

DANUBE REGION strategy



news

SPECIAL EDITION

Second Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region



PHOTO: EUROPEAN UNION

- **THE COMMISSION'S CORNER**
Stronger together,
stronger in the world **PAGE 2**
- **CONNECTED DANUBE REGION** **PAGE 4**
- **GREEN DANUBE REGION** **PAGE 5**
- **SMART AND INCLUSIVE
DANUBE REGION** **PAGE 7**
- **EFFECTIVE, ATTRACTIVE AND SAFE
DANUBE REGION** **PAGE 8**





Stronger together, stronger in the world

On 28-29 October 2013, the 2nd Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for Danube Region "Stronger together - stronger in the world" took place in Bucharest. The event was an excellent occasion to share and measure the progress of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) since its official endorsement in June 2011 by the European Council and the launch of the implementation phase.

The Forum was jointly organised by the Government of Romania, the European Commission and the cooperation programme INTERACT in the International Conference Centre/Palace of the Parliament in Bucharest, and over 1000 participants attended. European Commissioner Johannes Hahn, responsible for Regional and Urban Policy, opened the Forum underlining the success of this young macro-regional strategy. In particular, he noted the broad participation of the various stakeholders, from the ministerial level to civil society.

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region has demonstrated clear potential in its first phase of implementation, addressing joint challenges such as sustainable use of resources or climate change in a cooperative way. Actions address navigability of inland waterways, rail/road transport and energy connections, water quality, flood prevention, research networks, business, education and trade links. Around 400 projects have already been channelled; the benefits are further described in the Commission's report of April 2013. The recent Council Conclusions acknowledge the added-value of the macro-regional approach in general. But most of all, the achievements do not only help people in this Region; the Danube Strategy can contribute more broadly to the success of the European Union as a whole, explained Commissioner Hahn.



PHOTO: EUROPEAN UNION

The two-year-old EU Strategy for the Danube Region is showing achievements more quickly than expected, but this is no reason to be complacent, said the Commissioner. There is a need to ensure that the agreed objectives are followed up and translated into actions. Furthermore, as the working relationship matures, there is a need to develop better leadership. The Commission will continue to facilitate and provide strategic coordination, as it has from the beginning, but this has always been a bottom-up initiative. There is a need to see more ownership from the Region itself, with more effective ways to take decisions and to act together effectively. The Region has to take its destiny into its own hands. As Europe looks beyond the crisis, the region should reinforce efforts to improve its competitiveness, to invest in innovation and skills and to reduce administrative burdens.

"Commitment means active participation, active involvement of all members of this Strategy; it means travelling as drivers and not as passengers," said Commissioner Hahn. The political leaders need to stay fully engaged. The EUSDR has gotten off to an excellent start, but it will not continue to deliver if it goes on auto-pilot or if it is assumed that the European Commission will do all the heavy lifting. Commissioner Hahn also stressed the need to allocate sufficient resources to the Priority Area Coordinators and National Contact Points, the key actors of the implementation of the Strategy, in order to allow them to do their job efficiently.

Above all, Commissioner Hahn underlined the need for the countries to get actively involved in the current negotiations for the future programming period 2014 - 2020. The countries need to ensure that the Operational Programmes for 2014 - 2020 take the EU Strategy for the Danube Region fully on board. Looking further ahead, it is for the regions and the states of the Danube to reflect together what is needed in the longer term. Coordination of planning and investments is essential.

European Commissioner Dacian Cioloș, responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development, closed the forum by underlining the ability of these 14 countries to find joint solutions. He emphasised the still untapped potential for enhancing this cooperation. He also stressed the need to translate the strong political will expressed during the conference in a clear reference and commitment to the EUSDR in the Partnership Agreements and other strategic documents. Better cooperation on the level of macro-regions is essential to boost growth and support SMEs.



