

EUSDR – PA 10 - 7th SG-meeting, Brussels, 23 October 2014

Draft Background paper/Annotated Agenda

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“We grow together, together we grow”

The 7th SG-meeting of PA 10 takes place at the beginning of a very crucial phase in the development of the EUSDR in which we have to capitalise already made experiences and results and we have to contribute to the implementation and best use of the upcoming new governance structure and the related instruments and programmes in the Danube Region. In this paper we propose and comment the headlines of our meeting and also the conclusions to be drawn.

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1. Welcome

Baden-Württemberg welcomes the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 of the EUSDR.

2. Introduction

Within PA10, a new strategic direction was taken in December 2012 within the Steering Group of PA10. PA10 decided in **2012 to move from a mere project development mechanism towards the implementation of political processes**, where necessary, for the interim period 2013-2014, in view of the upcoming multiannual financial framework. This strategic dimension was confirmed in the last reporting period 07/2013-06/2014 and strengthened by the EC communication on governance as well as by the Joint Statement of Ministers in June 2014. We will continue in this direction and discuss among other issues the **adjustment of the governance structure of PA10** in order to be prepared for the future.

First of all it is a pleasure to inform you that we integrated the **Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) as a member in our SG and Central European Initiative (CEI) as a member of the Advisory Committee of our Local Actors Platform (D-LAP)**, in accordance with the Council conclusions of 29th September 2014 on the governance of macro-regional strategies. This is a very important step forward in order to establish working relations between the EUSDR and these two organisations with a huge experience in the macro-region.

In 2013 and 2014, PA10 implemented two platforms as main tools and centres for activities in the field of Civil Society (Local Actors, WG 2) and Urban and Regional Cooperation (WG 3): **Local Actors Platform (D-LAP)** and **Urban Platform Danube Region (UPDR)**. Each of these platforms is accompanied by an **Advisory Committee (AC)** including the members of the relevant working groups. This is a strong signal to the stakeholders for **more inclusion, ownership and co-operation** in the overall process of implementation of the EUSDR, especially of the part covered by PA 10.

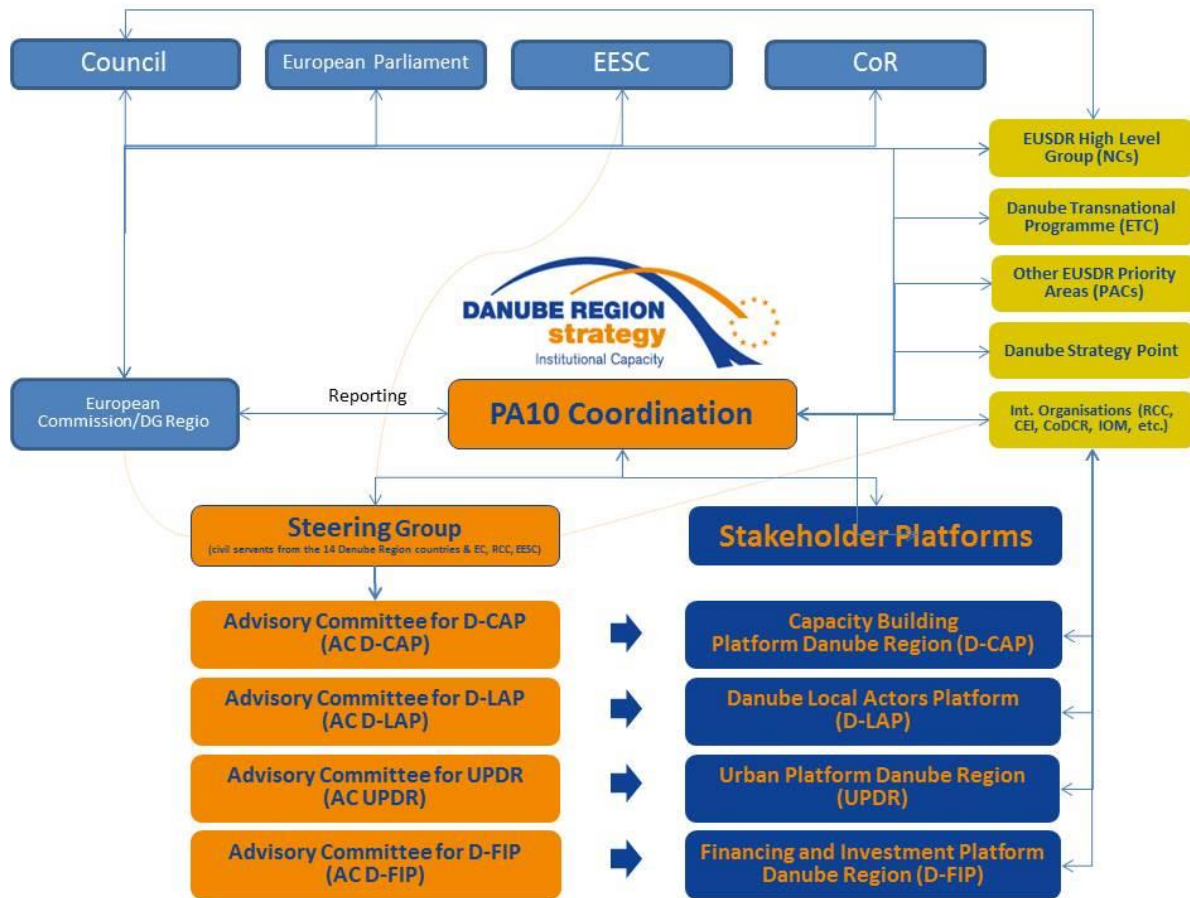
The task until the end of 2014 is to implement similarly organised and managed platforms (stakeholder meetings and online platforms monitored by an Advisory Committee) for capacity building and financing. The **Financing and Investment Platform Danube Region (D-FIP)** can be developed by using experiences and structures of WG 4 and including the already existing pilot projects DFD, TAF-DRP and START; the **Capacity Building Platform Danube Region (D-CAP)** uses the already existing experiences and structures of WG 1.

