

## 13th Meeting of the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” of the EUSDR (PA10)

– minutes –

Jable Castle  
 Slovenia, 28 November 2017

### Main Outcomes

	AT	B&H	BG	CZ	DE	HR	HU	MD	ME	RO	RS	SI	SK	UA	EC	EESC	RCC	CEI	
SG13	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+

\* The SG member was unable to come and Ambassador of HU replaced her

### Participants:

10 out of 14 EUSDR countries were represented at the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 (see Annex I), however not all of them were officially appointed members of the Steering Group. The representative of Bulgaria was from the same ministry as the SG member but was more involved in Bulgarian Presidency to the EUSDR than to PA10 activities.

According to the “Guidelines for the Functioning of the PA10 Steering Group” the quorum for decision-making was reached. Furthermore, Central European Initiative and Danube Civil Society Forum representatives attended the meeting, as well as two projects of the Danube Transnational Programme (RARE and CrowdStream) were represented at the meeting. Additionally, the Slovenian National Coordinator Office and EUSAIR – Facility Point were invited to present their activities.

### Main outcomes of the discussion:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group adopted the agenda as presented.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group took note of the activities implemented in 2017.
- The PA10 coordinators requested PA10 Steering Group members to share their activities, reports, events so that they can be published on PA10 website and promoted on PA10 social media.
- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note about the DTP projects that are related to the PA10 topics and objectives.
- The Steering Group took note about the results of the Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF).
- The Steering Group discussed and approved all 11 projects that applied for the Danube Transnational Seed Money Facility under PA10 topic for receiving a signed Declaration of Alignment by the coordination of Priority Area 10.
- The members of the PA10 Steering Group agreed that communication of activities is important and took note about the results of the conference on media organized in Slovenia in September.

- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note of the organization and activities of the EUSAIR Facility Point.
- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note about the EUSDR Annual Forum Conclusions.
- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note about topics and date of the EUSDR Annual Forum 2018 as well as dates of other meetings, organized by the EUSDR Presidency.
- The Bulgarian Presidency was asked to include the 5<sup>th</sup> Danube Participation Day as side-event to the official program of the Annual Forum in October 2018 in Sofia.
- Members of the Steering Group agreed that implementation of the Strategy should be better aligned with structural funds.
- Serbian member of the PA10 Steering Group was requested to check if it would be feasible to have PA10 SG meeting in spring in Belgrade.

### Upcoming meetings:

January/ February 2018	National Participation Day, Ljubljana (SI)
1 February 2018	Meeting of the Priority Area Coordinators of the EUSDR, Sofia (BG)
22 February 2018	Meeting of the EUSDR National Coordinators, Sofia (BG)
March 2018	DACHT Seminar, Ljubljana (SI)
March/April 2018	14 <sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting of PA10 (Location TBC)
14-17 May 2018	Facilitating enhanced cooperation of actors from all levels in the Danube Region, Ljubljana (SI)
25 May 2018	Joint meeting of the National Coordinators and Priority Area Coordinators, Sofia (BG)
8-9 September 2018	Young Danube Experts/Young Bled Strategic Forum, Ljubljana (SI)
10-11 September 2018	Bled Strategic Forum, Bled (SI)
17 October 2018	Danube Participation Day, Sofia (BG)
18/19 October 2018	EUSDR Annual Forum, Sofia (BG)
November 2018	15 <sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting of PA 10 (Location TBC)

## Welcome & Introduction

Nina ČEPON welcomed all participants at the 13<sup>th</sup> Steering Group (SG) Meeting of EUSDR Priority Area 10 and welcomed everyone at CEP's premises, Jable castle. She explained a bit about its history and how CEP is managing it. Right after Rudolf SCHICKER also welcomed the participants of the SG and thanked CEP for hosting and organizing it.

PAC 10-SI Nina ČEPON presented the agenda of the 13<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting (see Annex II) and asked if the members of the Steering Group want to make any amendments to the agenda. She explained briefly that some countries have new people appointed as SG members and that some are just attending it on behalf of their colleagues. All SG members were asked to briefly introduce themselves, as quite some have been at the PA10 SG meeting for the first time.

#### Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group adopted the agenda as presented.

### **Tour de Table of the members of the PA 10 Steering Group**

Nina ČEPON (SI) presented activities of the PA10-SI since last steering group meeting that focused mostly on involvement of youth in policy processes. First, she presented active participation of youth that was program for young entrepreneurs that gathered at PODIM conference and exchanged their experiences and daily difficulties they face with. Then she presented the Bled Strategic Forum framework that in first days brought together 40 young experts from 17 countries (20 from Danube region) and in the discussion in the following two days more than 1000 experts from policy level, academia, non-governmental sector and business. This year representatives of 66 countries joined in 50 hours of discussion about 'New reality' which was red thread of this year's Bled Strategic Forum (<https://www.bledstrategicforum.org/>). Special Advisor of Commissioner Cretu contributed to the discussion on Western Balkans, where he emphasized the role and opportunity that macro-regions are offering to the EU and non-EU countries – to work together on an equal footing (his opinion on BSF <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYIa77RRjmE&t=19s>). As BSF was followed by more than 140 journalists, CEP as co-organizer, took the opportunity to bring some attention to the macro-regions, especially EUSDR. SG members watched short video about the conference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16CsxpA7RAo&t=22s> (Annex III).

Radka ŠTORKOVÁ (CZ) started with introducing herself and reported that CZ organized a National Participation day in May 2017 that was well visited by the civil society organizations, public administration officials as well as interested subjects from abroad. Topic-wise it was devoted to the general issue of civic engagement in relation to the EUSDR activities. She said that emphasis was given on importance of a more active participation of citizens on decision-making processes in general.

Midhat DŽEMIĆ (B&H) explained that he is not officially appointed for any role in EUSDR as Bosnia and Herzegovina since BiH does not have a National Coordinator for EUSDR neither internal structure for implementation of the EUSDR in place yet. Consequently, they have no budget for attending the EUSDR related events – their participation is subjected to the coverage of the costs by the organizers. Bearing in mind that IPA funds are probably most important source of funds for the implementation of the EUSDR in BiH, he was appointed to attend the PA10 SG as representative of National IPA Coordinator's Office. He is EU Funds National Coordinator for the EUSAIR in BiH and also country coordinator for the implementation of strategic projects that have been developed within the programs Mediterranean and Adrion. He is working at the Directorate for European Integration within the Council of Ministers of the B&H.

Alen MATIĆ (CRO) introduced himself, explaining that he is attending the meeting on behalf of his colleague. He mentioned that Croatia is active in some DTP projects.

Ioana STANCIU (RO) is one of the new members of the SG, she presented her scope of work and told that they organized three info sessions on DTP (possible financing opportunities): October 10th in Bucharest, October 12th in Cluj Napoca and October 24th in Iasi. The sessions mainly focused on the funding of "seed money" projects through the program. The events were organized by the Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds (MDRAPFE), as National Authority and National Contact Point, with the support of the University of Bucharest, the North-West Regional Development Agency and the Prefect Institution of Iasi County. During this year, a series of calls of proposals were launched in Romania to support the EUSDR objectives under the 2014-2020 Regional Operational Programme and the Administrative Capacity Operational Programme. Regarding the projects co-financed through the European Social Fund - the Administrative Capacity Operational Programme 2014-2020, which contributes to the achievement of PA10 targets, she mentioned the project "Strengthening the framework for improving the quality of public services and supporting local development", implemented by the Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds in Romania. The purpose of this project is to develop a unified set of tools to strengthen administrative capacity to perform/deliver effective and efficient quality public services for citizens and the business environment.

Valeri NAIDENOV (BG) explained that he is not official SG member, but is attending the SG meeting for presenting the EUSDR Presidency priorities. BG has great ambition for presidency of the EUSDR as well as to the Council of the European Union that will be happening simultaneously (first half of 2018). He admits that it will be challenging and new for Bulgarian administration and they will do their best.

