

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

– minutes –

Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, 14-15 April 2016

Main outcomes

Participation

8 out of 14 Danube countries participated at the 10th Steering Group (SG) meeting of Priority Area 10 (PA10) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The quorum was thereby fulfilled in accordance with the guidelines for the functioning of the SG of PA10 (see annex 2).

RCC representatives also participated in the meeting.

Main discussion outcomes:

1. The SG reaffirmed the validity of the targets and their relation to the platforms of PA10, as adopted on 12 June 2015 at the 8th SG meeting in Ljubljana.
2. The SG welcomed the establishment of the Governance Hub at the interfaces of relevant MRS and strategies for (potential) countries.
3. The RCC reaffirmed its continued cooperation with PA10 and in general with the EUSDR (and EUSAIR).
4. The SG welcomed the concept of Strategic Projects developed by the DSP and endorsed the projects proposals by PAC10 to be listed as strategic projects.
5. DTP and SG reaffirmed to cooperate with regard to capitalisation and project development.
6. The SG was informed about current developments within the EUSDR, as well as platforms and events relevant for PA10.
7. The SG adopted strategic projects, which will be subsequently submitted to the DSP (see annexes 11 and 12).

Upcoming meetings/deadlines

9-11 May 2016: Writing Strategic Documents workshop, Ljubljana, Slovenia

19 May 2016: D-LAP Advisory Committee

23-24 May 2016: Danube Financing Dialogue (DFD), Bratislava, Slovakia

7-8 June 2016: D-CAP Advisory Committee, Ljubljana, Slovenia

20-23 June 2016: Fundamental Rights Forum, Vienna, Austria

23-24 June 2016: Governance Hub Conference, Vienna, Austria

September 2016: UPDR Advisory Committee/workshop for the development of a cadastre project

2-3 November 2016: 3rd Participation Day, Bratislava, Slovakia

3-4 November 2016: 5th Annual Forum of the EUSDR, Bratislava, Slovakia

November: Audit of IPA Funds workshop, Ljubljana, Slovenia

November 11th SG meeting, Bucharest, Romania

(Autumn) D-LAP Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

	AT	BA	BG	CZ	DE	HR	HU	MD	ME	RO	RS	SI	SK	UA	EC	EESC	RCC	CEI	DSP
SG10	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-

Schicker (PAC10, AT) welcomed the Steering Group and thanked the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) for hosting the SG. He underlined the importance to be in Sarajevo. Schicker introduced himself as the new Coordinator of PA10 for the City of Vienna, following Kurt Puchinger.

1. Welcome

Goran Svilanović, secretary general of the RCC, welcomed the Steering Group (SG) of PA10. He underlined the cooperation of RCC with the EUSDR and the EUASIR, which can be seen as additional tools for EU enlargement. 8 of the RCC participants also participate in macro-regional strategies (MRS) and the targets of the SEE2020 Strategy comply largely with those of EUSDR. He announced the governance hub conference on 23-24 June 2016 in Vienna in the framework of the Berlin process. He drew the attention to the Southeast Europe donor database (SEEDAD) and potential synergies with the EuroAccess project implemented by PA10. He commented on the RCC's activities and emphasized the importance of investment in infrastructure but also into human resources in the Western Balkans. He called for a maximum of synergies among the strategies, be it MRS or the SEE2020 Strategy. He stated that two of the RCC's participants from SEE do not participate in the MRS and the RCC will be active in making them knowledgeable about the MRS.

2. View of BA on the EUSDR

Goran Behmen (BA) underlined that BA submitted its request to become an EU Member on 15 February 2016. By the end of 2017, BA should become a candidate country. BA is closely cooperating with the EC in this regard. BA supports activities in the EUSDR. Behmen underlined that MRS are good tools for European enlargements and BA participates in many of the activities. He affirmed BA's interest in participating in the EUSDR.

