



MINUTES OF THE 8TH MEETING OF THE PA10 STEERING GROUP

CEF – Center of Excellence in Finance, Ljubljana

Friday, June 12, 2015

1. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Lukač extended a warm welcome to Steering Group members from 10 countries and the EC, and meeting guests. The PA10 Steering Group has new members (Ms. Abaffy, Ms. Herepean, Mr. Grassner), and so has PA10 Slovenia (Ms. Tomšič).

The meeting was attended by the following guests: Mr. Gabriel from the Joint Secretariat of the Danube Transnational Programme in Budapest, Ms. Jerina, Slovenian National Coordinator for Macroregional Strategies, and representatives of the Facility Point of the Adriatic Ionian Strategy from Slovenia (Mr. Vatovec, Ms. Korenika, Ms. Babuder Rumpert).

For the List of Participants at the meeting please see point 10.

2. PA 10 Update

Ms. Lukač informed participants about activities related to the capacity development platform (D-CAP). At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee of D-CAP mainly discussed how to proceed with the work. D-CAP will promote excellence in public administrations at all levels and develop capacities by exchanging knowledge and best practice cases in the Danube region and will continue supporting new projects and initiatives of D-CAP stakeholders. D-CAP will harmonize activities with Urban and Local Actors platforms and other priority areas. Ms. Lukač also provided a brief report of a stakeholder conference on e-governance, Reinforcing e-Governance Agenda in the Danube Region, that in February in Ljubljana gathered more than 100 participants. Representatives of the EC, Danube Region public administrations, civil society and cities discussed the advantages, challenges and perspectives of successful digital agenda / e-government implementation.

Mr. Puchinger and Ms. Lukač presented the cooperation of PA10 with PA8 and PA7 in setting up the Financial and Investment Platform (D-FIP). The Advisory Committee will at initial stage be comprised of the PACs of the respective PAs, the Donau Steinbeis and CEI. The platform will build on the experiences of financial dialogues, the TAF-DRP and START. It will act as a market place for projects, e-forum for communication among project promoters and financing institutions. Through the search tool EuroAccess, the platform will enable users to identify funding opportunities throughout the Danube region and across a number of sectors. Responding to concern raised by Mr. Panait, it was explained that PA10 platforms and other relevant sites will be interlinked, to enable a user-friendly experience. Mr. Holzner wanted to know how the »investment« side of the platform will be considered. This was an input from the PA8 whose stakeholders are interested to have information on investment climate and possibilities.

Mr. Hende informed participants that EC has some small funds for assessment of the use of financial instruments with a specific cooperation part (multi regional assistance). Mr. Hende invited the SG members to contact and inform their managing authorities or financial institutions of this possibility. The



call is open until the end of July. He also reflected on the task force within the DG Regio targeted towards supporting 8 countries (7 of them are Danube countries) with below average EU funds absorption rate.

Mr. Mirtl provided an overview of the Urban platform (UPDR) for the Danube region that is strongly related to the Council of Cities and Regions (CoCDR). Second stakeholder conference with more than 200 participants was organized in January in Vienna where commitment of the cities to cooperate within the UPDR was assessed. The response was positive and Mr. Mirtl shared some examples of cities' initiatives. Back to back to the UPDR stakeholder conference the Council of Danube Cities and Regions also met. PA10 (and CoCDR) also contributed to the consultation process of the establishment of the EU Urban Agenda.

The Advisory Committee of the Local Actors platform (D-LAP) met last November where they set the targets, i. e. raise the levels of participation, transparency and subsidiarity within EUSDR, increase public awareness and mobilize stakeholders and improve the expertise. Operational targets were set – to organize national hearings of civil society in all 14 Danube region countries (already done in Bulgaria, Ukraine, Austria, Slovenia). D-LAP / PA10 is cooperating with CEI, European Parliament, European Civil Society Forum and EESC in this respect. D-LAP and its Advisory Committee are also contributing to the 2nd Participation Day in Ulm that will be held back to back with EUSDR Annual Forum.