In parallel, four thematic workshops were organised, providing a space for an interactive exchange of experiences and opinions on issues such as ownership of the EUSDR, its multi-level governance, effective implementation of initiatives and possible funding sources:

1. Connected Danube Region
2. Green Danube Region
3. Smart and inclusive Danube Region
4. Effective, attractive and safe Danube Region

For more information about the workshops, including reports and presentations, please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/danube_forum2013/agenda_en.cfm

Alongside the 2nd Annual Forum of the EUSDR, several side events took place, spotlighting the varied dimensions of the Strategy. Two high level ministerial meetings took place; a meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and a meeting of Regional Development Ministers of the Danube Region countries. These high-level political events re-confirmed the political support and allowed for further discussion about the way to embed Danube perspective in policy and funding for the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 in order to ensure full success of the EUSDR.

Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of the Danube countries:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/danube_forum2013/doc/joint_statement.pdf

Conclusions of the 1st Regional Development Minister's meeting:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/danube_forum2013/doc/joint_statement_rdministers.pdf

Steering Group meetings of three Priority Areas took place on the margins of the Annual Forum, as well as a joint meeting between the Commission, National

Contact Points and Priority Area Coordinators aiming to tackle coordination and governance issues.

Several open public events were held, including the 3rd Danube Financing Dialogue hosted by the Romanian National Bank. The two-day event was attended by 220 participants, including 80 project promoters and 60 investors (banks, financing institutions, etc.). The Danube Financing Dialogues are a series of events where 'SMEs meet investors'. The aim is to facilitate the access to funds and finances for SMEs in the Danube Region in the light of the current economic and financial crisis, which has made access to finance for SMEs particularly difficult. The events provide for matchmaking opportunities (face-to-face meetings, small discussion rounds) as well as speeches on state of the art financing trends. Priority Area 10, Institutional Capacity, of the EUSDR coordinates the project.

For more information about the Danube Financing Dialogue:

<http://groupspaces.com/CapacityandCooperation/pages/danube-financing-dialogue-dfd>

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission formally launched the Danube Innovation Partnership. More than 100 participants representing public authorities, academia, industry and NGOs from the Danube region discussed how to create a network that will design and implement measures to accelerate innovation and technology transfer and how to support the commercialisation of research in the area.

For more information about the Danube Innovation Partnership:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=1410&obj_id=18200&dt_code=NWS&lang=en&ori=HLN

You will find a full list of side events and participants under:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/danube_forum2013/doc/booklet2013.pdf

Moving Forward

Annual Forum Workshops

The Second Annual Forum of the EUSDR served as an excellent opportunity for stakeholders of the 11 Priority Areas to come together and share their accomplishments and challenges, questions and suggestions for the future. The second day of the Forum included four parallel workshops in which Priority Area Coordinators and project partners were given the floor to present their work and participants were able to ask questions. Moving past the general statements and diplomatic formalities, these sessions were valuable because they gave an opportunity for stakeholders to share their opinions regarding the way forward and to discuss concrete examples of the strengths and weaknesses of the Strategy. The following article is organised in thematic sections which mirror the Forum workshops. Contributions for this article came from interviews with PACs as well as presentations given during the workshops. For summaries of each workshop, please visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/conferences/danube_forum2013/agenda_en.cfm

Connected Danube Region - Priority Areas 1A, 1B, and 2

The Danube River is the heart of the Region and plays a crucial role in connecting Europe beyond the river itself. Two years after launching the EUSDR, the Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) in the transport and energy fields are drawing their conclusions.

For Priority Area (PA) 1A (Mobility - Waterways) one of the main hurdles in the first year of the implementation of the Strategy was to find a common approach in identifying the main challenges in the Priority Area; another important but difficult task was to elaborate respective thematic roadmaps to solve these problems step by step and to identify relevant projects and actions in the field of inland navigation. So far, 90 relevant projects and project proposals have been identified in the field of navigation¹. The Strategy offers a platform for coordinators to tackle thematic priorities in an integrated way. One important accomplishment so far is the adoption of the Declaration on effective waterway infrastructure maintenance, which is quite an important milestone for

the Danube Region countries². The full implementation of harmonised 'River Information Services' was brought one step further with the start of the project IRIS Europe 3. In the field of fleet modernization a dedicated study called 'Innovative Danube Vessel' was commissioned which will bring concrete results and proposals on how to modernise the Danube fleet.

