

12th Meeting of the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 “Institutional Capacity and Cooperation” of the EUSDR (PA10)

– minutes –

Representation of Land Baden-Württemberg
Berlin (DE), 10 March 2017

Main Outcomes

	AT	BA	BG	CZ	DE	HR	HU	MD	ME	RO	RS	SI	SK	UA	EC	EESC	RCC	CEI	DSP
SG12	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-*	-	-	+	+

*) The representative of the European Commission (Marco Onida) was not attending the entire meeting. However, the EC held a presentation via Skype.

Participants:

8 out of 14 EUSDR countries were represented at the 12th Meeting of the Steering Group of Priority Area 10 (see Annex II). The representative of the Republic of Moldova registered for the meeting, but was not able to attend because of the on-going strike at the airport Berlin Tegel. According to the “Guidelines for the Functioning of the PA10 Steering Group” the quorum for decision-making was reached. Furthermore, the Danube Strategy Point, Central European Initiative as well as two projects of the Danube Transnational Programme (Attractive Danube, AgriGo4Cities) were represented at the meeting.

Main outcomes of the discussion:

- The Steering Group takes note of the information on the EUSDR Annual Forum 2017 that takes place on 18 and 19 October 2017, and the Danube Participation Day that takes place on 17 October 2017 in Budapest.
- The Steering Group endorses the drafting of a statement on Cohesion Policy 2020+ addressing civil society involvement and suitable funding by PA 10.
- The Steering Group discusses and endorsed the topics of PA 10 for the Danube Transnational Seed Money Facility
- The Steering Group endorses the activities of PAC 10’s work plan 2017.
- The Steering Group endorses the proceedings concerning the organisation of the Danube Participation Day 2017
- The Steering Group takes note of the submission of 56 applications to the DSPF.
- The Steering Group endorses further proceeding on developing a common narrative for the Danube Region and reaffirms its importance in terms of communicating the benefits of the EUSDR.

Upcoming meetings:

21 March 2017	D-LAP Meeting (Preparatory Meeting for the EUSDR Participation Day), Vienna (AT)
24 March 2017	National Hearing Serbia, Novi Sad (RS)
26/27 April 2017	CoDCR Annual Conference, Ulm (DE)
4/5 May 2017	3 rd Meeting of the ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region, Vienna (AT)
9-12 May 2017	Facilitating enhanced cooperation of actors from all levels in the Danube Region, Ljubljana (SI)
16 May 2017	Participation Day of Bulgaria, Sofia (BG)
30 May 2017	Participation Day of the Czech Republic, Prague (CZ)
June 2017 (tbc)	2 nd Cadastre-Seminar EUSDR, Belgrade (RS)
15/23 June 2017 (tbc)	Meeting of the EUSDR National Coordinators
1-3 September 2017	Young Danube Experts, Bled (SI)
4-5 September 2017	Bled Strategic Forum, Ljubljana (SI)
September 2017 (tbc)	Civil Day, Budapest (HU)
September 2017	Meeting of the TO 11 Network, Vienna (AT)
Sept./Oct. 2017	EU MRS Conference on Media and Communication, Ljubljana (SI)
17 October 2017	Danube Participation Day, Budapest (HU)
18/19 October 2017	EUSDR Annual Forum, Budapest (HU)
November 2017	Cooperation Conference, Chisinau (MD)
November 2017	13 th Steering Group Meeting of PA 10, Ljubljana (SI)
November 2017	D-CAHT Seminar, Vienna (AT)

Welcome & Introduction

Rudolf SCHICKER (PAC 10/City of Vienna, AT) welcomes the participants to the 12th Steering Group (SG) Meeting of EUSDR Priority Area 10 and thanks Matthias HOLZNER (Baden-Württemberg, DE) for hosting the meeting in the representation of Baden-Württemberg in Berlin and the opportunity of attending the *Donausalon* of Baden Württemberg the evening before.