In accordance with the development described above, we propose to switch our internal working structure **to a more client oriented and more outward oriented working structure** using the implemented structure of the established platforms (D-LAP, UPDR, D-FIP and D-CAP). The **Working Groups 1-4 will be upgraded to Advisory Committees (AC) of the Platforms** and prepare policies as well as a project oriented co-operation and communication to implement the Action Plan, which still is our basic working document.

The ACs – using the platforms – can also fulfil the task of networking with already existing networks and organisations in the Region. This process of restructuring will be accompanied by a **concept of enhanced dissemination of PA 10 activities among stakeholders**, using i.a. the web presence of PA 10.

The platforms should be developed to an instrument at the interface between EUSDR, ESI and other EU funding and the relevant parts of the Transnational Danube Programme and can provide inputs to the Danube Strategy Point under discussion.

Consolidated governance structure of PA10 of the EUSDR



Conclusion:

The SG agrees to the revised governance structure of PA 10 and welcomes the development and implementation of a concept of enhanced dissemination of PA 10 activities among stakeholders in their respective Danube Region countries and networks, as well as on the proposed platforms of PA10.

3. Results and consequences of the 3rd AF Vienna

- Eisenstadt stakeholder meeting
- Joint PA9-PA10 workshop on migration in Eisenstadt
- CoDCR meeting: elements of the key note
- Workshops

The active participation of 1100 experts and stakeholders from all 14 EUSDR countries and from the European institutions, the manifold presentations and lively debates have made the event a real success. The variety and breath of the cooperation taking place under the EUSDR roof was also brought home to the nearly 1.000 participants by the 'Danube Cosmos'. A half day of the Vienna Forum was dedicated to discussions in workshops, good practice exchange at speakers' corners, discovery of new partners and ideas in matchmaking areas as well as firsthand information in coaching zones. Covering the thematic pillars of the strategy, this new format offered 50 single

events around the themes of improved connectivity, environmental protection, prosperity and regional cohesion.

Meantime the Forum has been well documented on the conference website www.danubeforumvienna.eu, which now contains:

- A documentation clip of the Forum in a short and a more extensive version (subpage “Documentation”)
- A summary report of the Forum, focussing in particular on the outcome of the plenary session (subpage “Documentation”)
- The Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, adopted at the occasion of the Forum (subpage “Documentation”)
- Powerpoint presentations of the plenary speakers (in the respective sections of the subpage “Programme”)
- Summary notes and presentations from many of the Danube Cosmos sessions (in the respective sections of the subpage “Programme”)

4. EUSDR PA10 Report June 2014; Interpretation and discussion of the “Joint Statement” including the results of our questionnaire as well as the General Affairs Council Conclusions on the governance of macro-regional strategies (overview)

The report on the implementation of PA10 was submitted to the EC by the end of June. As last year, the report focuses mainly on the current development of PA10 and draws the attention to the main challenges and opportunities of the EUSDR with PA10 being a major horizontal catalyst for driving forward its implementation. The report was made available on the PA10 website. It comments on the on-going discussion process of the EUSDR governance and also takes into consideration relevant policy papers, Council conclusions as well as the communication of the Commission on the governance of MRS and opinions of the EESC and CoR.