Matthias HOLZNER (GER) informed that Baden-Württemberg organized a Participation Day in Stuttgart, that was more of a regional participation day, but nevertheless very successful one. It was attended by more than 100 participants who hear about the strategic roadmap and gave useful feedback to the organizers. It was organized in participative manner in the form of world café and Mr HOLZNER suggests it to the PA colleges as well. He briefly presented their own Seed Money Facility that is focusing on capacity building and youth (especially on dual education).

Snežana FILIPOVIC (RS) told that Serbia is currently operating without National Coordinator for EU Danube Strategy and has new ministry that is responsible for it - Ministry of European Integration (it was transformed from the Chancellery for European Integration into the Ministry). They have, however, organized seminars about the DTP and topics that fall under the priority areas Serbia is coordinating (1B and 7). In June 2017 Serbia hosted international conference on sustainable tourism that was attended by representatives of all 14 Danube countries and many more (UN representatives among others). Its main conclusion was that sustainable tourism can only be reached through appropriate administrative reforms and capacity building of actors involved. Another project worth pointing out (carried out at the Institute of economic sciences) is focusing on inclusion of socially vulnerable categories of citizens. High social and governmental interest and engagement is dedicated to Roma inclusion, especially how to ensure Roma people

better access to the education and employment; the relevant project is expecting to provide concrete applicable results.

Stefan LÜTGENAU from Danube Civil Society Forum (DCSF) presented their yearly event – Danube Participation Day that is held back-to-back with Annual Forum of the EUSDR. This year it was organized with support of Andrassy University, on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Budapest (see agenda in annex IV). Commissioner for Regional Policy Ms Corina Cretu and President of the European Committee of the Regions Mr Karl-Heinz Lambertz contributed to the event with letters of support. Danube Participation Day gathered more than two-hundred interested representatives of civil society, local, regional and national public authorities, politics, research and interest organizations gathered to exchange on good practices for participatory governance and discuss concrete steps towards better involvement of civil society and local actors in decision-making and policy implementation. Second activity that DCSF is linked to National Participation Days that they support – this year they were held in Belgrade, Prague (attended as well by Slovakian participants that didn't have national participation day this year), Stuttgart, Odesa and Chisinau. Main objective of national participation day is to link civil society to policy and working level on various topics connected to the implementation of the EUSDR. The event in Chisinau was titled *Danube Financing and Capacity Building Dialogue* as it a pilot initiative to merge together two usually separated events - national participation day and financial dialogue (see agenda in annex IV). As the event was evaluated as a successful it might serve as a model for future participation days.

Andrej RAHTEN is member of the CEP Governing Board and Slovenian former ambassador to Austria where he cooperated successfully with City of Vienna among others. He emphasized that Danube region is one of the priorities of the Slovenian foreign policy, paying special attention to some of the non-EU countries in the macro-regions.

Olga ABRAM presented herself and EUSAIR Facility Point, where she is working as a representative of a Slovene Lead Partner - Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy.

Rudolf SCHICKER presented some activities of the PA10-VIE since last SG meeting. He started with Cadastre and Land Register project where four topics touched upon (Digital Border Cadaster, Land Register, Open Government Data and Geographical Information Systems) are closely linked one to another and can pave important steps towards the open government data one day. He presented the website [www.basemap.at](http://www.basemap.at) that could serve as a role model for developing Danube-wide platform. During the meetings and workshops, they realized that all countries have different, but comparable challenges, especially on legal frameworks and adjustments that need to be done for better usage and access of these information. Secondly, he presented the Donors' Conference Framework that builds upon the results of the Danube Financial Dialogues that were successfully organized in Vienna, Sofia, Beograd, Zagreb and Bratislava for project promoters and financial institutions from the Danube Region in the last years.

During the implementation it somehow turned out that Danube Financial Dialogue needs to be brought closed to the project promotors and should involve regional and local administration and Civil Society Organizations. And now these dialogues evolved into Regional Donors Conference - a pilot conference was organized in Chisinau in November 2017 and attended by participants from Moldova, of regions of the Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria. He shared the conclusions from the



conference and concluded that it makes sense to continue this kind of format, but currently the finances are missing (Annex V).