As the implementation of infrastructure projects progresses, the importance of adopting an integrated approach is evident. Transport means movement of people and goods and as such is of key importance for the development of the economy, including tourism. However transport also has negative impacts that should be minimised. The only way to limit these negative effects is to work jointly with other policy areas, such as environment, spatial planning, science and technology development and the civil society sector.

Despite the progress made, the Danube Region is still lacking major transport links and there is a need to address bottlenecks. At the moment the level of cooperation between countries is insufficient. Member states need to put aside national priorities and focus on corridors from a macro-regional perspective. For coordinators of the Priority Area 1B (Mobility - Rail, Road and Air) it is especially important to better understand the disadvantages within the transport sector in the central and eastern part of the Danube Region, as well as to recognise the need to tap in to the potential of inland waterways, free airport infrastructure capacities and railways. To obtain a common transport vision for 14 countries that differ greatly in infrastructure development and transport services is a very demanding task. Projects that truly contribute to mobility and accessibility within the macro-region, implemented with a coordinated approach, would lead to achieving the goals of the EUSDR in the field of transport. In Priority Area 1B key stakeholders as well as relevant gaps have already been identified, and over one hundred projects and project



PHOTO: THE BELGRADE LAND DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC AGENCY

As the implementation of infrastructure projects progresses, the importance of adopting an integrated approach is evident.

¹ For more information please visit www.danube-navigation.eu

² Declaration on "Effective waterway infrastructure maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries (Luxembourg Declaration)"



proposals have been received. Nevertheless, finishing transport projects requires time and therefore it is essential to consider these with a long-term perspective.

There is a need to link the EUSDR objectives with the Partnership Agreements of the financial period 2014-2020 and the Operational Programmes. The national plans submitted to the European Commission should incorporate added value to Strategy implementation, i.e. projects of relevance for the Danube Region should be high on the list of all projects to be co-financed. A lot is expected from the newly established Danube Region transnational programme, which covers all 14 Danube countries. It will be of crucial importance to establish sound links between governance structures of the EUSDR and the programme to make the best possible use of available funds.

Likewise, it is necessary to hold a dialogue with the EU neighbouring countries. The EUSDR needs to focus on the Enlargement Policy and non-EU Members States objectives should be considered in the formulation of IPA and ENPI programmes. One of the key features of the EUSDR is that it includes non-EU countries and Member States as equal partners. In this respect, Priority Area 2 (Energy) plays an instrumental role in the integration of the energy markets of non-EU countries and supports them in the implementation of the EU energy acquis communautaire in order to better connect the Danube Region in the energy field.

PA 2 has launched a tailor-made knowledge transfer training programme to assist non-EU countries in the Danube Region in their efforts to implement the 2nd and 3rd Energy Packages of the European Union, which

aim for a competitive and integrated energy market in the EU. The first beneficiary of this programme was the Republic of Moldova. Following a fact-finding mission in Chisinau in January 2013, four workshops were organised involving 18 experts from several European countries and institutions as instructors. The workshops included active participation of representatives and leading experts from Moldova. A wide range of topics was discussed during these workshops regarding the practical implementation of the relevant EU law. This training programme of PA 2 is the first tailor-made concept prepared to meet the needs of Republic of Moldova, contributing to the overall EU objectives of creating a competitive and fully integrated energy market including the countries of the European Union and the Energy Community. The second phase of this programme will be launched in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the European Commission and will also include implementation of the initiative in other EUSDR countries.

All PACs agree that the EUSDR requires commitment and ownership at all levels and from each country involved, political support from the ministries of all countries of the Region, active involvement of relevant Directorates General of the European Commission and stakeholders ready to carry out projects.

Green Danube Region³ - Priority Areas 4, 5 and 6

Nature and a rich biodiversity form the green backbone of the Danube Region. Why is that so? There is a simple answer: we all want a Danube Region worth living in, with highly attractive natural spaces and clean water which in turn provide habitats for animals and plants.