Mr. Puchinger reflected on the state of play of special projects. In April, the 4th Danube Financial Dialogue was successfully organized in Zagreb in cooperation with the Croatian National Bank. After the success of the first call of START (seed money facility for small projects) with more than 800 applications, it was agreed with the EC to hold a second call of START that will enable to fund around 24 additional projects and second phase of the TAF-DRP additional 15 – 20 project ideas. The calls were just published and the Steering Group members were requested to contribute in the evaluation process.

Mr. Puchinger also presented the EuroAccess online search tool that will enable users to find possible and available funding sources for EU projects in the Danube Region. The search tool will be launched in early 2016 and will be a part of the D-FIP.

3. Building the Modern Danube Region (background paper) and PA10 Targets

Mr. Puchinger reflected on the background paper that was sent to the SG members prior to the meeting. The PA10 has been step by step implementing the set agenda and developing along the way, adjusting our governance (from working groups to platforms) and also increasing the numbers of active stakeholders which makes us better positioned to our client side. To our clients it is important that they realize the strategy is not a programme, we are not project producers and this is reflected in success factors of the strategy. We are at the interface of the projects and the political level and so is the new Danube Strategy Point. Mr. Puchinger elaborated on who our client side is, and how we determine the market. Our clients are not exactly known, the market is not transparent. So the PACs - even though dependent on them - cannot manage market participants, we can only motivate and coordinate them. To implement our agendas (urban, capacity development, civil society etc.) we can leap forward, build on created added value and overcome the concept of “catching up”.



The PA10 background paper also reflected on the targets. On the initiative of the EC, the PACs were requested to reflect on validity of their targets also in the light of the upcoming Danube Transnational Programme. As the targets of PA10 have been achieved and are therefore out-dated, PACs10 propose to introduce new targets. As reflected in the table below, each of the targets relates to one of the PA10 platforms, they also rely on our work experiences and will be considered for the DTP.

	Target	Action	Platform
1	<p>NEW: Improve World Bank governance indicators related to government effectiveness, regulatory quality and control of corruption in comparison to 2011.</p> <p>[OLD: Max. 4 weeks for business start-up permissions by 2015]</p>	a. To combat institutional capacity and public service related problems in the Danube Region.	D-CAP
2	<p>NEW: 80 % of participating countries involve the national, regional and local authorities and civil society organizations through annual national (provincial) EUSDR consultations in cooperation with the National Coordinators of the EUSDR.</p> <p>[OLD: Establishing a platform including civil society organizations and open governance networks]</p>	<p>b. To improve the trust of citizens and stakeholders in political authorities.</p> <p>c. To establish a Danube Civil Society Forum.</p>	D-LAP
3	<p>NEW: The UPDR (Urban Platform Danube Region) helps to generate, through the exchange of information and the support, on all levels of cooperation, for 25 % of UPDR stakeholder organisations at least one Urban Danube Project, furthering the aim of better spending</p> <p>[OLD: To facilitate network of metropolitan areas and systems by 2014]</p>	<p>d. To build metropolitan regions in the Danube region.</p> <p>e. To improve the trust of citizens and stakeholders in political authorities</p> <p>f. To facilitate the administrative cooperation of communities living in border regions</p> <p>g. To ensure sufficient information flow and exchange at all levels</p>	UPDR
4	<p>NEW: Increase the average absorption rate of EU funds in the Danube region in comparison to 2007-2013 period</p> <p>[OLD: Establish a Danube Financing Platform by 2013]</p>	<p>h. To review bottlenecks relating to the low absorption rate of EU funds and to ensure better coordination of funding.</p> <p>i. To support the development of local financial products for business and community development”</p> <p>j. To examine the feasibility of Danube Investment framework.</p>	D-FIP

4. Danube Transnational Programme

Mr. Gabriel provided an extensive overview of the DTS with a special focus on the synergies with the strategy and PA10. More specifically, he reflected on the relevance of capacity building in the Danube area in previous years / transnational programmes and how the issue is addressed in the new DTS. Questions related to the support of EUSDR implementation were raised; in particular how the PAC support and seed money facility will function. Mr. Gabriel explained that these topics will be address as



soon as the EC endorses the programme and the first call is published and asked for PACs to share experiences and suggestions in that regard.