Matthias HOLZNER welcomes the Steering Group of EUSDR Priority Area 10 on behalf of Baden-Württemberg in Berlin. Baden-Württemberg (BW) organised the annual *Donausalon* – this year in cooperation with Slovenia -, which is an important event to highlight the Danube Region in Berlin. The

idea of BW hosting the Steering Group meeting was to bring together the stakeholders of the *Donausalon* with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

Nina ČEPON (PAC 10/Centre for European Perspective – CEP, SI) also welcomes the participants of the 12th Steering Group Meeting. This is the first Steering Group Meeting, CEP is attending as official Coordinator of Priority Area 10 and ČEPON looks forward to the discussion. PAC 10-CEP plans to organise the next Steering Group Meeting in Slovenia in fall 2017.

PAC 10 Vienna Rudolf SCHICKER presents the agenda of the 12th Steering Group Meeting (see Annex I) and asks if the members of the Steering Group want to make any amendments to the agenda. He also announces that the Steering Group member from the Republic of Moldova is not attending the meeting probably due to the strike at the airport Berlin Tegel.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group adopted the agenda as presented.

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

Patricia ABAFFY (HU) points out that Hungary is currently holding the EUSDR Presidency and the staff is busy with planning and organising the meetings for this year. Unfortunately, no representative of the EUSDR Presidency was able to take part in the SG Meeting of PA 10. However, ABAFFY looks forward to meeting everyone at this year's EUSDR Annual Forum in Budapest.

Katerina FOLPRECHTOVA (CZ) informs that the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic is planning to co-organise a participation day seminar. The format of the event is approved, but there is not yet a concrete date set. The seminar is planned to possibly take place in the end of May or, respectively in the beginning of June 2017.

Matthias HOLZNER informs that Baden-Württemberg is preparing a Participation Day that is expected to take place on 29 June 2017. The date still needs to be confirmed. Baden-Württemberg is currently monitoring the projects approved by the INTERREG programmes related to the topics of Priority Area 10. Furthermore, Baden-Württemberg is involved in funding activities in the area of civil society and youth. Daniela URSCHITZ (PA 10/City of Vienna, AT) wants to take the opportunity to thank Baden-Württemberg as well as the Baden-Württemberg Foundation for providing financial support for the organisation of the EUSDR Participation Day for the next three years.

Snežana FILIPOVIC (RS) tells that Serbia is currently elaborating some project ideas dealing with topics related to Priority Area 10. However, it proves to be challenging for Serbia to provide sufficient staff for the Steering Group Meetings. Serbia needs to make some changes in this regard, which are up to the National Coordinator. FILIPOVIC asks PAC 10 to contact the Serbian National Coordinator in order to activate Steering Group members.

Raluca LEVITSCHI (RO) mentions that this is her first participation as official member of the PA 10 Steering Group. Before the Steering Group Meeting, she met with the Romanian National Coordinator in order to discuss the option for organising a national Participation Day in Romania. The Participation Day could take place in the course of the Annual Forum organised by the Romanian National Coordinator.

Furthermore, Romania seeks to better link national funding instruments to the EUSDR. On 27 and 28 February 2017, a delegation led by the National Coordination met with Managing Authorities and the European Commission discussed the possibilities of include the EUSDR in national funding schemes. Both, the organisation of a national Participation Day and the link between the strategy and national funding instruments will be discussed during the inter-ministerial meeting on 20 March 2017. LEVITSCHI also pointed out that Romania project partners developed project ideas related to Priority Area 10. One project was submitted to the Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF). But there is also an on-going discussion on further projects.

ČEPON says that Slovenia started to implement the work plan according to the approved application for PAC Support, but will be getting more into detail when presenting the PAC 10 work plan for 2017. CEP recently opened a PA 10 Twitter Account¹ and attended the communication training of the Danube Transnational Programme in Budapest.

Claudia SINGER (PA 10/City of Vienna, AT) mentions that apart from the activities of PAC 10, which will be presented later at the meeting, Austria plans to organise its third national Participation Day in Eisenstadt. The event is planned to take place in fall and focuses on cooperation with universities and students. URSCHITZ adds that we may achieve PA 10's target II² in 2018 and thanks all members of the Steering Group for their active cooperation.

SCHICKER asks Blaga STANCHEVA (PAC 11, BG) to present the activities of EUSDR Priority Area 11 "Security" and therefore to include the agenda item on "Information on activities from other EUSDR PACs" in the *tour de table*.