³ Based on an article by Florian Ballnus, Coordinator for PA 6 and presentations and discussions from the workshop 'Green Danube Region'

It is also essential for the people in the Region to be prepared for natural disasters; floods, forest fires and pollution know no borders. The Danube Region is home to the white-tailed eagle, the European green lizard, bears, sturgeons and many other species, some of which are highly endangered. The Danube Region offers large areas of specific ecosystems, some of which are unique in Europe, with the Danube Delta as an outstanding example. Besides riparian forests and wetlands along the Danube River, mountainous and steppe areas also characterise the wider Danube Region.

These natural areas and their biodiversity provide the Danube Region with a precious natural heritage and a source of well-being and prosperity; at the same time, they call for joint activities for their protection and development. Water quality must be maintained and environmental risks managed. In the framework of the EUSDR, Priority Areas 4 (Water Quality), 5 (Environmental Risks) and 6 (Biodiversity) are working together to implement the 'Environmental Pillar' of the EUSDR using a crosscutting and complementary approach.

Like biodiversity, also water quality is a cross-border issue. The policy for water quality is for mainly regulated by the EU water framework directive. PA 4 focuses on improving water policy and river basin management in the Danube watershed. PA 4's activities have a wide spectrum ranging from a water quality monitoring system to drinking water management and urban waste water treatment. PA 4 is currently working on ensuring that all region-specific programmes will include the early warning monitoring system as a target to ensure financing of this PA 4 activity in the next programming period.

The EUSDR also offers a framework to jointly manage environmental risks in the Danube region such as flooding, forest fire or landslides. PA 5 has taken initiative after

the disastrous flood of 2013. International coordinated action is needed to reduce flooding and associated human sufferings and economic losses in the Danube region. PA 5 will help develop an action and implementation plan to support countries coping with extreme flood events, including policy development and operative flood management issues.

The EUSDR provides a unique platform for the definition and implementation of integrative and sustainable solutions for the well-being of the entire Danube Region. For the first time in this macro-region, it is possible to bring together the different interests of economic, environmental and social stakeholders and link them with the policy level at the regional, national and EU level. Clear progress due to this approach can already be seen, nevertheless much more work and effort still lies ahead. Now with the new funding period 2014 - 2020 up ahead, more and more concrete activities must be carried out.

What remains crucial is the continuous commitment of all involved actors in the different regions and on different levels. The existing activities for protecting biodiversity and for nature protection are in many cases fragmented across the Danube Region, thus one of the aims is a strengthened coordination and networking of local and regional stakeholders, NGOs and authorities. Some of the success stories include laying the groundwork for sturgeon protection and the networking of protected areas and joining forces with several organisations and NGOs working in Priority Area relevant topics.

The cooperation of all PACs and their networks, including those in different pillars, laid the basis for cross-sectoral work within the EUSDR, which is another cornerstone of the EUSDR working approach. With the new funding period ahead of us, environmental issues will likely be



PHOTO: RALF REINHARTZ

Efforts to protect the sturgeon population require coordination among all Priority Areas.



PA 8's project DanuClus links clusters in the Danube Region to foster innovation and help groups from a wide range of economic sectors jointly develop new products, services and processes in response to societal challenges such as climate change or an ageing society.

addressed by most region-specific programmes in the Danube area, therefore, EUSDR projects will be able to obtain funding from these programmes. Also, the future Danube Region transnational programme will likely include the environment as a major focus area for funding transnational cooperation projects. Another important source of funding will be the future Life programme, the only EU financial instrument specifically targeting the environment. The two planned sub-programmes of Life for environment and climate change, including resource efficiency, combating biodiversity loss and fostering climate adaptation and mitigation, appear ideally suited to fund some of the projects currently being developed by PAs 4, 5 and 6. Last but not least, continuous communication of best practice examples is essential in promoting how the EUSDR concretely benefits the water quality, biodiversity and the people living in the Danube Region.