5. Presentation of the Danube Strategy Point

Conclusion: PA 10 explicitly expresses its support to the future Strategy Point’s work and asks the National Coordinators and DG Regio to design and further cooperation procedures which foster consensus and trust among all EUSDR stakeholders for an enhanced implementation of the Strategy.

6. Platforms are live and Pilot Projects are ongoing

6.1 UPDR-Urban Platform Danube Region (including the new cultural dimension in PA 10)

The Danube is the river with the highest number of bordering countries, but has also a large concentration of capital cities and metropolitan areas, which gives the Danube Region potential for becoming one of the most dynamic, competitive and thriving macro-regions of the European Union in the 21st century.

It is of utmost importance to integrate regional and local administrations, cities and civil society into the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region at all levels and within every Priority

Area. The practical involvement of these organisational levels and institutions still has to gather momentum in order to make the Strategy a success and strengthen its multi-level governance.

Therefore, one of the main aims of Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) was to set up the “Urban Platform Danube Region”, uniting as many cities, city networks and associations in the Danube Region as possible in order to enhance their ownership within the implementation process of the EUSDR and gearing their joint efforts towards the targets of the EU2020 strategy and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. This should at the same time strengthen their leadership role in the region and give them a common voice within the EUSDR. The Urban Platform Danube Region does not want to replace the many existing networks, but to provide them with the macro-regional approach as well as with the opportunity of an open information exchange process related to both policy and project development.

See also website: www.updr.eu

The Council of Danube Cities and Regions (CoDCR) as a network of political representatives is included and also served by the AC of the platform by providing proposals in the sense of policy making.

6.2 D-LAP – Danube Local Actors Platform

The Annual Forum in Vienna on the 26-27th of June, and the 1st Participation Day in Eisenstadt were both a great success, especially where the recognition at the highest level of the central role of local actors- local, regional, urban administrations, social partners, civil society and academia in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Area is concerned. For the first time, three workshops were dedicated to civil society aims, to Roma concerns and to urban policies, and the 150 persons that attended the participation day meeting in Eisenstadt were an impressive statement to the growing relevance of the local actors in the EUSDR.

At the Annual Forum, PA 10 met Commissioner Hahn, had talks with representatives of DG Regio, reported about the results of the WG2 meeting in March and presented the Eisenstadt declaration; the idea of broadening the scope of the working group to “local actors” to reflect the actual composition and the future aims following the declaration was welcomed by the commission, who together with Minister Peter Friedrich of Baden-Württemberg agreed to integrate the “participation day” as a regular side event of the future EUSDR Annual Fora. “Providing a platform for the involvement of civil society, regional and multi-governance levels, and parliamentary debate and/or oversight” (DG Regio, June 2014) has become one of the targets for the future governance of the Danube Strategy.

Establishment of the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP)

EUSDR-PA10 Working Group 2/Civil society has been established in 2011 at the onset of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Three years into the Strategy, WG 2 consists mainly of representatives of Civil society Organisations in the Danube Region (mainly national/transnational Danubian umbrella organisations), representatives of public administrations, and representatives of Academia. At the last meeting in March 2014, PA10/WG2 members agreed to evolve from a civil society group into a larger platform, comprising members of all three groups from each country of the Danube Region and representatives of thematically relevant EU/international organizations.

PA10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” is ready to provide, with its Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP), a framework within which the representatives of the local actors can develop and exchange their experiences with new cooperation models, projects and news forms of governance for the EUSDR.

The many existing institutions, umbrella organizations and networks of the Danube Region (CEI, RCC, NALAS, DCSF, Cultural Cluster...) should be implemented through the establishment of a Danube Local Actors Platform in the framework of PA10 of the EUSDR.

The Danube Local Actors Platform is to provide:

- focussed policy recommendations to all levels of the governance system of the EUSDR
- a simple and reliable mechanism of transparent exchange and structured dialogue with civil society and local actors.
- A gateway to gear civil society and Non-Governmental Organisations towards the Priority Areas of the EUSDR, National Contact Points, national Ministries and the European Commission and thereby implement them in the developing governance of the macro-region.
- for each Annual Forum of the EUSDR, integrated events related to the relevant topics of the integration of local actors and place-based strategies in the implementation of the Strategy. If possible, specific thematic stakeholder meetings of the D-LAP will take place between the Annual Fora.
- Information about relevant activities concerning civil society, local actors, governance, EUSDR etc. provided amongst others by the members of the platform on the EUSDR-PA 10 site, easily accessible for other Priority Areas and institutions/organizations.

Targets of the Danube Local Actors Platform:

- identify areas where particular attention to civil society development and involvement in the Danube region is needed;
- identify synergies and build on best practices of existing projects that are carried out on a national level that could be applicable at the supranational level within the Danube region;
- identify new projects and initiatives that could be mutually developed by the existing CSOs in the Danube region.