STANCHEVA states that the work of EUSDR Priority Area 11 (PA11) is based on three pillars. First, PA 11 works in the field of police cooperation dealing with combatting terrorism, fighting trafficking in human beings and drug trafficking as well as domestic burglaries. In addition, PA 11 deals with border police cooperation, e.g. to ensure security of passengers and freight on the Danube. Second, PA 11 seeks to ensure the security of travel documents. Third, PA 11 promotes the rule of law and the fight against corruption.

STANCHEVA highlights that PA 11 is open for the cooperation with other Priority Areas and established good cooperation with PA 1a "Waterways Mobility" or PA 6 "Biodiversity and Landscapes" in the area of sturgeon protection. Furthermore, PA 11 is also cooperating with PA 10, e.g. in fighting against trafficking in human beings.

SCHICKER summarises that in all countries of the Danube Region processes of cooperation and capacity-building are going on dealing with the specific challenged of each country. SCHICKER asks if any of the Steering Group members has any questions to other participants on their activities. There are no further questions from the members of the Steering Group.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note of the activities and initiatives planned by the Steering Group in 2017.

¹ twitter.com/PA10_EUSDR

² Target II of EUSDR Priority Area 10: „80 % of participating countries involve the national, regional and local authorities and CSOs through annual National (provincial) EUSDR consultations in cooperation with the National Coordinators of the EUSDR”

EUSDR Annual Forum 2017

SCHICKER asks Patricia ABAFFY, if she has any detailed information on the up-coming EUSDR Annual Forum in Budapest from the EUSDR Presidency. ABAFFY negates having any further details of the forum from the EUSDR Presidency.

SCHICKER shortly presents that the EUSDR Annual Forum 2017 will take place on 18 and 19 October 2017. The forum will focus on renewable energy, transport mobility and connectivity.

Matija VILFAN (Danube Strategy Point - DSP, BE) adds that the DSP and the European Commission (EC) did a small evaluation of the EUSDR Annual Forum 2016. The main findings of this evaluation were that not all Priority Areas had the opportunity to present themselves and the results of the EUSDR Participation Day were not represented well enough at the Annual Forum. The DSP took these messages to the EUSDR Presidency in Budapest that took the findings seriously and thus, will include all Priority Areas in the agenda of the EUSDR Annual Forum.

The Hungarian Presidency also announced that – additional to the EUSDR Participation Day – there will be another event linked to civil society by the organisation European House in September. However, the majority of the National Coordinators of the EUSDR confirmed at the Meeting of EUSDR National Coordinators in February 2017 that the EUSDR Participation Day is the main event for civil society as it is embedded in the EUSDR structure. SCHICKER thanks him for the presentation. URSCHITZ asks, if there will be another draft proposal for the Annual Forum from the EUSDR Presidency any time soon. To the understanding of VILFAN, the EUSDR Presidency will soon provide another draft proposal of the agenda. There was also an agreement by the NCs that other countries also have a say in the agenda. Currently, it is planned that every pillar of the EUSDR will have a special workshop on funding.

If the members of the Steering Group or PACs would like to provide any input to the agenda of the Annual Forum, the DSP recommends approaching their National Coordinators until May/June, as there will be another round for discussion on the Annual Forum at the NC Meeting that will take place either on the 15 or 23 June 2017.

Ugo POLI (CEI, IT) wants to bring into consideration the recurring attention of the Danube Investment Facilities to the synergy between EUSDR and EUSAIR in the Balkan region in particular. Furthermore, a recent call from ESPON addressed the Danube and Adriatic-Ionian region on the territorial impact of migrations. Both strategies have to be considered, as there are some overlapping issues. POLI suggests a workshop for decision makers on the issue of these synergies for brainstorming and stock-taking activities.

SCHICKER appreciates the topic of funding and points out that the issue is relevant for all macro-regional strategies.