3. Introduction

Schicker reiterated the importance of holding the SG meeting in BA. Tomšič (PAC10, Centre of Excellence in Finance (CEF), SI) stated the interest of CEF to participate in the EUSDR, as this international organisation is active mainly in the Southeast Europe. Andreja Jerina (SI, EUSDR NC) commented on the experiences of SI within three MRS (also EUSALP and EUSAIR) and stressed that time was needed in order to successfully implement them. Capacity building and hence PA10 are essential in order to make cooperation a reality. She drew the attention on a conference dealing with transport to be held in Ljubljana as well as another conference to be held in November dealing with the Barcelona process.

The introduction was followed by a tour de table.

4. Update on macro-regional cooperation

Marco Onida (EC, DG Regio) commented on the very good work that has been carried out. He insisted on the fact that there is a need for a new momentum in the implementation of the Strategy in order to renew the political support. He gave an overview of the past meetings of PACs and NCs. He pointed out that the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) is going to support the governance of the EUSDR and commented on the establishment of the Danube Strategy Point (DSP). With regard to the future implementation of the Strategy, the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) will provide a threefold support:

- a) Technical assistance;
- b) Support of DSP;
- c) Seed money.

A specific challenge is to convince Managing Authorities (MA) of considering MRS. Also mainstream OPs as well as INTERREG A need to embed MRS, e.g. through specific calls related to MRS or by granting additional points to applicants when implementing EUSDR. One way to do it is to refer to EUSDR targets, which are currently being revised. Onida also referred to the EuroAccess web platform as well as the Danube Financing Dialogue (DFD) which will take place on 23-24 May 2016 in Bratislava. DSP has developed a concept of Strategic Projects and PA10 will set up with the EC a new Project Fund focussing specifically on third states in the Neighbourhood (MD, UA) as well as in the Western Balkans (BA, ME, RS). The EUSDR needs to take into account current developments. For example, the migration issue in Southeast Europe was discussed at the last Annual Forum, and this topic may be given more prominence in the future of the Strategy.

5. Presentation of the EUSDR Governance Hub

Thomas Prorok (AT, KdZ) presented the Hub and commented on Public Administration Reform (PAR) and its role with EU enlargement. In the framework of the Berlin process, the Governance Hub will be launched on 23-24 June 2016 in Vienna. The Governance Hub is a political initiative that lives from projects. It is mainly financed by the Austrian Development Agency and related to the Western Balkans Strategy of the AT MFA. One essential element of the hub is e.g. the project Building Administrative Capacity in the Danube Region (BACID). Onida informed that DG Regio will be represented at the conference. The hub is a joint initiative of the Austrian MFA, the RCC, and PA10. Schicker (PAC10) stated that the Governance Hub is an innovative combination of the Berlin process, MRS, and others. He stressed that local communities are crucial when it comes to achieving better governance in the macro-region. All cities are invited to come, which would serve the ultimate goal of European integration and Enlargement. Jerina (SI) mentioned that actors from EUSAIR could also be involved. → See annex 3.

6. A.o.b.

Schicker reported on a meeting with the head of the Carpathian Convention and potential cooperation between the EUSDR and the Convention.

Haken (EESC) emphasized the importance of the urban agenda and the opinion the EESC has issued in this respect.

7. Discussion of new targets, adoption of strategic projects

The SG reaffirmed the targets as adopted on 12 June 2015 at the 8th SG meeting in Ljubljana. Schicker stated that strategic projects bear the capacity to provide additional visibility of PA10's activities, such as the cadastre project. Mirtl (PA10, AT) gave an overview of potential strategic projects. Representatives of RCC, BA and RO reaffirmed their interest in cooperating in the field of inclusion of the Roma minority in the Danube Region. Schicker concluded that strategic projects matter especially in terms of public

relations of the EUSDR, but also in order to involve countries from the Western Balkans. The list of projects will be submitted to the SG with the draft minutes; agreement will be reached through simplified written procedure.

See annexes 5 and 6, as well as 11 and 12.

