

20th Meeting of the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” of the EUSDR (PA10)

– Final Minutes –

22 April 2021

Main Outcomes

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

Main outcomes of the discussion:

- The Steering Group took note of the initiatives presented in the areas of funding, civil society and local actors as well as institutional capacity building.
- The Steering Group took note of the priorities of the Slovak EUSDR Presidency.
- The Steering Group took note of the developments in the EUSDR concerning the embedding process, the evaluation process, the road maps and strategic projects.
- The Steering Group discussed the understanding of the SG member role and identified needs. Further, the participants discussed potential needs to adapt the internal coordination, and communication according the Steering Group members’ needs.
- The Steering Group took note of the information on the Danube Transnational Programme 2021-2027.
- Further, the Steering Group members expressed their interest in an Extended Steering Group Meeting on digital public services.

Welcome

Claudia SINGER (PAC 10/City of Vienna) and Jernej GRAHOR (PAC 10/Centre for European Perspective) welcome all participants to the Online Steering Group Meeting and Claudia SINGER briefly presents the agenda.

Annex I Agenda

11 out of 14 representatives of the partner countries were present at the meeting. Hence, the quorum was reached.

Annex II Participants list

Implementing Priority Area 10

The session introduced a selection of initiatives to illustrate the implementation of Priority Area 10. Thereby, a short video presented a variety of initiatives addressing the following thematic clusters: 1) Funding; 2) Civil Society & Local Actors; 3) Institutional Capacity. After each short video, a selection of initiatives was presented by the project partners, owners of the initiative.

Funding

The short video on “Funding” presented the following initiatives: EuroAccess MacroRegion, Bridging the Gap, Donors Conferences, and the Network of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region.

Annex III EUSDR PA10 “Funding” video

Funding: Update from the Network of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region

Barbara WILLSBERGER (Priority Area 9 “People & Skills”, L&R Social Research) gave an overview of the work of the ESF managing authorities network so far and the future steps. The network aims at fostering transnational cooperation within the ESF+ Operational Programmes in the Danube Region, to thereby connect cooperation and investment, and serve as a joint knowledge hub for implementation, planning and exchange of experience with social policies. Ms Willsberger presented the current milestones in the embedding process in the ESF+ that the network has reached:

In the last years the focus was on the discussion of common topics of the Danube Strategy and the ESF national Operational Programmes. Further, the network discussed some common topics to address in transnational cooperation across the Danube Region. At this stage the network will discuss, which topics will be addressed by a cluster of Danube countries and which will be addressed throughout the Danube Region, such as social innovation.

Another relevant milestone is the discussion on a common text module. In 2020, the network developed a draft provision for the programmes.

An additional milestone is the successful project application for social innovation competence centres. The project is called Social Innovation Plus – Competence Centres (SI Plus) with partners from Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Austria as lead partner but also associated partners from Baden-Württemberg, Croatia and Slovenia.

Further, Ms Willsberger explained the next step for the ESF network and the embedding process: the next meeting is expected to take place on the 1st of June and will continue the exchange on common topics and the text module. Furthermore, the meeting is supposed to launch a discussion on the implementation of future transnational projects. (More information please find [here](#))

Funding: Bridging the gap

Jernej GRAHOR (PAC 10/Centre for European Perspective), presented the “bridging the gap” initiative, a platform that aims at providing an opportunity for the cooperation and exchange of ideas for previous and new stakeholders within the EUSDR from the public administration, private sector and civil society. The project will provide a technical solution for the stakeholders to exchange their ideas, networks and projects, like e.g. a website or an app where they can share their ideas as well as experts meetings and policy recommendations. It will be an opportunity for different stakeholders (civil society, youth, decision makers,...) to cooperate.

Annex IV Bridging the gap

Civil Society & local actors

The short video on “Civil Society & Local Actors” presented the following initiatives: National Participation Days, Danube Participation Days, Young Bled Strategic Forum, MELIA Observatory, TalentMagnet, Network to fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, Network for Roma Inclusion.

Annex V “Civil Society & local actors” video

Civil Society & local actors: MELIA Observatory

Erika URSIC (School of Advanced Studies, Nova Gorica) presented the MELIA Observatory project, whose main objective is to promote sustainable democracies by developing a transnational media literacy observatory, based on cooperation between different relevant stakeholders. In many countries of the Danube region, the development of competencies of media literacy and active citizenship is lacking behind. This observatory will serve as a mechanism for increasing media literacy and thus strengthening citizens' competencies what will contribute to the development of sustainable democracy. The main target groups are young people and the people who work with them. Against this background, the observatory will provide tools, available for both young people as well as their educators.