URSCHITZ adds that PAC 10 is drafting a statement on Cohesion Policy 2020+ in cooperation with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), INTERACT and the Danube Civil Society Forum (DCSF). A short part of this statement – referring to the involvement of civil society and the implementation of small scale funding that addresses the needs of stakeholders in the macro-regions – were presented at the meeting of the High Level Group in February 2017 as position of the Austrian *Länder*. The statement could possibly be integrated in the plans of the Hungarian EUSDR Presidency. The statement also addresses the question on how the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) should be adapted according to the needs of civil society. The draft statement will be disseminated with the minutes (see Annex IV).

SCHICKER asks if there are any comments or questions to the forthcoming EUSDR Annual Forum or the statement on Cohesion Policy 2020+ from the Steering Group. There are no further comments or questions for the Steering Group.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note of the information on the EUSDR Annual Forum 2017 in Budapest (HU).
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group were informed that all countries of the Danube Region are able to provide input for the agenda of the EUSDR Annual Forum. Any input should be communicated to the respective National Coordinator (NC) before mid-June, as the next NC Meeting will take place on 15 or 23 June (tbc).
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note that the Hungarian EUSDR Presidency will organise an event addressing civil society (“Civil Day”) in September in addition to the Danube Participation Day.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group approved the statement on Cohesion Policy 2020+ by PAC 10 as presented at the High Level Group Meeting in February 2017.

Update on macro-regional cooperation & EC Report on 4 MRS

Marco ONIDA (DG REGIO, European Commission - EC, BE) welcomes the members of the PA 10 Steering Group and apologises for not attending personally at the meeting. ONIDA points out that the European Commission currently cannot report on any up-dates concerning the future of Cohesion Policy as the debate is still going on. At the present time, there are no concrete ideas of how cohesion policy after 2020 will look like, as this is also dependent on the results of the BREXIT negotiations.

In regard to the European Commission’s report on the four Macro-regional Strategies (MRS) (see Annex V), ONIDA stresses that MRS are based on both a bottom-up approach and multi-level governance. However, there are a number of persisting challenges as policy planning at EU level and national level as well as the alignment of funds. The main projects – that are also represented in the EC’s publication on Success Stories in the Danube Region – come from different line DGs. It is crucial to show that there are different projects and processes going on. The crucial task for communication is to highlight these processes. The report documents the progress in the four MRS. The bottom-line is that the implementation is on a good track, but there are also critical issues such as the participation of the political level and within the Steering Groups. The questions arising from the report are: How can we make better use of the MRS for better coordination? How can we strengthen cooperation with neighbouring countries? Further, there are three questions for the conclusion of the report: 1) How can synergies with the ESIF be realised? 2) How should national programmes be further aligned with MRS or transnational programmes? 3) How could the governance structure be improved? The countries were reiterating the three NOs. They are a constituting element of the MRS, yet we still need to figure out how to improve existing structures. Currently, there is no common line on the questions of the report.

ONIDA confirms that the current framework of the Danube Strategy Point (DSP) will not be continued. The National Coordinators discussed the future of the DSP during their recent meeting in February. The result of the discussion was that the DSP should be continued. However, no country volunteered

to fulfil the task despite the Danube Transnational Programme provides financing³. ONIDA expresses his worries concerning the continuation of DSP tasks such as the EuroAccess Danube Region database, where we are facing a standstill of the project. Another task is the hosting of the EUSDR website, whose contracts will fade out in April. ONIDA further states that the European Commission cannot take care of these tasks due to the lack of personnel resources and hopes that a solution will be found. He also takes the opportunity to highlight that Priority Area 10 is in front line to overtake the DSP tasks with regards to the scope of activities in the Priority Area. SCHICKER suggests that if the European Commission as well as the representatives of the EUSDR governance wish that PAC 10 should fulfil the DSP's tasks, they can approach PAC 10 accordingly.

SCHICKER asks if there are any questions or comments regarding the presentation of the European Commission.

POLI wants to know if there are any considerations upon the goals of cohesion policy to integrate MRS in institutional reform processes of the EU in the light of the anniversary of the Rome Treaties. ONIDA answers that there are currently different discussion on this issue and the European Commission does not know yet about the outcomes.