Daniela URSCHITZ introduced the D-LAP platform that is bringing together local actors from all 14 Danube countries since 2014 and have grown into interface for structure consultations among actors from various policy levels. Additionally, she brought forward the Danube Participation Day that Mr Lütgenau presented and was happy to share that the conference was great opportunity to present the Agenda for Participation that PA10 initiated and developed five thematic Participation Partnerships – they were discussed in five separated workshops. Later on, Ms Urschitz presented six National Participation Days that were organized in this year and called for the member states that have not organize one yet, to do so. One of the PA10 targets is that *80% of participating countries involve the national, regional and local authorities and CSOs through annual national EUSDR Hearings* and it is advices that each country organizes one.

Claudia SINGER presented last part of the PA10-VIE activities that were linked to Round Table Danube Cities Against Human Trafficking (D-CAHT) that took place at the end of November in Vienna. Its main objective was to bring together 40 participants from cities/municipalities, NGOs, international organizations and experts that discussed principles and standards in fight against trafficking in human being. PA10 published on its website D-CAHT Guidelines that are very practical and still evolving – plan is to amend and update them with good practice examples from the Danube Region. The Round Table is planned to be continued as an expert seminar that will take place in Ljubljana in the beginning of 2018.

PA10-VIE organized in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the Danube Transnational Programme individual project consultation sessions related to the topic of good governance in 2016. In 2018, PAC10 plans to implement a similar small format for project support for PA10 stakeholders. Against this background, PAC10 initiated a short online survey for members of the PA 10 Steering Group, the Danube Local Actors Platform and further interested stakeholders to receive feedback on concrete needs for project support. Based on the results, PA10 will organize a small project support format and will provide additional information on opportunities for project promoters, respectively. PAC10 asks all members of the Steering Group to take part in the survey and provide their feedback or forward the survey to their stakeholders: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRay6VRqY\\_f7Lrep6YNBdFp9LtdFdsOMFV\\_gKXDmOL-HlqPg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRay6VRqY_f7Lrep6YNBdFp9LtdFdsOMFV_gKXDmOL-HlqPg/viewform)

Ms Singer reported that the content of the PA10 website was re-organised as presented to the Steering Group at the 12<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting in Berlin and explained the basic rationale behind its organization. She emphasized that website is intended to promote all PA10 related activities from all PA10 Steering Group members, not only for the activities of the coordinators. Also, a “Partnership” section will be added to the main menu in the course of next year, presenting information on cooperation with different networks, e.g. Danube Local Actors Platform, DCSF, CoDCR, Danube Transnational Programme/Capitalization Strategy etc.

#### Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group took note of the activities implemented in 2017
- The PA10 coordinators requested PA10 Steering Group members to share their activities, reports, events so that they can be published on PA10 website and promoted on PA10 social media.

## Presentation of DTP projects: PA 10 Strategic Projects & PA10 related projects, update on Thematic Pole 11

Ms ČEPON presented shortly workshop at the EUSDR Annual Forum that brought together projects closely linked to PA10 topics and provided brief update from two project – AgriGo4Cities that recently published extensive *Inventory report about the state of art of relevant public intuitions, vulnerable/marginalized groups and UPA (Urban and Peri-urban agriculture) in pilot areas*

([http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved\\_project\\_output/0001/09/ca6788e581b3085e0e60755c366fabd5ef274922.pdf](http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_output/0001/09/ca6788e581b3085e0e60755c366fabd5ef274922.pdf)) that was prepared as basic information for their project activities were missing. Furthermore, project used an interesting method to gather participants for their transnational training session that was held at the end of November in Munich – each project partner needed to nominate 5 participants - 2 representatives of local/regional/national authorities + 2 representatives of vulnerable/marginalized groups + 1 member of relevant stakeholders (e.g. NGO, association, development agency, university, civil society).

Secondly, DTP project AttractiveDanube was mentioned as it continues with their project activities that are regularly presented at their website (<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/attractive-danube>) – DTP recently selected their website as third best from all DTP approved projects.

Ms ČEPON thanked two representatives of the projects that are dealing with topics relevant for targets of the PA10 – CrowdStream and RARE – that they joined the PA10 SG meeting and asked them for short presentation of their projects.