The project will establish an observatory for media literacy that will provide instruments for scrutinizing media contents, training tools and policy recommendations for upgrading media literacy in relation to other civic skills.

Annex VI MELIA Observatory

Shoot by Youth

Lyuben GEORGIEV (Re-Act/Danube Youth Network) presented the Shoot by Youth project, a video competition for young people engaging in local participation. A team of youth organisation representatives from 5 countries are developing the competition. Teams of young people between 15-25 years can take part. The videos should show a local challenge/ problem and a possible solution. Each winning team will receive a micro grant to realize the idea presented in the movie. Further, the top three winning teams will win money (250-500 €) and the winning videos will be shown to the public.

Annex VII Shoot by Youth

Civil Society & local actors: TalentMagnet

Ana NOVAK (Centre for European Perspective) presented "TalentMagnet", a project with 29 partners in 12 counties that aims at strengthening local institutional capacities to mitigate brain-drain and to help medium-sized cities in the Danube region to develop tools to reduce the outmigration of talented young workforce. It is not just about opening up attractive job opportunities, but about improving the quality of life in a broader sense. The focus of the project is expressed through the fact that most of the project partners are municipalities, development agencies and NGOs. The main result is to establish new multilevel and transnational governance model/tools/plans for talent attraction and retention.

Annex VIII Talent magnet

Civil Society & local actors: National Participation Day

Stefan LÜTGNAU (Danube Civil Society Forum) reported on the biggest challenges for the National Participation Day format in 2021. As, due to the COVID 19 crises, all 5 National Participation Days planned for 2020 had to be cancelled. Hence, we need to create a new format that takes into account the present conditions. Unfortunately, participation turned out to be very challenging for many organisations in an online meeting format. Therefore, it is all the more important to think of how to make better use of digital formats at national and regional level as well as how to adapt the format to the respective national/regional needs of countries. Additionally, the National Participation Days are not following a "one size model fits all"-model as the region covers various political landscape and various forms of political culture, particularly regarding communication and exchange between state and non-state stakeholders. From the point of view of the civil society organisations, the digital meetings should be incorporated and we should organise meetings with former and future organizers to brainstorm and discuss potential formats for National Participation Days

that are tailor-made fit to the needs and situations in the respective regions and countries. Finally, Stefan LÜTGEMAU pointed out that with regard to National Participation Days, the national stakeholders are the crucial drivers. However, the DCSF is at their disposal for support.

Civil Society & local actors: Danube Participation Day

Claudia SINGER gave an overview of the results of the brainstorming discussions of first preparatory meeting for the Danube Participation Day 2021, whose subject is “Participation and Digitalisation”:

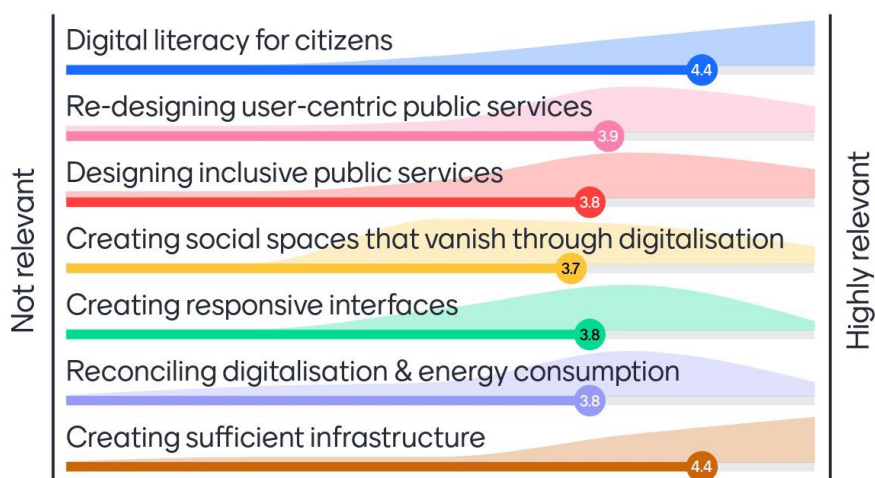


Then the participants of the EUSDR PA10 Steering Group meeting took part in a survey to give feedback concerning aspect of:

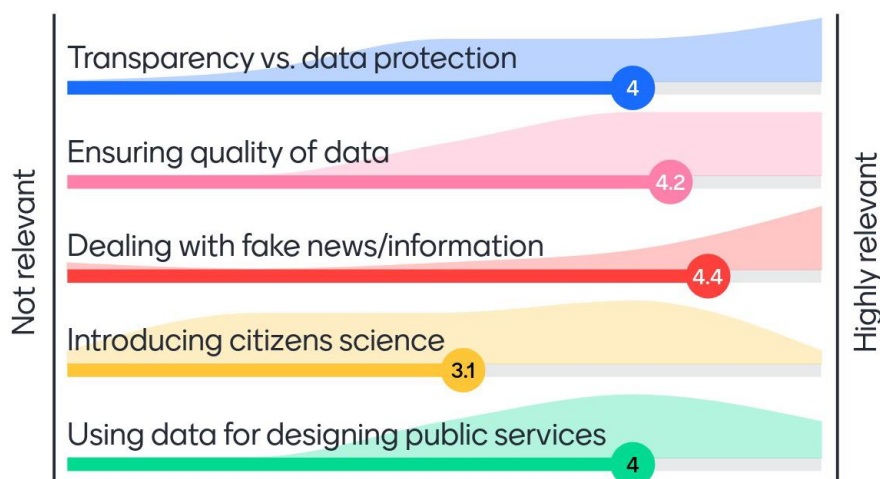
virtual decision making



digital services



access to data



Annex IX EUSDR PA10 PPT

Institutional Capacity

The short video on “Institutional Capacity” presented the following initiatives: Danube Governance Hub, Policy paper for Sound Local Public Management, Toolbox for Civil Society Engagement, Policy Paper on Metropolitan Regions, Webinar on Funding for Cross-border services.

Annex X EUSDR PA10 “Institutional Capacity” video

Institutional Capacity: Policy Paper on Sound Public Management

Claudia SINGER (EUSDR PA 10/City of Vienna) presented the Policy Paper on Sound Public Management, published already in 2019, but which can also be used for regional or national public management. The

paper addresses all aspects of open government, about transparency and accountable governance. Further, it shows how to create more user centric public services and how to engage and mobilise citizens.

Annex XI Policy Paper on Sound Public Management

Institutional Capacity: Toolbox for Civil Society Engagement

Jernej GRAHOR (PAC 10/Centre for European Perspective) presented the “Toolbox for Civil Society Engagement”. The overall aim of the paper is to showcase best practice cases and tools which are already in place on how to bring decision makers and Citizens together and to address common challenges within the region. Further, on how to come from a one sided communication to a two sided communication.

Annex XII Toolbox for Civil Society Engagement

Institutional Capacity: Paving the way to put ideas into practice:

Claudia SINGER (EUSDR PA 10/City of Vienna) announced, that, as a result of the extended SG meeting discussions on Cross Border Cooperation, PA10 will organise a webinar on strategic projects. EUSDR PA10 can support project partners, potential project promoters in finding the right consortium and /or the right funding and dealing with the following topics:



Claudia SINGER asked the Steering Group members, if there was an interest for an Extended Steering Group Meeting on digital public services.

The majority of the members expressed their interest in an Extended Steering Group Meeting on digital public services.

Updates from the EUSDR

Priorities of the Slovak EUSDR Presidency in 2021

Michal BLASKO (National Coordinator of the EUSDR, Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Information, SK) presented the priorities of the EUSDR Slovak presidency based on current challenges. He also presented what has been achieved in the past and what is planned for the future. Further, Mr. Blasko highlighted the 10th Annual Forum on 26-27 October 2021, which will take place in a hybrid format. The title of the Annual Forum 2021 is: “Green and Digital Transformation: A Route to a Prosperous Danube Region”. Additionally, he pointed out the importance of the embedding process and underlined the importance of better involvement of non-EU member states.