The first call of the DTS will be published in September, the launching event will be held in Budapest from 23-24 September 2015.

Presentation is available at www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/steering-group

5. EUSDR Update

Ms. Jerina briefed participants about the recent discussions among national coordinators regarding the governance issues of the EUSDR as well as the meeting of its foreign ministers that took place in May at the representation of the land Baden-Württemberg at the EU that is also hosting the Danube Strategy Point. As Ms. Jerina is a national coordinator for three macro regional strategies (MRS) that Slovenia is (or will be) a part of (EUSDR, EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region, and EU Strategy for the Alpine Region), she provided an interesting insight into their complex governance structures. Even though each strategy and geographic region has its own characteristics, she thinks that the participating states and the EC should strive to harmonize and simplify the governance structures and unify the names of various organizational forms as it is very confusing for the stakeholders, especially considering the low profiles that MRS have among general public.

Ms. Jerina explained that the OECD is looking into the added value of MRS as their research into cooperation among metropolitan areas proved that cooperation across metropolitan borders brought significantly better outcomes (e.g. in transport efficiency, water management, income). Researchers are of the opinion that MRS should also have similar synergies but this is yet to be proven.

She also referred to embedding EUSDR and other MRS into operational programmes. Mr. Hende added that the EC is preparing a document where this will be discussed, and the criteria and examples described.

6. Results of the PA10 questionnaire

Mr. Mirtl presented results of the questionnaire that was sent to PA10 SG members. Questions were related to time dedicated to EUSDR (mostly less than 30%), visibility of the strategy and linkages between the cohesion policies and EUSDR which is rather weak. We also asked about the development of flagship projects within the PA10. The views are divided, so are ideas of what constitutes an EUSDR project.

Within the activities and four topics of PA10, the topic of Capacity Building was a priority, whereas Financing and Investment seem to matter to a lesser degree to them. In implementing PA10, respondents point out that it is a challenge that national decision-takers feel involved in the process of EUSDR implementation. To increase the efficiency of PA10, the most important tools were seen to be project development, networking and the mainstreaming of the macro-regional dimension into policy documents, influencing political leaders, and writing contributions to EU public consultation procedures.



An overview of the questionnaire results is available at www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/steering-group

7. Update on the EUSDR Annual Forum, PA10 Involvement

Mr. Holzner extended the invitation and presented the upcoming EUSDR Annual Forum that will be organized in Ulm from 29 – 30 October. The main topic of the forum is smart, social and sustainable innovation for the Danube region. Meeting of the ministers in charge of the EU funds has been confirmed and side events, such as e.g. Participation Day. PAs were invited to contribute with workshops, panels, stands.

PA10 will contribute actively at the Participation day, CoCDR conference, with a panel discussion, workshops and information stand. Tentatively, a joint SG meeting of PA1b, PA8, PA10 will be organized as well as the meeting of the D – FIP Advisory Committee.

A discussion on how to ensure appropriate levels of most relevant politicians and meaningful discussions was raised and Mr. Panait offered the Romanian experiences and Mr. Puchinger the Austrian as previous organizers of the annual forums.

Presentation of Mr. Holzner is available at www.danube-capacitycooperation.eu/pages/steering-group

For more information about the Annual Forum and to register, please visit: www.danube-forum-ulm.eu

8. Next Steps

Below you can find an overview of the next PA10 activities. Please note that the dates are tentative and will be announced ahead of time.