SCHICKER thanks for the presentation of the European Commission and asks again for further questions and outcomes. There are no further requests to speak from the Steering Group members.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note that the discussion on the future of Cohesion Policy 2020+ is still open according to the European Commission.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note that there is an on-going discussion on the follow-up of the European Commission's report on the four macro-regional strategies.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note of the NC's opinion to continue with one or the other form of a DSP. The European Commission expresses its worries on the fact that by now no country of the Danube Region volunteered to fulfil the DSP function and takes the opportunity to highlight that DG REGIO sees PAC 10 in the front line to overtake the tasks.

DSP Work Plan 2017

VILFAN states that Baden-Württemberg decided to close down the current DSP project and not to continue the DSP. The current team of the DSP will be fully functional until May 2017. Afterwards, a team of three employees will be working until September 2017. The options for a new DSP are currently under discussion.

VILFAN reports that the DSP shared its draft work plan with the PACs for further amendment if deemed necessary and thanks Priority Area 10 for the contribution on possible activities to implement. The overall feedback on the work plan was good.

The DSP will work in the field of policy support for the PAs. For this purpose, there will be a horizontal exchange in early May. After identifying topics that cover several PAs, concrete initiatives, projects and ideas should be formulated. Subsequently, the DSP and the PACs define next steps in the cross-sectoral approach.

³ The Danube Transnational Programme provides 85% co-financing for the DSP project under Specific Objective 4.2.

The DSP proposed strategic projects to the National Coordinators for further endorsement. In February at the NC meeting, no decision was taken. However, the DSP was entitled to open a second round. The DSP will prepare a policy paper on how the strategic projects could be taken over and what to gain with a systematic labelling.

Furthermore, the DSP plans to support PACs in strategic planning, showing them how to plan smart and to transpose initiatives in targets and actions. Thus, the DSP will engage with external experts to help to shape the strategic focus. The workshop will take place in Bratislava in the end of April. With support of an external contractor, the DSP plans to carry out a mini review of the Participation Days. Possible issues to be examined might be the coordination mechanism of the Participation Day, if the strategy is bottom-up and whether and how the results of the initiative get to the PA and NC level.

The DSP plans to organise a workshop on cadastre and land register in cooperation with PAC 10 in Serbia and to assess the possibility to establish a future project.

Priority Area 1b plans to organise a conference on open data in cooperation with the DSP in Brussels in June 2017. Therefore, the DSP requests for the participation of PA 10, which should be represented at the conference due to the thematic scope.

The DSP appreciates the intervention to assess overlaps between MRS and deals with better communication of MRS.

Last, but not least, the EuroAccess Danube Region initiative should be continued and further developed to use its full potential. The DSP plans further to explore the implementation of partner search functions and consultancy services.

VILFAN announces that the DSP has various communication materials in the languages of the Danube countries. He encourages the members of the Steering Groups as well as PACs to contact the DSP⁴, if print products (e.g. publication on EUSDR success stories) are needed.

SCHICKER asks for questions or comments regarding the DSP work plan for 2017.

URSCHITZ mentions that PAC 10 recently started to develop a questionnaire on the Participation Days that will be shared with the DSP in order to complement the efforts. VILFAN appreciates the procedure and is glad, if there are some findings for the Meeting of National Coordinators in June.

POLI informs on the organisation on 12 July 2017 of the Trieste Summit of the WB Process (also known as Berlin Process) currently coordinated by Italy. The CEI is contributing to the initiative and its preparatory events. Parallel to the summit, there will be a large civil society forum organized by the European Fund for the Balkans. The aim of the forum is to relaunch civil society at large in order to prompt governmental commitment. This could be an interesting opportunity to connect the existing civil society fora and to push for a stronger consideration of MRS potential support to the Western Balkan Process. There was already a soft statement on the role of MRS in the Final Declaration of the Vienna Summit 2015, but this position should be reinforced in view of cohesion policy 2020+. ČEPON adds that the Centre for European Perspective is also part of the reflexion forum for the Trieste Summit and will organise a preparatory seminar in March, where it will use the opportunity to inform participants on MRS.