Smart and Inclusive Danube Region

Priority Areas 7, 8 and 9

Priority Areas 7 (Knowledge Society - Research, Education and ICT), 8 (Competitiveness) and 9 (People and Skills) are working together to implement projects and activities fully targeted to the Europe 2020 goals using a crosscutting and complementary approach. The EUSDR has led to more cooperation and projects, as well as improved communication among key players. Plans for building up a Danube Region research infrastructure on River-Delta-Sea Systems are progressing through the project 'Danubius', as well as the development of joint university degrees. Since June 2013 the DanuClus project has been developing cross-sector clusters, benefiting from synergies among almost 300 clusters in the Danube Region. The clusters jointly develop new products, services and processes in many economic sectors. Concrete projects have also been initiated in the field of

educational training, such as the pilot project 'Empowering Young People - Connecting Europe' of PA 9, which is strongly supported by all three Priority Areas.

The Danube Region is very heterogeneous, but many problems are shared. Only cooperation can make the Region strong, efficient and competitive. The EUSDR enhances cooperation between enterprises and institutions, which is contributing to the creation of new jobs, better infrastructure and education systems. The coordinators of these PAs see that the EUSDR has become a common umbrella for existing projects and provided new political momentum. Skill building and education are crucial factors for the development of the Danube Region, as well as the basis for innovation and smart specialisation, as education is an essential component of the knowledge triangle (research, education and innovation). Investment in human capital has a particularly high return and is crucial in order to tackle unemployment and the brain-drain phenomena.

While the benefits of cooperation are great, there are many challenges that the PACs face in implementing the EUSDR. The coordinators of PA 7 note that aligning national research strategies of countries, which are at various stages of readiness, is quite a challenge; it is not an easy task to streamline these national strategies to meet common EU policies. One achievement of PA 7 is the development of flagship clusters identified

The EUSDR is indeed making substantial progress and, most importantly, is bringing changes and socio-economic development to the Region.

“Prosperity is driven by investments and private expenditure. At the moment the key seems to be the necessary increase of salaries, especially in some public sectors, and the expansion of the local markets. Strengthening the public sector is crucial in reducing fluctuations, slowing down the brain drain, improving customer orientation and avoiding irregularities in the future. I am convinced that the step by step implementation of dynamic governance approaches accompanied by socially equitable improvements in status and income of public employees is a promising measure for more efficiency in reaching the goals of the Strategy.”

Kurt Puchinger, PA 10

together with the Joint Research Centre of the EU Commission. The coordinators of PA 8 cite the need for more qualified employees, stronger political backing, increased transparency, more sustainable cooperation, less bureaucracy and more incentives for investments in the Region as challenges to their work. In order to tackle these challenges, partnerships with relevant stakeholders and networks are key, as they generate new ideas and can lead to the implementation of actions and projects. According to coordinators of PA 9, the challenges they face are those reflected in the EU2020, as well as by the framework Education and Training 2020. Within the context of the on-going economic crisis, the reduction of youth unemployment and early school leaving rates is crucial. Raising awareness about the importance of education and training is a key factor for the Danube Region. Other topics which PA 9 is taking action on include work-based learning and social inclusion of marginalised Roma communities.

Throughout the EUSDR funding sources are a hot topic for discussion. Coordinators from PAs 7, 8 and 9 highlighted the need to align Horizon 2020 and the European Regional Development Fund (including national and regional programmes), ENI and IPA II, as well as the need to attract private funding sources by building links between researchers and industries. With this goal in mind, coordinators of PA 8 participate in a specific task force dealing with strategic orientation and alignment of the EU funding programmes. Nonetheless, different stakeholders must search for their most appropriate funding sources. The transition between programming periods in 2014 makes finding funding sources for projects more difficult, and there is a need for transparency of the requirements and procedures of the main funding sources. PAC 9 noted that the upcoming Erasmus+ Programme will be key for education and training projects. Additionally, vocational education projects (e.g. work-based learning) should be included in the scope of the future Danube Region transnational programme. PACs also see the need to find effective mechanisms to finance small and mid-sized projects.