- 17 June: reception at the house of the city of Vienna (Brussels)
- 18 June: intervention of Kurt Puchinger at the EESC, ECOSOC meeting (Brussels)
- 24-25 June: floating conference PAC, NC, EC and DSP meeting (Bratislava/Vienna)
- 18 September: ARGE Donau Meeting
- 28 October: 2nd Participation Day of the EUSDR (Ulm)
- 29-30 October: 4th Annual Forum of the EUSDR (Ulm)
 - * CoDCR conference
 - * PA10 panel discussion, workshops and information stand
 - * Joint SG meeting PA1b, PA8, PA10 (tbc)
 - * D – FIP Advisory Committee meeting
- 13 Jul. - 1 Sept.: TAF – DRP 3rd call SG selection procedure (via email)
- 27 Jul.-18 Sept.: START 2nd call SG selection procedure (via email)
- Nov. 2015 (tbc): Conference on Good Governance as Fundament of European Integration (Vienna)
- Nov. 2015 (tbc): D – CAP Advisory Committee (Vienna / back to back to the conference)



9. Meeting Conclusions

The PA10 Steering Group made the following conclusions:

1. SG takes note of the PA 10 general orientation and welcomes the progress made.
2. SG endorses new targets that correspond to PA10 actions from EUSDR Action Plan.
3. SG takes note of the results of internal questionnaire and supports the promotion of Danube projects with significant macroregional impact within PA 10.
4. SG supports the proposal for a meeting of ministers for regional development. PA 10 (in cooperation with PA 8 and PA 1B) will approach NCs to initiate such a meeting and is ready to support the DSP in thematic preparations of the meeting.

10. List of Participants

Name	Surname	Email	Institution	Country
Csaba	Hende	Csaba.HENDE@ec.europa.eu	European Commission	/
Elean	Gagov	EGagov@mrrb.government.bg	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	Bulgaria
Tomislav	Belovari	tomislav.belovari@mrrfeu.hr	Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds	Croatia
Magdalena	Žarska	magdalena.zarska@mmr.cz	Ministry for Regional Development	Czech Republic
Matthias	Holzner	matthias.holzner@stm.bwl.de	Ministry of State Baden-Württemberg	Germany
Alfred - Alexander	Gaßner	Alfred-Alexander.Gassner@stmi.bayern.de	Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, for Building and Transport	Germany
Patricia	Abaffy	patricia.abaffy@mfa.gov.hu	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Hungary
Johannes	Gabriel	johannes.gabriel@ngm.gov.hu	Danube Transnational Programme Joint Secretariat	Hungary
Raluca	Herepean	raluca.herepean@a.mdrap.ro	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration	Romania
Valentin	Panait	valentin.panait@mae.ro	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Romania
Carmen	Florea	dhm.romania@siol.net	Embassy of Romania to Slovenia	Romania / Slovenia
Saša	Mart	sasa.mart@mfa.rs	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Serbia
Dorota	Malčeková	dorota.malcekova@minv.sk	Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic	Slovakia
Andreja	Jerina	Andreja.Jerina@gov.si	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Slovenia
Miran	Vatovec	miran.vatovec@gov.si	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, European Territorial Cooperation and Financial Mechanisms Office	Slovenia
Nataša	Babuder Rumpret	Natasa.Babuder-Rumpret@gov.si	Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, European Territorial Cooperation and Financial Mechanisms Office	Slovenia
Klavdija	Korenika		Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, European Territorial Cooperation and Financial Mechanisms Office	Slovenia
Kurt	Puchinger	kurt.puchinger@pa10-danube.eu	City of Vienna - EUSDR PA 10	Austria
Jörg	Mirtl	joerg.mirtl@pa10-danube.eu	City of Vienna - EUSDR PA 10	Austria
Maja	Tomšič	maja.tomsic@cef-see.org	Center of Excellence in Finance	Slovenia
Irena	Lukač	irena.lukac@cef-see.org	Center of Excellence in Finance	Slovenia