

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Danube Financing Dialogue – a great success in Belgrade

The words „The Danube can open up the EU towards its neighbours in the Black Sea Region, the South Caucasus and Central Asia” marked the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Danube Financing Dialogue (DFD). It is with this quote from the European Commission’s Communication on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region that Kurt Puchinger, Coordinator of this Macroregional Strategy from the City of Vienna opened the 2nd conference of its kind. After a successful premiere in March 2012 at the Austrian National Bank in Vienna, the location of the DFD was moved to Belgrade and in that way closer to the aforementioned target region of the Strategy. The Serbian National Bank hosted this international conference attended by around 200 participants.

The DFD brought together representatives of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with high-profile actors from the Danube Region with the objective to identify and to discuss innovative business opportunities. In her opening speech, the Governor of the Serbian National Bank, Jorgovanka Tabaković, highlighted the high level of know-how gathered in the institution’s premises: “Bringing together capable people to bring about change will make the Danube river flow upstream”. This statement was further highlighted by Franz Nauschnigg from the Austrian National Bank: “It makes me very happy that, similar to its successful premiere in Vienna, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Dialogue in Belgrade has again managed to host such high-profile participants”.

In the first session of the conference, the representatives of the European Investment Bank, the European Commission, the Serbian Ministry of Finance and the South Balkan Fund discussed the financing opportunities available for SMEs in the Danube Region. “Identifying new funding instruments for SMEs is not the utmost priority” said the chairwoman Marlene Hahn from the Vienna-based consultancy Metis. “The key is rather to make more efficient use of the funding sources that are already available in the region”. The panelists then focused on identifying the funding instruments that are currently available in the Danube Region and the relevant project types. The panelists then moved on to discussing the future financial developments at EU-level. Giannantonio Ballette from the European Commission gave the participants an overview on the state-of-play of the planning processes for the future financing period of 2014-2020.

In general, the participants in Belgrade were convinced that the Danube Region would play a decisive role in the future economic performance of the EU. This is not least supported by the fact that the Region encompasses a large number of capital regions which are the engines of growth of their respective countries (Kurt Puchinger). The conference then moved on to the opportunities and challenges in relation to project financing and hence to the core idea of the DFD which is strengthening the dialogue between SMEs and their potential financiers in the Danube Region.

In the spirit of the 1<sup>st</sup> DFD in Vienna, great attention was paid to bringing both of these groups of stakeholders together. This was not least the objective of the face-to-face meetings and the matchmaking session. Small group discussions were held in order to give a large number of participants the opportunity to voice their ideas and doubts about financing issues. Similarly, the one-to-one meetings between the representatives of both banks and SMEs, which the participants could schedule online prior to the conference, offered both groups of actors the possibility to focus on their individual needs and interests and thereby together figure out financing potentials.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Danube Financing Dialogue is planned to take place in Bucharest in October 2013. You can download all documents, Power-Point Presentations and pictures of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Danube Financing Dialogue at: <http://groupspaces.com/CapacityandCooperation/pages/2nd-danube-financing-dialogue>

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## Agenda

<p><b>13:00</b> Registration and welcome coffee</p> <hr/> <p><b>13:30</b> <b>Welcome</b>  <b>Jorgovanka Tabaković</b>, Governor of the National Bank of Serbia  <b>Ognjen Mirić</b>, Deputy Director of the Serbian European Integration Office  <b>Franz Nauschnigg</b>, Oesterreichische Nationalbank  <b>Chair: Kurt Puchinger</b>, EUSDR PA 10 Coordinator from the City of Vienna</p> <hr/> <p><b>14:15</b> <b>Session 1   Which financing instruments are available for SME in the Danube Region?</b>  <b>Key note speakers</b>  <b>Sorin Mircea Oprescu</b>, General Mayor of Bucharest  <b>Dragijana Radonjić Petrović</b>, Ministry of Finance and Economy  <b>Andreas Beikos</b>, European Investment Bank, Regional Office for the Western Balkans  <b>Nikola Stefanović</b>, SEAF South Balkan Fund  <b>Giannantonio Ballette</b>, European Commission  <b>Chair: Marlene Hahn</b>, Metis GmbH</p> <hr/> <p><b>15:30</b> Project market place   Coffee break</p> <hr/> <p><b>16:00</b> <b>Session 2   Challenges and opportunities of financing SME investment projects in the Danube Region</b>  <b>Panelists</b>  <b>Željko Ožegović</b>, City of Belgrade  <b>Bojana Vukosavljević</b>, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  <b>Hans-Peter Herdlitschka</b>, EUSDR PAC 8 Coordinator from the Ministry of Finance and Economics  <b>Klaus Michal</b>, Kommunalkredit Austria AG  <b>Josip Fabijanč</b>, Representative of the SME "Miskantus"  <b>Chair: Irena Lukač</b>, Center of Excellence in Finance</p> <hr/> <p><b>17:00</b> Face-to-face meetings</p> <hr/> <p><b>19:00</b> <b>Networking dinner at the National Bank of Serbia</b>  <b>Welcome</b>  <b>Kurt Puchinger</b>, EUSDR PA 10 Coordinator from the City of Vienna  <b>Željko Ožegović</b>, City of Belgrade</p>	<p><b>08:30</b> Registration and welcome coffee</p> <hr/> <p><b>09:00</b> <b>Session 3   Match-making</b>  Small group discussions between representatives of financial institutions, project developers and public actors of the EUSDR  <b>Chair: Peter Scheidewind</b>, Metis GmbH</p> <hr/> <p><b>10:30</b> Project market place   Coffee break</p> <hr/> <p><b>11:00</b> Face-to-Face meetings</p> <hr/> <p><b>13:00</b> <b>Session 4   Closing remarks</b>  <b>Johann Sollgruber</b>, Representation of the European Commission in Austria  <b>Kurt Puchinger</b>, EUSDR PA 10 Coordinator from the City of Vienna</p> <hr/> <p><b>13:15</b> End of conference</p>
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