Annex XIII EUSDR Slovak presidency PPT

Latest news concerning the EUSDR

Katharina LENZ (Danube Strategy Point) presented an update of the activities and the way forward in 2021 within the EUSDR Strategy. In doing so, she pointed out the following topics:

- support for PACs, NCs and the EUSDR presidency (the “Needs Assessment on the engagement in Steering Groups”),
- the embedding process,
- monitoring and evaluation,
- communication (e.g. Communication Strategy, Communication Guide, social media platforms, development of the EUSDR App),
- capacity building for National Coordinators and Priority Area Coordinators and the presidencies,
- the Ukraine EUSDR Presidency from November 2021 to November 2022,
- the EUSDR Intranet as well as
- the “EUSDR Strategic projects/processes” OR “EUSDR Flagships”- a communication measure to enhance visibility.

Annex XIV Danube Strategy Point PPT

Post 2020

Karolina JASINSKA-MÜHLECK (DG Regio/ Unit D.1, European Commission) highlighted 3 initiatives particularly relevant for EUSDR PA10

Youth Manifesto (and the ECs follow up actions)

The Youth Manifesto presents young people’s ideas on Interreg and especially on how to make it more in line with their expectations. It is mainly addressed to policy makers at EU, national, regional and local level as well as to Interreg Managing Authorities and project beneficiaries, organisations interested in EU cohesion – and especially Interreg – policy making, youth, citizens’ engagement and democratic participation.

The ideas presented in the manifesto have been collected by European Commission via targeted surveys, polls and online group discussions with young people from all over Europe (i.e. EU, outermost regions and its neighbouring countries).

Ms Jasinska-Mühleck pointed out that the EC offers structure and support - amongst others - through meetings of a core group to facilitate exchanges and stimulate joint ideas. (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13908870>)

Further, she underlined the ECs willingness to help to promote any initiative in terms of youth involvement. Concerning the framework to boost and enable youth involvement, Ms Jasinska-Mühleck recommended to

think about the structural approach towards youth involvement on all levels of the Danube Strategy's governance.

Moreover, she informed the SG members, that the Youth Manifesto is available in many languages under:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/brochures/2020/manifesto-for-young-people-by-young-people-to-shape-the-european-cooperation-policy

Smart village initiative

The "SmartVillages" project is a strategic initiative of EUSALP and follows an integrative, participatory approach implying a city - village dialogue. The direct beneficiaries are local/regional authorities and administrations, SMEs, public service providers, regional development agencies and NGOs. They will benefit from alliances with other Smart Villages and actors from rural and urban areas and receive a concrete guidance to implement the Smart Village approach.

<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/smartvillages/en/home>

The Smart-Village-approach leads to the following policy recommendations. These policy recommendations address all institutional levels ranging from EU level, through macroregional level to national, regional and local level.

<https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/smartvillages/en/results/project-results/wp4---policy-recommendations/deliverables>

Finally, there will be a closing conference on the 29th April 2021.

Digital compass

Ms Jasinska-Mühleck informed about the latest news concerning the digital agenda: in March 2021 the EC published "Europe's digital compass". Further, she presented digital targets for 2030.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-digital-compass-2030_en.pdf

Annex XV EC DG Regio_ Post 2020 PPT

Steering Group Needs Assessment – understanding roles, identifying needs and co-creating services

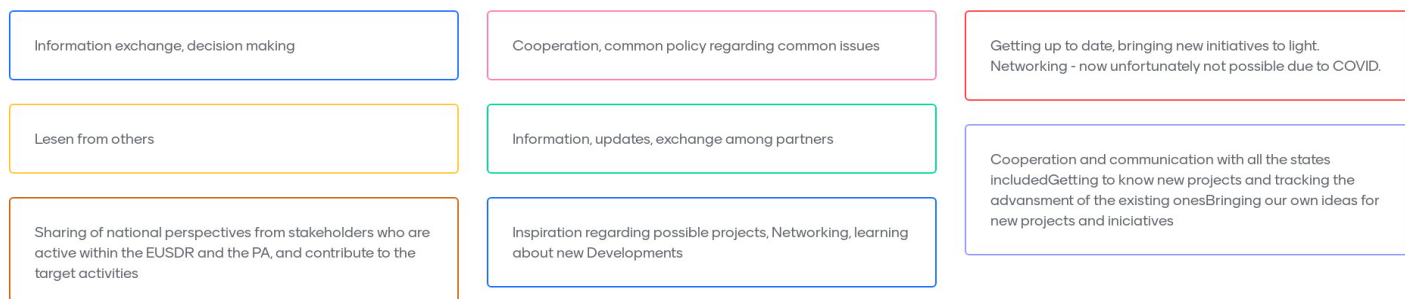
This session aimed at getting a concrete picture of how Steering Group members understand their role and how to deliver policy & activity coordination, communication and exchange in a way that serves the members of the PA 10 Steering Group best.