Julia SCHMID presented CrowdStream project – its main objective is to improve the effectiveness of public/private business-support for innovative spin-offs & social enterprises to access qualitative alternative financing (crowdfunding). She talked about projects objectives and envisioned results, outputs and targeted activities (Annex VI). PA10-VIE is Associated Strategic Partner of the CrowdStream project.

Szilvia SURI introduced the RARE project - Changing Discourses, Changing Practices: The Roma as Human Resource - aims to enhance the capacities of and cooperation among actors having a stake in the labor market participation of the Roma in order to better exploit their economic potential. She focused on structural factors that are leading to the current situation where many Roma people are unemployed and remembered on economic benefits of their economic interventions in the pilot areas in six Danube countries (Annex VII).

### Outcomes:

- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note about the DTP projects that are related to the PA10 topics and objectives.

## Information about the Financing Instruments

Rudolf SCHICKER shared with SG members results of the Danube Strategic Project Fund that was co-financed with funds provided to the European Commission by the European Parliament and the City of Vienna. The DSPF was a facility aiming at supporting the implementation of

transnational strategic projects aligned with the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. 56 applications were received by the priority areas, 37 formally correct applications were assessed by the jury and 12 selected to be financed. Short statistical analysis showed that majority of the lead and project partners are universities and academy institutions, which started the debate among the PA10 SG members about the appropriateness of such and similar calls for project proposals. The dilemma that came put was that academics end up best in writing proposals, which is not necessary what we are trying to achieve with available finances.

Midhat DŽEMIĆ informed that the financing dialogue for the financing of the EUSAIR in non-EU MSs would cover the implementation of the EUSDR as well. This information was provided by the DG Regio at the last meeting of the GB of the EUSAIR.

Ugo POLI added that call for DSPF was welcomed and innovative in its demand for projects that are relevant and connecting EUSAIR and EUSDR. It is surely needed now to monitor how the selected projects will develop and use their results for increasing the impact and visibility of both involved macro-regions.

Nina ČEPON briefly presented the presentation from the Danube Transnational Programme about the funding opportunities for pillar IV. It sums up the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> DTP call and some details about the 2<sup>nd</sup> call – 127 project applications were received and are currently in the process of evaluation (Annex VIII). Though priority 4.1. was not opened for financing, some projects have Urban and participatory focus and are therefore expected to join AgriGo4Cities, RARE and AttractiveDanube in Thematic Pole 11 of the Capitalization Strategy, where PAC10 has the co-lead. Secondly, Seed Money Facility call that was still open at the time of the SG Meeting, was presented. Its main objective was to support the development of complex strategic transnational projects contributing to the EUSDR. Applications needed to go first to the priority areas that defined up to 4 topics of the (future) projects. Project which topics were aligned with pre-defined topics of the priority area received a *Letter of alignment*. Final submission deadline was December 7<sup>th</sup> 2017.

Eleven applications were submitted to the coordination of PA10 until the official deadline for the Declaration of Alignment of PA10, 13 November 2017. The SG members were requested to check the project descriptions regarding their alignment to one of the four pre-defined topics of PA10 for the DTP Seed Money Facility. The decision for awarding the Declaration of Alignment was taken at the 13<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting. All the SG members have received the applications via email two weeks before the Steering Group meeting and were request to voice their objections. If Steering Group members could not attend the meeting, the decision was taken in written form via silent procedure. Any objections to the projects could be provided until 22 November 2017. By the time of the 13<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting, no objections were sent to PAC10. Rudolf SCHICKER opted out about project application titled SUPPORT for DIVERS as he is vice president of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), which is involved as project partner. All Steering Group members approved the 11 projects submitted to PA10 for receiving a signed Declaration for Alignment and therefore enabling the submission of their project idea to the Danube Transnational Programme Seed Money Facility. Additionally, the Steering Group members agreed to inform all Lead Partners immediately after the decision of the Steering Group. However, some members of the SG agreed that quality of the project proposals varied to a great extent, but the priority areas were mandated only to assess the alignment with selected topics, not quality as such.



