

## 15th Meeting of the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” of the EUSDR (PA10)

– minutes –

PA10 + PA11 Steering Group Meeting – joint meeting

Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, Prague (CZ), 28 November 2018

PA10 Steering Group Meeting

Academy of Public Investment, Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic, Prague (CZ),  
29 November 2018

### Attendance

	AT	BA	BG	CZ	DE	HR	HU	MD	ME	RO	RS	SI	SK	UA	EC	EESC	RCC	CEI
SG14	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+

### Participants:

10 out of 14 EUSDR countries were represented at the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 (see Annex I and Annex II). According to the “Guidelines for the Functioning of the PA10 Steering Group” the quorum for decision-making was reached. Furthermore, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Central European Initiative, the implementing body of the Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF) as well as representative from the project CLEVER (financed by the DTP through the Seed Money Facility) attended the meeting.

### Outcomes

#### Main outcomes of the discussion:

- The Steering Group takes note of the information on the priorities of the Romanian Presidency to the EUSDR, EUSDR Annual Forum 2019 and the Danube Participation Day that will take place at the end of June in Bucharest.
- The Steering Group takes note on the upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> DTP call, its priorities and technical steps for application.
- The Steering Groups of Priority Area 10 and Priority Area 11 agree to further explore possibilities for cooperation in Pillar IV.
- The Steering Group proposes actions in view of the revision of the Action Plan of the EUSDR.
- The Steering Group takes note on projects that are financed by the DTP Seed Money Facility and the Danube Strategic Project Fund that fall under thematic scope of PA10.
- The Steering Group takes note on the implemented activities of the PACs in 2018.

Wednesday, 28 November 2018, PA10 + PA11 Steering Group Meeting – joint meeting

## Welcome

Nina ČEPON (PAC 10/Centre for European Perspective – CEP, SI) welcomes the participants of the joint meeting of the EUSDR Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacities and Cooperation” and Priority Area 11 “Security”. She welcomes H. E. Leon Marc, Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia to the Czech Republic and he briefly welcomes participants of the joint meeting as well. Due to previous good cooperation between the PA10 and PA11 this SG meetings have been organized back-to-back and part of them, as a joint meeting – to cover the topics relevant to both Steering Groups members.

## Danube Transnational Programme

Johannes GABRIEL (Programme Officer, DTP Managing Authority Danube Transnational Programme) presents the Danube Transnational Programme: main outcomes of the 1<sup>st</sup> SMF CfP, main elements of the 3<sup>rd</sup> CfP, the DTP-EUSDR Capitalization Strategy and the DTP post 2020 challenges. Among main outcomes of the 1<sup>st</sup> SMF CfP he points out that among approved proposals per PA PA2 and PA3 have three approved proposals, PA4 and PA5 have no approved proposals and other PAs have one or two approved proposals. Among the Lead Applicant countries per PA the strongest countries are Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary however Germany and the Czech Republic are not listed among the LA countries. GABRIEL lists some good practices of the 1<sup>st</sup> SMF CfP: cooperation between MA/JS and PA SGs in defining the topics, cooperation between MA/JS and PA SGs in defining the topics, involvements of PACs in the preparation of the call, LA seminar with representatives of relevant funds and match-making between PACs and projects. There is still some room for improvements. These are: to make clear distinction of roles between the PACs and DTP MA/JS, to provide more time to PACs to review proposals before submission, to set a minimum level of information to be provided to PACs and to provide concrete examples of successful proposals.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> CfP will be officially launched at the end of 2018 or at the beginning of 2019 and will be the regular call for proposals. It will be a two-step process: 1st step - submission of a short Expression of Interest (and if successful) 2nd step - submission of a complete Application Form. The Call budget is up to 60M EUR (ERDF, IPA, ENI) and max project duration will be 30 months. “Application pack” is already available at the <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/calls/calls-for-proposals/third-callfor-proposals>.

The Specific Objective 4.1 “Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges” is expected to be re-opened and can be addressed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> call for proposals. The Specific Objective will have no restrictions. However, some topics such as education, migration, labour market policies, and active citizenship are particularly highlighted. Johannes GABRIEL also points out that the Specific Objective 1.2 dealing with social innovation will support measures that strengthen capacities of support organisations such as trade unions, employment agencies etc., and better social service that meet the needs of beneficiaries.

DTP Capitalisation Strategy stipulates the clustering of projects with similar thematic scope to create “critical mass” for achieving effective policy change. It involves DTP approved projects, EUSDR PACs and projects funded by other funding instruments. It is divided in 12 Thematic Poles aligned to the EUSDR PAs and lead by a LP of a DTP project and a related PAC. The (First) outcomes are expected to be presented during next DTP MC meeting.

