stimulated the following networks:

- **Danube Civil Society Forum (DCSF):** a self-organizing network of Civil Society Organizations of the 14 Danube Region countries. The DCSF is one of the activities mentioned in the EUSDR Action Plan
- **Danube Cities Against Human Trafficking (D-CAHT):** a cooperation of cities to raise awareness, provide information and know-how, identify common challenges and provide practical tools for local actors to fight human trafficking
- **Council of Danube Cities and Regions (CoCDR):** a platform for local politicians and administrations had several meetings to seek for better involvement of cities and regions to the EUSDR and European policies in general
- **ARGE Donauländer:** a cooperation of regions along the Danube River e.g. launched an application for making the Roman limes to a world cultural heritage site.

In line with the targets of PA 10 **National Participation Days** as joint seminars of the country's administration and the civil society were organized in 9 DR countries with the help of PAC 10. Their main purpose is to improve the trust of citizens and stakeholders in political authorities as well as to ensure sufficient information flow and exchange at all levels of administration.

By the way of stimulating the transnational cooperation of civil society organizations and as side-event to the Annual Fora the 3rd and 4th **Danube Participation Day (DPD)** was organized in cooperation with DCSF and the Presidency. Each of the DPDs had some 200 to 250 participants from all 14 DR countries. One of the results of the 4th DPD was the **Agenda for Participation** and the start **for Participation Partnerships**. Having a side-event for the civil society to the Annual Fora was so successful that it was copied by EUSBR and EUSALP.

PAC 10 Slovenia invested quite some energy for **inclusion of youth in policy processes** and have with that intent initiated a network of young innovative and perspective experts that have decided to actively influence their future. They have met in different settings and at several occasions and have most visibly contributed to the results of the **Bled Strategic Forum** where they didn't let the politicians, academics, entrepreneurs and general public to forget, how important part of the society they are.

As follow up of the conference "Public Governance as the foundation of European Integration" which took place in Vienna in June 2016 and in cooperation with BACID program (Capacity Building of the countries of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova) a **Danube Governance Hub** was

established together with the Center for Public Administration Research (KDZ) for strengthening the basis for a strong public sector based on European standards through:

- Contributing to the current efforts of fostering good governance, rule of law and modernization of public administration
- Promoting knowledge exchange and creating synergies between relevant stakeholders dealing with governance topics in the region
- Drawing attention to the importance of coordination between national, regional and local level as basis for a strong public sector
- Focusing on open government, transparency and cooperation with civil society
- Contributing to the European Integration process in the Danube Region/Western Balkans.

In this process organizations of cities and communities like NALAS and ReSPA and the Council of Europe are involved. The process is subsidized from ADA (Austrian Development Agency).

Border Cadaster and Land Registry in countries of the Danube Region, due to legal regulations, are different but comparable. Constraints and legal regulations. Legal uncertainty on transactions of real estate in some countries is high which leads to limited real estate markets, uncertainty in all forms of investment related to land use (investment in new enterprises, technical infrastructure...) and is a pushing factor to corruption. In line with EUSDR Action Plan PAC 10 made a documentation about the different methods of border cadaster and land registry in all the countries of the Danube Region and launched the development of common standards for cadaster and land registry. Elaborated **digital border cadaster** opens a wide field of useful applications in land use planning, statistics and other issues of public administration (GIS, OGD, floating scale mapping...) but has to be implemented according to the new GDPR. This led to close cooperation between stakeholders of the DR (geodetic institutions, regional planning organizations, regional and local administrations) which again is in line with the **DTP-funded project “Attractive Danube”**, a project for creating a DR-wide set of indicators describing the standard of living in the DR.

One of the pilot actions PAC 10 Vienna was running, the **START initiative (Small Project Fund)** was terminated with a final conference presenting the results and a booklet presenting the 48 success-stories of this funding initiative financed by European Parliament funds and the city of Vienna. The results were highly important also for shaping the **Seed Money Facility tool of DTP**.

As a result of PAC 10 Vienna's pilot initiatives (START, TAF-DRP: Technical Assistance Facility for DR-projects, DFD) a **Danube Project Support Tool-kit** was drafted to provide guidance for organizations interested in establishing instruments for supporting projects in their field of competence in the Danube Region and beyond.

Another pilot initiative was implemented, the **“Danube Strategic Project Fund”**. Its main emphasis is to intensify cooperation across the EUs borders and between EUSDR and EUSAIR countries with a specific focus on inclusion of young people. 12 projects were funded and are being implemented.

The target “to increase the absorption rate of EU funds...” matched by the initiative **“Danube Financial Dialog”** where on five occasions facilitators and project-promoters were brought together to identify the most suitable funding tool for promising project-ideas. The previous Slovenian PAC 10 (Center for

Excellence in Finance – CEF) has supported especially non-EU experts with trainings on auditing and management of public finances. In November 2017 a **regional facilitators and donors conference** was organized in Chisinau with great success.

For providing information about funding opportunities in the DR PAC 10 Vienna/EuroVienna with the financial help of DG Regio could create an information tool **“EuroAccess”**. It provides information about open calls and their territorial and thematic coverage. A newsletter keeps interested stakeholders informed about the opening of new calls applicable for their projects. Again, with the financial support of DG Regio and the City of Vienna EuroAccess will widen its coverage to all MRS soon.

The media have been recognized as an important partner in every activity – they help us reach out to more stakeholders and present achievements on a wider scale. Initially Slovenia organized a seminar open for all four MRS on communication and the media in Portoroz in September 2017 (see 5).