#### Outcomes:

- The Steering Group took note about the results of the Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF).
- The Steering Group discussed and endorsed the projects that applied for the Danube Transnational Seed Money Facility under PA10 topic and signed the Declarations of Alignment for them.
- The Steering Group agreed to inform all Lead Partners of the 11 projects immediately after the Meeting.

### **Media and Macro-regions Conference Report**

Bojana CIPOT from the office of Slovenian national coordinator for the macro-regions reported about the conference that was held in September in Slovenia and brought together all 4 macro-regions and media representatives. Its main objective was to bridge the gap between the number of implemented activities and project funded by the European Union and its visibility in public media. She explained that they built on last year's conclusions that suggested to create a unite pillar on communication for all 4 macro-regions and this year's gathering in September was first step in planned direction. Some great experts joined communicators from all 4 macro-regions which resulted in confrontation of two different worlds with their own language – it was a practical experience how information about the macro-regions need to be 'translated' into the language understandable by general public.

Conference brought some tangible results – Slovene National Television will launch a series of documentaries about the concrete results of the macro-regions. It was as well concluded that similar format should meet in September 2018 (the Baltic sea macro-region is expected to organize it).

Conclusions and recommendations: [http://registration.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EU-Macroregional-Strategies-Conference-on-Media-and-Communication-2017\\_Conclusions-and-Recommendations.pdf](http://registration.adriatic-ionian.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EU-Macroregional-Strategies-Conference-on-Media-and-Communication-2017_Conclusions-and-Recommendations.pdf)

At the end participants watched short video that sums the conference activities <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDwcreghZs4>

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#### Outcomes:

- The members of the PA10 Steering Group agreed that communication of activities is important and took note about the results of conference.

### **Activities of other Macro-Regions on Institutional Capacity and Cooperation**

Olga ABRAM presented the EU Strategy for Adriatic-Ionian Facility Point, its financing, organization, activities and challenges they are facing. She emphasized the communication package that is very important as agreed in previous discussion (Annex IX: EUSAIR Facility Point presentation) and offered some insight in the EUSAIR communication plans.

#### Outcomes:

- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note of the organization and activities of the EUSAIR Facility Point.

### Report on the EUSDR Annual Forum and HU Presidency to the EUSDR (October 2016 – October 2017)

Results of the EUSDR Annual Forum that was organized in Budapest (18-19 October 2017) were presented by Ambassador of Hungary to Slovenia, H.E. Mrs Edit Szilágyiné Bátorfi. Title of the Forum was “*A secure, connected and prospering Danube Region*” emphasized the challenges and perspectives of the energy security in the region. Some recommendations: future role of Ukraine as transit country; significant difference between West and East; refrain from easy solutions – sustainability should be the key for post 2020 period; gas important role in decarbonizing WB; more sustainable transport sector; best practices exist, we should follow them. Part of the Forum was dedicated to the non-EU countries and their engagement in the EUSDR implementation – the bottom line agreed was that better access to funding opportunities is needed, which at the end contributes to enlargement and neighborhood policies of these countries. Additionally, the presidency called for better alignment of topics discussed, better involvement of stakeholders, better government inclusion; potential for synergies amongst stakeholders that share interests.

Conclusions of the Forum can be found at [http://www.danube-forum-budapest.eu/system/danube-forum-budapest/files/Summary\\_of\\_the\\_6th\\_EUSDR\\_Annual\\_Forum.pdf?1509639875](http://www.danube-forum-budapest.eu/system/danube-forum-budapest/files/Summary_of_the_6th_EUSDR_Annual_Forum.pdf?1509639875)

#### Outcomes:

- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note about the EUSDR Annual Forum Conclusions.