Regarding the DTP post 2020 challenges GABRIEL mentions a simpler and more flexible framework for the cohesion policy and the new thematic scope as 11 thematic objectives from 2014 should be

reduced to 5 'policy objectives' (POs) in 2020:: a smarter Europe, a Greener, carbon free Europe, a more connected Europe, a more social Europe and a Europe closer to citizens. The up-coming funding period will further promote simplified cost options for the projects and the single audit principle. Additionally, the regulations stipulate the facilitation of synergies with other funds (presentation in Annex III).

Currently, the new geographic coverage of Interreg B programmes is still under debate. However, the areas of the macro-regional strategies will definitely be covered.

Gert-Jan MUIJL (PAC 1a, AT) suggests to align the DTP Capitalisation Strategy with the Priority Areas in the next funding period in order to avoid double structures.

Ugo POLI (CEI, IT) asks, whether there is a possibility to get an overview of all the topics of the applicants that were not selected under the past CfP as this would be a very important source for understanding needs and expectations of stakeholders towards EU programmes and DTP in particular and subsequently to feed future planning exercises starting from ex-ante evaluation practice. GABRIEL explains that this is not realistic as there is over thousand failed applications all together. Due to lack of technical support DTP is not able to provide such an overview.

#### Danube Strategy Point

Rudolf SCHICKER presents a new Danube Strategy Point. It is a project financed by Danube Transnational Programme, led in partnership of the City of Vienna (Lead Partner) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration of Romania (partner). The DSP is financed for 40 months (Sept 2018 – Dec 2021) with the budget of 3,686,766.01 EUR. DSP is the supportive body for all stakeholders involved in the Strategy. It will encourage cooperation between stakeholders and other actors (funding facilities, administration, civil society, local / regional / national authorities), make the Strategy visible for as many people as possible and document the added value of the strategy for countries and people. SCHICKER explains in more details all the planned activities of the DSP and what to expect from the DSP in the following months (presentation in Annex IV).

#### Presidency of the EUSDR - Romania

Deputy Head of Mission (Embassy of the Republic of Romania to the Czech Republic) Andrei HĂȚEGANU presents objectives and priorities set by the Romania EUSDR Presidency-in-office. Romania will try to use the opportunity offered by the six-month overlapping of its two Presidencies (EUSDR and the EU Council) for the promotion of macro-regional strategies, in particular, of the EUSDR related objectives at the EU level. The main objective of the Romania EUSDR Presidency consists in the relaunching of the Strategy. Romania will promote 4 lines of action and priority themes for the EUSDR:

1. Improving connectivity and mobility in the Danube region;
2. Revitalizing the Strategy along with the process of updating the Action Plan of the EUSDR;
3. Promoting exchanges of experiences and good practices within the EUSDR Priority Areas;
4. Fostering transnational cluster development.

The official calendar of meetings and events for Romanian Presidency of the EUSDR consists of 55 meetings and thematic events (<https://suerd.gov.ro>).

The 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the EUSDR Annual forum will take place in Bucharest (Palace of the Parliament) on 27-28 June 2019.

## Cooperation between PA10 and PA11

Claudia SINGER (PAC 10/City of Vienna, AT) presents two proposals for further cooperation and coordination between Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” and Priority Area 11 “Security”. (Annex V)

In recent years, both Priority Areas cooperated time and again on the issue of trafficking in human beings in the Danube Region. Priority Area 10 developed the initiative Danube Cities Against Human Trafficking (D-CAHT) that addresses capacity building of cities and municipalities in the fight against trafficking in human beings (THB). As the Danube Region encompasses both regions of origin and regions of destination for victims of THB, cooperation at macro-regional level is considered to be highly relevant to tackle the issue. Furthermore, past experience with the D-CAHT initiative clearly showed the need for cooperation between cities, civil society and law enforcement in order to tackle the issue in a comprehensive and systemic way. Against this background, Priority Area 10 suggests to establish a joint platform for policy learning and project implementation that support initiatives against trafficking in human beings of law enforcement and local actors, identifies interfaces between the stakeholder groups and supports the development and implementation of measures that contribute to better cooperation between them.

Currently, the city of Vienna plans to develop a project on trafficking and human beings and child rights. Claudia SINGER asks members of both Steering Groups, whether they have some on-going or planned initiatives related to fighting trafficking in human beings they would like to bring forward.

Hubert GRIEPE (PA 11, Bavaria, DE) mentions an investigation in progress concerning labour exploitation in the shipping industry.

Matthias HOLZNER (PA 10, Baden-Württemberg, DE) points out to a planned cooperation with law enforcement on fighting trafficking in human beings that is planned for 2019.