- In a first step, the results of the survey, which took place prior to the meeting were presented concerning
- The role as a PA Steering Group member
- Communication with Steering Group members (flow/access and sources)
- To which extent the SG members agree with the tasks according to the EUSDR Governance paper in relation to their understanding to their role
- The relationship of the Steering Group members with their NCs
- The relationship of the Steering Group members with stakeholder groups

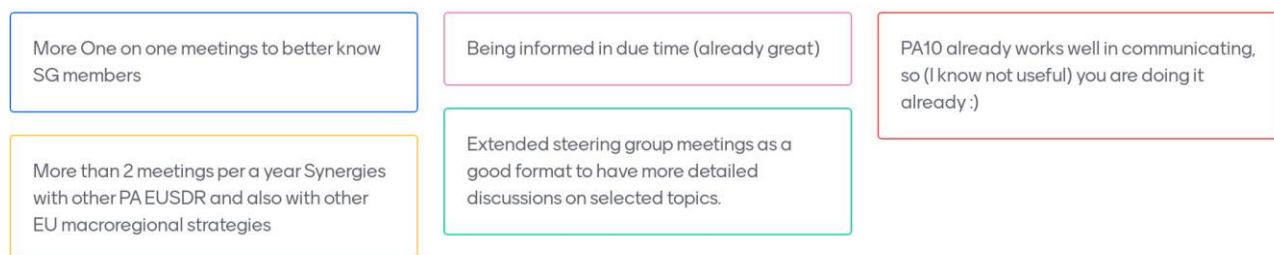
Annex IX p. 27 et seq.

Then three consecutive buzz word discussions in small groups on needs and services took place. After 5 minutes the participants came back to the plenary to share the outcomes of their discussions. The results were collected in “Mentimeter”. The participants discussed the following questions:

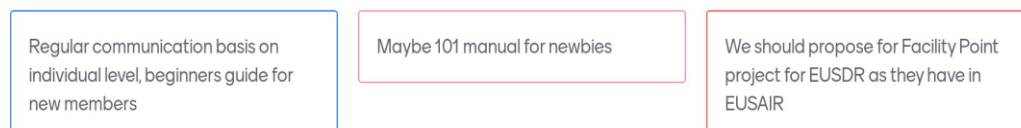
- **What do I expect from the Steering Group Meetings?**



- **What do I expect from the communication with the Priority Area Coordination & among the Steering Group?**



- **What is already useful to fulfil my tasks and what would be helpful for the future?**



What can we expect from the Danube Transnational Programme II?

Johannes GABRIEL (Danube Transnational Programme) presented the key elements and current programming processes of the Danube Transnational Programme 2021-2027. The thematic scope of the DTP II will address: innovation, environment and energy, social affairs and tourism and governance and EUSDR support. He pointed out, that projects dealing with PA10 topics (as PA10 has also horizontal scope), might be covered by all the priorities.

He announced that the first call, which will be a 2-step call, will be launched together with the kick-off event in October 2021. Interested project promoters can follow any news and progress on the DTP II on the DTP website, get in touch with the National Contact Points or attend National Info Days that are organised prior to the calls.

Project promoters can also get in touch with Priority Area Coordinators to discuss project ideas in connection with the Danube Strategy. Consultations concerning the project design according to the DTP's requirements should be arranged with the respective National Contact Points or the thematic DTP Project Officer. Further information can be found here:

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/about-dtp/interreg-post-2020>

Annex XVI DTP PPT

AoB

Peter LANGER (Council of Danube Cities and Regions), announced that the "Budapest Forum - Building Sustainable Democracies" will take place on 15 - 17 September 2021 and the "György Konrád - Prize for Democracy, Freedom and Human Dignity in the Danube Region", will be awarded there for the first time.

Annex XVII+XVIII

Jernej GRAHOR (PAC 10/Centre for European Perspective) announced that the Bled Strategic Forum will take place 1-2 September 2021 under the title: "Future of Europe" in Bled. Further, the "Young Bled Strategic Forum" will take place with support of EUSDR PA10 involving youth in the discussion. Details will be published soon.

Claudia SINGER closes the meeting.