2) Policy impact:

DSCF, DPDs and **D-LAP** were able to establish a more open approach towards Civil Society in many countries (see **National Participation Days**).

D-CAHT leads to closer cooperation between Security Forces, which are mainly nationwide organized, and the local organizations running social work.

Danube Governance Hub helped to raise the awareness of sound public management and multi-level governance, not sparing out regional and local level from information and integrating them in a nationwide governance upgrading.

Cadaster and Land Register not only rose the awareness of the necessity to have digital border cadaster but also the opportunities and challenges in OGD, GIS and GDPR.

Bled Strategic Forum provided a great platform for promotion of inclusion of youth in daily policy processes as they represent an important part of our societies and can decisively contribute with innovative approaches, countless ideas and ‘out of the box’ thinking.

3) Monitoring/targets and indicators:

PAC 10 has identified 4 targets (revised 2015) in accordance with the EUSDR Action Plan 12/2010. These targets include indicators.

4) Funding allocated:

- DTP, 4.2: Technical Assistance for PAC 10 2017-2019: EUR 351.000

- DTP: PA 10 projects: ATTRACTIVE DANUBE, CrowdStream: EUR 3.510.000
- DG Regio: Technical Assistance for PAC 10 - CoV 2015/2016: EUR 58.500
- DG Regio: Pilot Initiatives TAF-DRP, START, DFD, DSPF
- DG Regio: EuroAccess
- Austrian Development Agency: BACID, regional facilitators and donors conference Chisinau (Danube connects 2015-2018)
- City of Vienna: PAC 10 Vienna, TAF-DRP, START, DFD, DSPF, EuroAccess, Conference on Public Governance as the foundation of European Integration, CapaCity programme
- Slovenia: PAC 10 CEP
- Regional Cooperation Council: Conference on Public Governance as the foundation of European Integration
- Central European Initiative: Young Bled Strategic Forum 2018: 35.000 €
- Baden-Württemberg Foundation: Support for National Participation Days and Danube Participation Days 2016-2018: EUR 49.500
- one example of ESIF mainstream-programs: European Social Fund (Bulgaria, OP Human Resources) Call on “Transnational Partnerships” addressing labour market, social inclusion, healthcare, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, work conditions and the building of administrative capacity in them: EUR 2.244.000

5) Cross-cutting cooperation:

PAC 10 is grateful to **Interacts** initiative to organize platform **meetings for coordinators of thematic areas**. One could see the different approaches MRS have to similar issues and learn a lot of other MRS colleagues. It also helped to identify the needs for improving the organizational measures. These initiative hopefully will continue.

Another joint initiative of all four MRS was launched by Slovenia for facilitating a horizontal pillar “**the media and communication**” for increasing visibility of the results of MRS activities.

PAC 10 has close cooperation with **EUSBSR**, Horizontal Action ‘**Capacity**’ and **EUSAIR**, **Facility Point** and **Facility Point Plus**.

Keep is one of the better tools covering all 4 MRS. (As we hope **EuroAccess** will be for the other 3 MRS).

DSPF is a funding tool covering EUSDR and EUSAIR.

PAC 10 Vienna is establishing a cooperation with the **EUROPEAN URBAN AGENDA** for increasing the dissemination of results (e.g. of work-group on Housing) to the DR cities.

Within EUSDR cooperation is very close with PAC 7, 8 and 9 and on several topics also with PAC 11.

6) Governance:

Stakeholder Platforms have been established. Most of the representatives in Platforms and in the Steering Group are highly engaged, but unfortunately some of the DR countries have no nominated representative in PA 10s Steering Group or nominated persons have changed obligations without nominating a successor. Sometimes the participation of members is hindered by the long and complicated national procedures or financial constraints.

7) Civil Society:

See 1).

8) Main issues:

The three NOs.

PACs would need a small amount of financial support to launch small studies and implement pilot initiatives.

EUSDR as other MRS are missing a sort of organizational stability and rules (rules of procedure, split of competences and obligations).

Almost one and a half years without a secretariat (DSP) is not helpful. Internal capacity building not only helps coordinating EUSDR activities but is essential for improving the visibility of EUSDR (see EUSBR and EUSAIR). Through better communication media-attention could be increased and the perception of MRS by the public improved.

Capacity development in countries of the EUSDR is a real challenge and public sector modernization is a top priority.

9) Lessons learnt:

It is a challenge to implement the strategy with no institutions, funding and legislation and yet to communicate that it has an added value. The three NOs are hindering a better outcome of MRS.

A Multi-level approach and the inclusion of Civil Society is highly recommended.

Decisions have to be taken more quickly.

Cooperation with other MRS is very beneficial.

Elaborated communication activities and an intensified collaboration with the media, translations into autochthon languages raise the visibility of MRS and the outreach to citizens.

10) Next steps:

- Implementing a secretariat (DSP new) asap!
- Launching an external qualitative evaluation of EUSDR actions/targets/activities identifying strengths and weaknesses and the missing actions and the ones to dismiss.
- Adopting a new Action Plan before new OPs in line with MFF get drafted.
- European Cohesion Policy 2020+ should include easily accessible and manageable funding instruments, pre-financing models and project preparation facilities for smaller projects, which would strengthen the involvement of local actors and civil society in the development of macro regions. Synergies between ESIF based programs and directly operated sectorial programs such as Horizon 2020, CEF and ERASMUS+ should be created.

Annexes

Annex 1: CrowdStream

Annex 2: Danube Water Program/Danube Learning Partnership – D-LeaP

Annex 3: Danube Women City Guide