Each of the three PACs has a vision for the success of their work within the EUSDR. PAC 7 sees that the

prosperity of the Danube Region relies on improved education, research and innovation systems. The result of cooperation should be the transformation of ideas into products and services, which will improve the competitiveness of the Region in the European and world market. To do this, financial tools and strong political back-up to the macro-regional project are needed. PAC 8 believes that political and administrative support by all institutions concerned is as essential as the commitment of enterprises and people in the Danube Region. To achieve this, there should be more attention to visibility and communication of the EUSDR. Effective cooperation and networking between all involved institutions is also necessary. According to coordinators of PA 9, investment in skills and competences are at the heart of the Strategy and are key for the prosperity of the Danube Region. Education is on the top of the European agenda when it comes to tackling effects of the financial and economic crisis and increasing employment and competitiveness. Together, the goals and ideas of these Priority Areas, along with the 8 others, will come together as a shared vision for the overall Strategy to make the most of the potential of the Danube Region.

Effective, Attractive and Safe Danube Region Priority Areas 3, 10 and 11

PA 3 (Culture and Tourism), PA 10 (Institutional Capacity and Cooperation) and PA 11 (Security) span a wide range of activities. However diverse their projects may be, these PAs came together at the EUSDR Annual Forum in Bucharest to discuss how to make the Danube Region more effective, attractive and safe. It is clear that a region must be safe and effective in order for it to be an attractive area, not only for tourists but also for the residents themselves. The PACs agreed that the most essential factors in cooperating towards the goals of the Strategy are trust and participation.

The meeting in Bucharest has proven that the EUSDR is indeed making substantial progress and, most importantly, is bringing changes and socio-economic development to the Region. As coordinators of PA 3 underlined, “The Strategy brings about process modelling that could otherwise be left to the deliberation of



PHOTO: EUROPEAN UNION

A cross-border PA 11 security exercise marking Danube Day between Romania and Bulgaria near Vidin.

countries, regions and local communities; it improves the dynamics of cooperation on processes.” It is important to remember that although the Danube Region covers different countries, it is connected by their common challenges and potentials. Security actions are great example; as PAC 11 explains, “We are seeking to treat all the major threats that may impede the economic development of the Danube countries and the well-being of all their citizens.”

When talking about the changes that the EUSDR brings to the Region, it is key to remember that an integrated and balanced development of regional economic growth and social welfare does not emerge by itself; it requires an overall political concept which includes all relevant stakeholders in the process of implementation, the public sector, civil society, and the economy in its respective transnational inter-relations. For this reason, all three PACs (3, 10, and 11) responsible for coordination of work on an effective, attractive and safe Danube Region state that broad participation of all countries and organisations is an important condition for the development of the Strategy. “Special attention should be placed on inclusion of civil society, of the people and their needs and wishes. Otherwise the EUSDR will be reduced to a poor mechanism of technical project support and thus, activities like ‘To combat institutional capacity and public service related problems’ will end up in the sand,” states PAC 10. It would benefit the EUSDR greatly to better include civil society and the capacity of the Region’s cities and its networks in the Strategy’s governance structures. It is worth noting that the Danube Civil Society Forum has recently published a short opinion paper on enhanced bottom-up participation and multi-level governance in the Baltic and Danube macro-regional strategies. The paper, titled “Tapping the full potential of macro-regional strategies”⁴ concludes that effective institutional operation requires well-structured and well-established governance structures, as well as the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders.

The EUSDR strengthens political concepts and improves

the utilisation of European knowledge and subsidies in the Region by raising awareness and intensifying cooperation. However, the challenge remains to ensure the balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation. In this aspect, PAC 3 makes an important point: “On one hand, project implementers need to realise that nothing in the Strategy can be taken for granted; it does not bring in copious amounts of money to local economies by default. It’s the complete opposite. The positive effect can only come through proactive cooperation, and at the same time, people need to hear clear and honest messages from politicians. After all, it is a process of trust.”