8. Analysis of the 1st call of the Danube Transnational programme (DTP), outlook on the 2nd call

Gabriel (JTS DTP) outlined the main contents and different facets of the DTP. Achieved results should be considered when developing new activities. All the pillars have a strong capacity building aspect. Gabriel stressed that projects introducing new training schemes explicitly targeting public sector managers were missing at the first call. Moreover, there were few projects taking into consideration real governance innovation models. Civil Society involvement was another topic that was indirectly tackled only. The 2nd call of DTP is going to be an open call to be launched end of 2016. It will be a one-step procedure and also involve ENI funds for the Rep. of Moldova and most probably also for Ukraine. In the first call, many projects failed due to a lack of consideration of specific DTP technicalities. Gabriel underlined the PACs have a crucial role to play in order to moderate the capitalisation of projects and provide them with a political momentum. Onida added that also the ENI contribution for UA could be secured. Gabriel and Onida emphasized the importance to interact between DTP and the PACs, both in terms of project partner and identification and capitalisation. DTP is going to launch a seed money facility, based upon the respective experiences of PA10 in this field and involving the expertise of the DSP into the set-up of the facility. Schicker welcomed the cooperation between PAC10 and DTP and called for an optimised information exchange in this regard. See annex 6.

Haken (EESC) called for a change of rules in order to address all sectors of society, especially civil society.

9. Presentation of GIZ

Di Marco (GIZ) presented the instrument Open Regional Funds for South-East Europe – Modernisation of Municipal Services that was launched in 2008. See Annex 7.

10. Status and perspectives of the D-CAP

Tomšič (PAC10, SI) reported on a workshop dealing with IPA funds and which addressed novelties in the IPAll. The advisory committee of the Danube Capacity Platform will be held on 7-8 June 2016. It will deal with change management and leadership. Another workshop will deal with auditing. Dates will be announced on the website. See Annex 8.

11. Status and perspectives of the D-LAP and UPDR

Urschitz (PA10, AT) gave an update on the D-LAP. A meeting of the advisory committee was held on 8 December 2015. New members are welcome. D-LAP together with the Danube Civil Society Forum will organise the 3rd Participation Day which will be held on 2-3 November at the margins of the 5th Annual Forum of the EUSDR. A national Civil Society Hearing for the EUSDR was held in Sofia. Currently, the D-LAP also deals with the topic of human trafficking in the Danube Region – a conference in this regard is jointly organised with the Fundamental Rights Agency. Haken (EESC) addressed the issue of travel costs to be covered for NGOs.

Mirtl commented on current developments of the UPDR and the urban agenda, which may be endorsed under the NL presidency. The upcoming Advisory Committee of the UPDR will be dedicated to the development of the above-mentioned cadastre project. The UPDR website will be integrated into the new PA10 website provided by the DSP and funding information for cities made available on the

EuroAccess website. The upcoming Annual Forum of the EUSDR should also reflect the Urban Agenda, which was reiterated by Schicker.

12. Presentation of the EuroAccess project

Dalmoro (EuroVienna) presented the EuroAccess pilot project, which will be launched in November 2016 at the Annual Forum. See Annex 9.

13. Building synergies between the SEE2020 Strategy and the EUSDR

Greavu (RCC) provided information about the SEE2020 Strategy, which aims at fostering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Southeast Europe and thereby sustaining EU integration of the accession economies. She proposed a technical meeting with PAC10 to interlink SEEDAD and EuroAccess.

14. Conclusions and outlook

Schicker thanked the SG for attending and the RCC as host. Tomšič announced that 11th SG meeting will be carried out by CEF and is going to be hosted by Romania (Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration). It will be held in Bucharest in autumn after the Annual Forum.

Annex 1 Agenda

Annex 2 Participants

Annex 3 Presentation Governance Hub

Annex 4 Targets & platforms

Annex 5 Strategic project presentation

Annex 6 Presentation of DTP

Annex 7 Presentation of GIZ

Annex 8 Presentation of B-CAP

Annex 9 Factsheet EuroAccess

Annex 10 Presentation on SEE2020 & MRS

Annex 11 Strategic project list

Annex 12 Strategic project sheets provided by project leaders