### Priorities of Bulgarian Presidency to the EUSDR (October 2017 – October 2018)

Valeri NAIDENOV from Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works presented topic of upcoming 7<sup>th</sup> EUSDR Annual Forum that will be held on 18-19 October 2018 in Sofia and titled “*Economic growth and territorial cohesion through investments in tourism, including financial instruments*” (Annex X). It will be organized in cooperation with European Commission and DTP,

#### **focusing on:**

- Economic growth through measures for development and conservation of cultural heritage
- DTP contribution to the EU Strategy of the Danube Region
- EU macro-regional strategies and the future of cooperation
- Sustainable tourism mobility
- Security in Public Spaces

Most important **dates for meetings of the EUSDR governing structures** are already set:

Priority Area Coordinators Meeting: 1 February 2018

National Coordinators Meeting: 22 February 2018

Joint Meeting of National Coordinators and Priority Area Coordinators: 25 May 2018

7th Annual Forum of the EUSDR together with a meeting of the Ministers Danube region in charge of tourism 2018: from the 18 – 19 October 2018

Open air exhibition – contribution of DTP projects to the the EUSDR objectives 2018: 8 – 20 October 2018.

Mr SCHICKER asked if the Priority Area Coordinators will be involved actively in the implementation of the Annual Forum or if they can suggest a topic and Mr NAIDENOV will discuss the request in Sofia and let PA10 Steering Group know.

PA10-VIE remembered that Danube Participation Day is traditionally organized back-to-back with Annual Forum and requested to cooperate with the EUSDR Presidency and include the Danube Participation Day as a side event to the official Programme of the Annual Forum.

#### Outcomes:

- The members of the PA10 Steering Group took note about topics and date of the EUSDR Annual Forum 2018 as well as dates of other meetings, organized by the EUSDR Presidency.
- The Bulgarian Presidency was asked to include the 5<sup>th</sup> Danube Participation Day as side-event to the official program of the Annual Forum in October 2018 in Sofia.
- The Bulgarian representative will get in contact with the Presidency about any details (involvement of PACs, side-event 5<sup>th</sup> DPD) related to the Annual Forum in Sofia.

#### **Workplan of PA10 activities by next SG meeting**

Members of the Steering Group touched upon the report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies of the European Parliament, mentioned by Mr POLI that includes some promising statements for the macro-regions. Question arose, if the presidency of the EUSDR could, with help of the European Commission, raise awareness about the macro-regions of the states. Sometimes the strategic goals of the macro-regions are helpful for progress in certain sector, however, the ESI funds are not aligned. Strategies should be more supported by the member states with inclusion of actions and goals into national documents.

Mr SCHICKER believes that some funds should be added for stabilizing the cooperation among the EUSDR actors as many organizations are now volunteering when hosting certain gatherings. Some funds should be allocated for studies and organization of the events as necessary tools for macro-regional strategies. Another question that remains open is what will happen with coordination once the Programme (DTP) ends – the priority area coordination is not a project and should be more long-term oriented and sustainable. In opinion of Ms URSCHITZ the strategy should not be subject of the program, as it has much longer lifetime than project.

Members of the Steering Group discussed the date and location of the next Steering Group Meeting that is planned to be held in spring 2018. Ms FILIPOVIĆ was requested to see if there is any option that next meeting would be held in Belgrade, as it was suggested rotate the location of the Steering Group meetings across the Danube Region at previous Steering Group Meetings. Ms FILIPOVIĆ will let coordinators know if there is any institution that could support the meeting, as Serbia currently does not have a national coordinator, which makes it more challenging to bring the EUSDR to the attention. Mr. SCHICKER offered to provide support regarding the search for potential supporting organisations.

Ms ČEPON briefly summarised the discussions of the meeting and asked for any concluding remarks or objections to the topics discussed. There were no further comments or objections from the members of the Steering Group.

Outcomes:

- Members of the Steering Group agreed that implementation of the Strategy should be better aligned with structural funds.
- Serbian member of the PA10 Steering Group was requested to check if it would be feasible to have PA10 SG meeting in the first half of 2018 in Belgrade.

## List of Annexes

Annex I Agenda of 13<sup>th</sup> PA10 SG Meeting

Annex II List of Participants of 13<sup>th</sup> PA10 SG Meeting

Annex III PAC10-SI activities

Annex IV Agenda of the Danube Participation Day

Annex V PAC10-VIE activities

Annex VI Project CrowdStream

Annex VII Project RARE

Annex VIII DTP Funding Opportunities for Pillar IV of the EUSDR

Annex IX Annex IX - EUSAIR Facility Point

Annex X Annex X - 7th EUSDR forum 2018\_Sofia

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