Claudia SINGER introduces the second proposal for joint cooperation that refers to a joint position paper of EUSDR Pillar IV “Strengthening the Danube Region”, based on the initiative of Pillar III “Building Prosperity” (Priority Area 7 “Knowledge Society”, Priority Area 8 “Competitiveness”, Priority Area 9 “People and Skills”). Priority Area 10 already published and disseminated a position paper in advance to the draft regulations based on the experience of its stakeholders in the current funding period. This experience can be used and complemented with experiences of Priority Area 11 as well as with the call for wider recognition of institutional capacity building and security in the Danube Region beyond Cohesion Policy, as institutional capacity building and security have a crucial role in the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

Martin KRAUSS (PA 11, Bavaria, DE) took note of the proposals and agreed on behalf of Priority Area 11 to consider and explore further possibilities of cooperation with Priority Area 10 in these areas.

The last topic that was recognized as potentially common, is fight against corruption. The coordinators agreed that topic is relevant for both priorities, however, the operational activities should be discussed – how to join the efforts and address the issue from two angles.

Thursday, 29 November 2018, PA10 Steering Group Meeting

## Welcome

Nina ČEPON welcomes the participants of the 15<sup>th</sup> Steering Group (SG) Meeting of EUSDR Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacities and Cooperation”. She briefly presents the agenda for the meeting of PA 10 and welcomes Magdaléna OVESEN from the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic. OVESEN welcomes participants on behalf of the Ministry of Regional Development. She stresses that active participation and continuous involvement of states in the activity of Steering Groups of the Priority Areas is crucial and adds that Czech representatives regularly attends Annual Forum as well as Steering Groups meetings. She highlights the beginning of a very important phase in the development of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, in which the revision of the action plan of the Danube strategy is the main topic.

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

All participants of the Steering Group Meeting introduce themselves.

Diána LENGYEL (HU) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary mentions that this is her first PA10 Steering Group Meeting and that the main focus of her work is the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

Lyudmila STOYKOVA (BG) is from the Ministry of regional development and public works of Bulgaria and works on Bulgarian development strategy.

Rudolf SCHICKER (AT) and Robert LICHTNER (AT) work for the newly established Danube Strategy Point, SCHICKER as coordinator and LICHTNER as pillar coordinator, responsible for pillars 1 and 4.

Stefan LÜTGNAU (DE) is representative of the Danube Civil Society Forum.

Ugo POLI (CEI, IT) works as project manager and emphasises that CEI is the only regional cooperation crossing all four European macro regions. According to his opinion CEI can contribute especially to the exchange of good experiences.

Midhat DŽEMIĆ (BiH) works for the Directorate for European Integration of Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the office of the national IPA coordinator. He participates the meeting as BiH has no national coordinator for macroregions. He tries to relate macroregional documents to IPA planning documents.

Raluca HERPEAN (RO) from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration of Romania works on the revision of the Action Plan of the EUSDR and the preparations of the Romania for the EU Presidency in the first half of 2019.

Matthias HOLZNER from the States Ministry of Baden-Württemberg works with civil society and on different funding structures.

Olena KUCHERENKO (UA) represents the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine and is responsible for general coordination regarding the EUSDR in Ukraine. She explains that Ukraine parliament considered the Danube transnational programme

already and that regarding the programme the Ukraine sent a diplomatic note to the European Commission. She stresses the importance of involvement of Ukraine in the DTP.

Veronika SCHLAIEN (CZ) works for the Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic.

Vučić ČETKOVIĆ (ME) from the European Integration Office of the Prime Minister's Office of the Montenegro explains that his country is not very active in the EUSDR and express hope to be more active in the next planning period. Their office is located within Prime Minister's Office and this might give some impetus

### Revision of the PA10 Action Plan – Group Discussion

Claudia SINGER (AT) presents the proposed timeline for the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan. The results of the consultations in the Steering Groups are expected to be submitted until 9 January 2019, which is considered to be an ambitious timeframe. Nevertheless, Priority Area 10 will attempt to keep the deadline, provided there are no changes announced by the Romanian EUSDR Presidency.

Claudia SINGER further presents the results of the written contributions provided by the members of the PA 10 Steering Groups. The results were compiled in a working paper that includes a prioritisation of actions, proposals for reformulation of actions as well as proposals for additional or complementing actions. The discussion of the Steering Group shall be based on the results of the written contributions. (Annex)

Rudolf SCHICKER adds that the Romanian Presidency to the EU might present a new roadmap with more concrete proposals for the revision of the Action Plan. After the submission of inputs by the Priority Area Coordinators by 9 January 2019, the Danube Strategy Point will compile the contributions. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 there will be a ministerial meeting (Ministers of European Affairs and of European Funds) in Bucharest where the revised Action Plan will be presented to the ministers. On 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 in Bucharest the paper will be presented to the European Commission.