Finally, making a more effective, attractive and safe Danube Region means the need to better mobilise and coordinate the funding sources. The three PACs admit that even though there are no particular financial instruments designated for the Strategy or even particular PAs, they are still enthusiastic about identifying possible financial sources including funding through various future EU programmes or private funding sources. For example, two German foundations, Konrad-Adenauer and Hanns-Seidel, provide regular financial support for activities in the field of security.

However, there are two important financing-related issues that should be underlined. Firstly, as PAC 10 stated, the challenge is to find adequate funding for project development (especially for small projects) as this is still a bottleneck. That being said, PA 10 is working on solutions to tackle this problem. One solution is the Danube Financing Dialogue, an initiative that aims to start pilot actions to close this gap between project and funding by linking SMEs and municipalities with various European granting institutions and commercial banks. Secondly, projects’ sustainability is another big challenge. As PAC 3 explains, “We all have to learn that the Strategy is not about 18- or 24-month periods. A project doesn’t do any good if it does not support larger, cohesive processes. Therefore we can clearly define the Strategy as a process in which we all have to be patient and persistent.”

⁴ The report is available here:
http://www.danubestrategy.eu/fileadmin/danube/media/Tapping_the_full_potential_of_MRS_brochure.pdf

PRIORITY AREA COORDINATORS

PRIORITY AREA	NAME AND INSTITUTION	CONTACT
1) To improve mobility and intermodality		
1a) Inland waterways		
Austria 	Mr Reinhard Vorderwinkler Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology	reinhard.vorderwinkler@bmvit.gv.at
Romania	Ms Monica Patrichi Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure	monica.patrichi@mt.ro 
1b) Rail, road and air		
Slovenia	Mr Franc Žepič Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning 	franc.zepic@gov.si
Serbia	Mr Miodrag Poledica Ministry of Transport	poledica@mi.gov.rs 
2) To encourage more sustainable energy		
Czech Republic	Ms Eva Slovakova Ministry for Industry and Trade	slovakova@mpo.cz
Hungary	Ms Anita Orbán Ministry of Foreign Affairs 	aorban@kum.hu
3) To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts		
Bulgaria	Mr Branimir Botev Ministry of Economy and Energy	b.botev@mee.government.bg
Romania	Mr Emanuel Cernat Department for SMEs, Business Environment and Tourism	emanuel.cernat@yahoo.com
4) To restore and maintain the quality of waters		
Hungary	Mr Ottó András Szabó National Institute for Environment, Ministry of Rural Development	otto.szabo@neki.gov.hu
Slovakia	Ms Andrea Vranovska Water Research Institute 	vranovska@vuvh.sk
5) To manage environmental risks		
Hungary	Mr László Dobi Central Water Directorate	dobi.laszlo@ovf.hu
Romania	Ms Olimpia Negru Ministry of Environment and Forests	olimpia.negru@mmediu.ro
6) To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils		
Bavaria 	Mr Florian Ballnus Bavarian State Ministry of Environment and Consumer Protection	florian.ballnus@stmuv.bayern.de
Croatia	Ms Ana Kobašić Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection	ana.kobaslic@min-kulture.hr

PRIORITY AREA	NAME AND INSTITUTION	CONTACT
7) To develop the knowledge society (research, education and ICT)		
Slovak Republic	Mr Stefan Chudoba Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport	kancelaria.st@minedu.sk 
Serbia 	Mr Miroslav Veskovik University of Novi Sad	veskovic@uns.ac.rs
8) To support the competitiveness of enterprises		
Baden-Württemberg (Germany)	Mr Hans Peter Herdlitschka Ministry of Commerce 	hans-peter.herditschka@wm.bwl.de
Croatia	Ms Dragica Karačić Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Directorate for SME's	dragica.karaic@minpo.hr
9) To invest in people and skills		
Austria	Mr Jürgen Schick Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture	juergen.schick@bmukk.gv.at
Austria	Mr Roland Hanak Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection	roland.hanak@bmask.gv.at 
Moldova	Mr Ion Gumene State Chancellery	ion.gumene@gov.md
10) To step up institutional capacity and cooperation		
Austria	Mr Kurt Puchinger City of Vienna 	Kurt.puchinger@pa10-danube.eu
Slovenia 	Ms Irena Lukač Center of Excellence in Finance	irena.lukac@cef-see.org
11) To work together to tackle security and organised crime		
Bulgaria	Mr Plamen Angelov Ministry of the Interior	eusdr@mvr.bg
Germany	Mr Christoph Hübner Ministry of the Interior	christoph.huebner@bmi.bund.de
Bavaria (Germany)	Mr Wilhelm Schmidbauer Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior 	stmi.polizeieinsatz@polizei.bayern.de