6.3 New Platforms: Capacity Building, Financing

Based on the successful transformations of working groups 2 and 3 into functioning platforms, the working groups 1 and 4 will also evolve into platforms and thus become more open podiums for relevant stakeholders.

Working group 1 dealing with institutional capacity issues of the civil service in the Danube region will become Capacity Building Platform Danube Region (**D-CAP**). We will use the existing structure and members of the working group as it currently comprises 18 institutions from 12 Danube region countries. Members of the working group were mainly ministries responsible for public administration, public administration schools, specialized training institutions and other interested

stakeholders. The new platform will open to existing networks and institutions in the region, such as NISPA CEE (the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe), NALAS (Network of Associations of Local Authorities in South East Europe), EIPA (European Institute of Public Administration), local governments and initiatives supporting their institutional capacities, and others. We will also build on findings of OECD Sigma, Administrative Capacity in South-East Europe department in DG Regio, and propose to conduct a comprehensive research on the state of Danube region public administrations and their capacity gaps. Platform will also widen areas of relevance, such as e-governance, local government where we plan to build on synergies of the Local Actors Platform (D-LAP), and more. The members of the working group 1 will be upgraded to the Advisory Committee of D-CAP.

Working group 4 dealing with financing issues does not have a solid structure as it met only once and most of the PA activities related to the financing issues were related to events focusing on specific issues (such as developing project ideas, preparations / coordination of the Danube Programme) with specific target audience. The Financing and Investment Platform Danube Region (**D-FIP**) will also include and build on the special PA 10 projects (Danube Financing Dialogue, TAF – DRP and START) as they bring in project promoters and their ideas from the Danube region on one side, and financial sources and their providers (public, EU and private) on the other side. D-FIP will also include management authorities of ESI and other EU funds and relevant contacts of the operational programs. When it comes to financial opportunities and related information concerning the Danube region, especially the EU funding, the information is spread out and outdated.

6.4 Pilot Projects DFD, TAF-DRP, START - Update

7. New partner organisations within the working structures of PA 10

Presentation of RCC, CEI and others

Conclusion: PA 10 – SG welcomes the inclusion of RCC and CEI in the working structures of PA10 and is open for further cooperation in the region, especially with a view to the enlargement perspective of the EUSDR.

8. News and Status of the Danube Program

Presentation by DG Regio.

9. Activities PA 10 in the next future

Content

In line with the SG decisions of 2012 “to move from a pure project development mechanism towards the implementation of political processes” and with the European Commission statement that European Cities of the future “should be places of advanced social progress, platforms for democracy, cultural dialogue and diversity, places of green, ecological or environmental regeneration and places of attraction and engines of economic growth”, PA10 will focus on the presentation and dissemination of innovative urban initiatives, policies and projects, while at the same time

developing the cooperation between and implementation of the local actors in the Danube Region at all levels, underpinned by innovative financial instruments and funding.

Taking into account these aims, PA 10, together with the CoDCR, commented the draft for the European Urban Agenda with a view to strengthening the urban policy element as well as the participative and inclusive strategies within the EUSDR (See Annex 1).

The basic document for the work of PA 10, defining further operational steps will be the Joint Statement of the Council of Cities and Regions (CoDCR) and the Urban Platform Danube Region (UPDR) (see Annex 2) taking into account the proposals of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) (see Annex 3) as well as the EC proposal on European Urban Policy.

A stakeholder conference of PA 10, planned as a follow-up of the conference “the urban future of the Danube region” will be held in January 2015 in Vienna, focussing on cooperation in the cultural sphere of the EUSDR as well as the follow up of Urban policy development and capacity building.

Governance of PA 10

Development and Implementation of the 4 ACs and Platforms as described above

Conclusion: The SG welcomes the proposed orientation to various urban/regional policies, including the local actors as main stakeholders of the strategy, and the improvement and stakeholder orientation of the working structures of PA 10

10. Outlook to the 4th AF Ulm and farewell

Representatives of Baden-Württemberg present the 4th Annual Forum.

11. Annexes

- Annex 1 Joint PA10/CoDCR comment on Urban Agenda consultation
- Annex 2 Joint UPDR/CoDCR statement
- Annex 3 The local and regional governments manifesto, CEMR, 2014
- Annex 4 (draft) GAC conclusions on MRS governance 29 September 2014
- Annex 5 Report 3rd Annual Forum Vienna
- Annex 6 Foreign ministers’ statement, Vienna, 26 June 2014
- Annex 7 Minutes of 6th SG meeting of PA10 of the EUSDR, Ljubljana 2014
- Annex 8 EUSDR PA10 Implementation Report to EC June 2014
- Annex 9 DFD Evaluation