⁴ Contact details of the DSP Communication Officer: Sándor Blasko, e-mail: Sandor.Blasko@dsp.bwl.de

FILIPOVIC states that there is currently a new project with countries from the Western Balkan. The project aims promoting the countries of the Western Balkans in the EU so that citizens getting more acquainted with the region. The initiative involves representatives from civil society, research and public authorities and is implemented in coordination with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

SCHICKER concludes that – given the time remaining for the current DSP – the EUSDR might not have a direct replacement for the DSP this year. At the same time, the programme presented by the DSP is rather tight. SCHICKER highly appreciates the organisation of the horizontal meeting in May.

He mentions the first workshop on cadastre and land register in October 2016 and highlights the importance of the topic in terms of sound public administration, linking public and private activities, and transparency that is also a useful tool to fight corruption and, thus, can be linked to the work of PA 11. The second seminar is planned to be organised in cooperation with the DSP in Serbia. The agenda will be developed with the Centre for Public Administration Research that already accompanied the process during the first seminar. The topic also links to the conference on open data that is planned in Brussels.

SCHICKER points out that the contract between the European Commission and the City of Vienna for implementing EuroAccess Danube Region ended in 2016 and was expected to be continued by the DSP. Unfortunately, the DSP did not continue the contract yet as the DSP work plan has not been approved so far. This led to a big information gap in the funding database as no current calls can be up-dated. This proves to be a major problem and PA 10 hopes that this does not ruin the reputation of the EuroAccess Danube Region tool.

SCHICKER also thanks the DSP for informing the Steering Group on the communication material and calls all members of the Steering group on using the opportunity to disseminate information on the EUSDR if they wish to do so.

SCHICKER further asks when the work plan will be adopted? VILFAN replies that the work plan will be adopted via written procedure. The last day for comments by the National Coordinators is 10 March 2017. The DSP expects the adoption of the work plan by end of March or beginning of April if there are no objections.

VILFAN takes the opportunity to thank the present Priority Areas – PA 10 and PA 11 – for the good cooperation. He also invites everyone to look at the progress reports and the achievements accomplished in the Priority Areas.

SCHICKER asks the members of the Steering Group if there are any further questions or comments. There were no further comments or questions from the Steering Group.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note of the DSP work plan that was submitted to the National Coordinators and is expected to be adopted.

DTP Seed Money Facility

SINGER recalls that the Seed Money Facility of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) was presented at the 11th Meeting of the PA 10 Steering Group in Bucharest. The first call of the Seed Money Facility is planned to be launched in the end of September 2017. In November 2016, the PA 10 Steering Group endorsed five PA 10-related topics that should be addressed by the facility via written

procedure. PAC 10 submitted the topics to the DTP Joint Secretariat in February 2017. In the beginning of March 2017, the Joint Secretariat requested a revision of the topics in order to narrow them down and to submit them until 15 March 2017. Thus, PAC 10 presents the revised topics of PA 10 for the DTP Seed Money Facility (see Annex III) to the Steering Group for further discussion and endorsement.

FILIPOVIC comments that the principle of pre-financing of the DTP Seed Money Facility is a big problem for Serbian partners. Furthermore, she suggests to add the issue of Roma employment to the list as this is an important issue in Serbia. SINGER points out that employment is a Priority of Priority Area 9 “People & Skills” and therefore should be addressed by the responsible PA. In this regard, URSCHITZ proposes to approach PA 9 accordingly, which was agreed by FILIPOVIC.

FILIPOVIC suggests addressing “vulnerable groups” in general instead of Roma and refugees under the first topic. SINGER remarks that the target groups were narrowed down because of the discussion with the Joint Secretariat that stated that “vulnerable groups” is too broad a term. Jani KOZINA (Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, SI) suggest specifying different groups according to the definition for Europe 2020. FILIPOVIC supports the proposal.

SINGER asks to send comments, proposals or amendments to the revised topics for the DTP Seed Money Facility until 15 March 2017 so they can be included in the list. Furthermore, she point out that there will be most probably another call of the Seed Money Facility that offers the opportunity to adapt or revise the topics if deemed necessary.