Matthias HOLZNER Enquires about the level of detail for the action plan. Claudia SINGER clarifies that the guidance note does not specify the level of detail for the contributions from the Priority Areas. However, there is a common understanding among the Priority Area Coordinators that the contribution is supposed to contain strategic goals and topics to be addressed. Any concrete projects, networks or further initiatives shall be planned and discussed in order to have a clear understanding of the concrete activities linked to the actions, but are not subject to the document of the Action Plan, as it is a strategic document.

Raluca HERPEAN (RO) notifies that targets should be defined and actions should reflect the way of how to reach those targets. Rudolf SCHICKER adds that action plan does not include any targets and PA has to define its own targets. He suggests that PA10 identify targets, actions and activities that are proper and adequate for the development of the region and the territorial and economic cohesion. As the European Commission wants to reshuffle PA structure of some PAs in order to avoid merging with other PAs have to define very precisely their activities. Stefan LÜTGEMAU (DCSF, AT) proposes to draft a mission statement for Priority Area 10 that sets out the main challenges and topics to be addressed.



Ugo POLI exposes the importance of the comparison of actual and potential actions that are funded from the existing and future (2020+) structures. It is important what is in the perspective for the next years and to connect the new strategy with the new regulation on funds.

Summaries of the discussion on each PA10 action are in Annex VI – Annex XII.

## PA10 report on activities in 2018

Active Participation of Youth

Youth for Europe

Young Bled Strategic Forum

Bled Strategic Forum

National Participation Day Slovenia

Activities related to coordination with other macro-regions (capacity building, communication)  
(more in Annex XIII)

Participation Days

Framework for investment in institutional capacity Donors' Conference Framework and TO 11 Network)

ESF Network Danube Region

Danube Strategic Project Fund

EuroAccess Macro-Region

Policy Development (Policy Paper on Sound Public Management and Policy Paper on Metropolitan/Functional Regions)  
(more in Annex III)

## Presentation of SMF and DSPF projects

There were two projects that are thematically connected to PA10 priorities and were funded by the Seed Money Facility (SMF) of the Danube Transnational Programme.

First is project 'Clever' - co-designing smart solutions for Connecting Locations, Exploiting Values and Enhancing Resilience was presented by Natalia ONESCIUC. The project aims to develop and implement innovative tools that promote the smart cities approach and entails an integrated strategy involving ICT including resilient development. Furthermore, the projects addresses multi-stakeholder engagement with a special emphasis on cooperation between cities and companies. Project involves partners from Romania, Croatia, Serbia and Italy. The final results of this one-year project need to be a very well-developed project idea, with proposed consortium and indicative budget as well as list of possible funding instruments that project could apply to (presentation in Annex XIV).

ČEPON shortly presented the other project that was financed through SMF instrument, namely the ActiveHome - Activation of homeless project coordinated by the Development agency of Savinjska region. Their aim is to prepare a fundable project that will focus on low-threshold provision of local services for homeless people in cities and municipalities in the Danube Region. Currently they have project partners from Serbia and Croatia.

Project 'SeCCo2 - Youth for cross-border partnership and cohesion of EUSDR and EUSAIR' was presented through short video. The project was funded by the Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF) that is financed by the European Commission through funding of the European Parliament and the City

of Vienna, and implemented by the coordination of Priority Area 10 – City of Vienna. The DSPF supports strategic projects at the interface between the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy of the Adriatic-Ionian Region.

## Discussion & Outlook

Claudia SINGER asks if any of the Steering Group members would like to offer to host the next meeting. Three offers emerged from the discussion: Brussels (Roman HAKEN, European Economic and Social Committee), Trieste (Ugo POLI), Podgorica or any other place in Montenegro (Vučić ČETKOVIĆ).

Nina ČEPON thanks everyone for their participation and closes the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PA 10 Steering Group.

### Already known dates of the meetings in 2019:

15 January	Thematic workshop – Governance by Danube Transnational Programme, Bratislava (SK)
22 – 23 January	EUSDR PAC meeting, Bucharest (RO)
22 - 23 May	Facilitating Enhanced Cooperation among Young Danube Experts, Maribor (SI)
22 - 24 May	NC/PAC Meeting, Bucharest (RO)
26 – 27 June	Danube Participation Day, Bucharest (RO)
27 – 28 June	EUSDR Annual Forum, Bucharest (RO)
30.8.– 1 September	Young Bled Strategic Forum, Bled (SI)
2-3 September	Bled Strategic Forum, Bled (SI)