Upcoming Events

- 16-17 January: Meeting of NCPs, Vienna
- 13 February: Meeting of the High Level Group on Macroeconomic Strategies, Brussels
- 11-12 March: Meeting of PACs & NCPs, Vienna
- 19-20 May: ETC Annual Event, Brussels
- 26-27 June: 3rd Annual Forum of the EUSDR, Vienna

2014

NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

For updated contact lists of National Contact Points and Priority Area Coordinators, as well as information on upcoming events, please visit www.danube-region.eu.

COUNTRY	NAME	INSTITUTION	CONTACT
Austria	Mr Werner Almhofer	Foreign Ministry	werner.almhofer@bmeia.gv.at
Austria	Mr Roland Arbter	Federal Chancellery	roland.arbter@bka.gv.at
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr Osman Topcagic	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	osman.topcagic@mvp.gov.ba
Bulgaria	Mr Miroslav Maznev	Ministry of Regional Development	mmaznev@mrrb.government.be
Croatia	Mr Hrvoje Marušić	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	hrvoje.marusic@mvep.hr
Czech Republic	Ms Petra Stastna	Office of the Government of the Czech Republic	stastna.petra@vlada.cz
Germany	Mr Peter Schoof	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	e-b-2@auswaertiges-amt.de
Germany - Baden Württemberg	Ms Susanne Neib	Baden Württemberg State Ministry	susanne.neib@stm.bwl.de
Germany - Bavaria	Mr Markus Theuersbacher	State Chancellery	markus.theuersbacher@stk.bayern.de
Hungary	Mr Balázs Medgyesy	Office of the EU Danube Strategy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	dunastrategia@mfa.gov.hu
Moldova	Mr Liviu Oboroc	Ministry for Regional Development and Construction	liviu.oboroc@mdrc.gov.md eusdr.moldova@gmail.com
Montenegro	Ms Ivana Petricevic	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration	ivana.petricevic@mfa.gov
Romania	Ms Carmen Podgorean	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	carmen.podgorean@mae.ro
Serbia	Mr Ognjen Miric	Serbian European Integration Office	omiric@seio.gov.rs
Slovakia	Mr Ladislav Šimko	Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic	ladislav.simko@vlada.gov.sk
Slovenia	Mr Gregor Krajc	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	gregor.krajc@gov.si
Ukraine	Mr Volodymyr Bandurov	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade	vvoloshko@me.gov.ua

Imprint © INTERACT 2007-2013

Editorial Team: INTERACT Point Vienna and European Commission - DG Regional Policy. With thanks to all our contributors.

Publisher: INTERACT Point Vienna, on behalf of the INTERACT Programme.

INTERACT Point Vienna accepts no responsibility or liability with regard to information or opinions of the authors of the articles in this issue. Unless otherwise stated, the copyright of material published in this newsletter is owned by the INTERACT Programme. This material is allowed to be used for public use, provided the source is acknowledged. None of this material may be used for any commercial use.

Contact: INTERACT Point Vienna | Kirchberggasse 33-35/9 | 1070 Vienna | Austria

To receive an electronic copy or to contribute to the next issue(s), please contact ip.vienna@interact-eu.net

The newsletter can be downloaded at www.danube-region.eu

Design: Kienesberger Reklamebureau KG | Vienna



www.interact-eu.net

INTERACT provides technical support and networking opportunities for Territorial Cooperation programmes, including those located in the Danube Region.

INTERACT is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund

Printed on 100% recycled paper

In collaboration with