Outcome:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group agree that topic one will extent the list of vulnerable groups (initially addressing Roma and refugees) as defined in the course of the Europe 2020 strategy.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group agree on sending any comments, further proposals and amendments on the revised topics to PAC 10 if deemed necessary until 15 March 2017.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note that PAC 10 will submit the revised topics to the Joint Secretariat on 15 March 2017.

Work plan 2017 of PAC 10

SINGER, URSCHITZ and ČEPON present the work plan of PA 10 for 2017 (see Annex III).

SINGER announces that in 2017 there will be two Steering Group Meetings. Apart from the present meeting in Berlin, a second meeting will be organised in Ljubljana in fall.

URSCHITZ recalls on the merging of the Urban Platform Danube Region (UPDR) with the Danube Local Actors Platform (D-LAP) that was presented and endorsed by the Steering Group subsequent to the last Steering Group Meeting in November 2016 as the platforms were working on many joint issues. Furthermore, PAC 10 is currently elaborating an Agenda for Civil Society and Local Actors in the MRS with experts from the EUSBSR, EUSDR, INTERACT, CEI and EESC that includes a programme, a clear aim and a calendar that will be set-up. The drafting group is currently in the finishing movements of a short paper that PAC 10 will send to the Steering Group members for further use. The agenda should reinforce two messages: 1) local actors need to be included in the development of regional policy; 2) Suitable funding is crucial for integrating civil society in regional development. The draft paper is expected to be finalised in June 2017.

PAC 10 is also working on a statement on cohesion policy 2020+. The statement addresses amongst others the need of small project funding and suitable seed money facilities. The paper will be provided to the Steering Group. In general, the discussion on Cohesion Policy 2020+ is well under way and there are presently over 20 statements from European regions. Thus, URSCHITZ points out that it was high time, that the EUSDR drafts statement. The EUSBSR already drafted its statement, which is well elaborated and will be acknowledged in regard to the EUSDR statement.

URSCHITZ states that on the D-LAP Meeting on 21 March, PAC 10 discusses new developments with the members and will present and discuss the draft agenda for the EUSDR Participation Day 2017. There will be an open and transparent discussion on the organisation and agenda of the event, where comments and amendments of the D-LAP members are collected and considered in the further planning. This year, the Participation Day will be also supported by the Baden-Württemberg Foundation.

The EUSDR Participation Day 2017 will take place on 17 October 2017 at the Andrassy University in Budapest. As the Andrassy University is host and partner of this year's Participation Day, there will be a thematic focus on science. But the event is also dealing with topics addressed at the EUSDR Annual Forum 2017. URSCHITZ presents the proposals for thematic workshops⁵.

URSCHITZ recalls that PAC 10 developed a one page implementation manual on how to organise a national Participation Day and announces that currently, there are six national Participation Days planned for 2017 (see Annex III). URSCHITZ points out that PAC 10 gladly supports countries and regions to implement a national Participation Day that can be adapted according to the needs of each partner as it is a flexible format. She further mentions that PAC 10 made good experiences with the past national Participation Days. PAC 10 also prepares a Cooperation Conference in close cooperation with the Republic of Moldova and Romania. The conference addresses the topic of private funding by big donors and seeks to facilitate better coordination of funding objectives in a given region. The conference should be a pilot for further cooperation in the entire Danube Region. ČEPON reports that PAC 10 will organise a preparatory seminar for the D-CAHT project in Ljubljana to raise awareness of the topic at local authorities in the Western Balkan region. The findings of the seminar will be included in the subsequent D-CAHT seminar organised in Vienna.

ČEPON announces that in spring, PAC 10 organises an event to enhance cooperation among stakeholders in the Danube Region. The event will inform on funding opportunities in the EU and Danube Region and provide the opportunity for networking. Potential participants will have to submit a proposal and will be selected for joining the conference. In September, PAC 10 organises the Bled Strategic Forum that brings together representatives from politics, business, academia and young people. The first three days are devoted to young experts. The topic of this year's forum will be "New realities". The members of the Steering Group are encouraged to send their suggestions for speakers (preferably at ministerial level or similar) to PAC 10-CEP.

SINGER presents two activities related to the alignment of funds. In May 2017, PAC 10 will organise the third Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region in cooperation with Priority Area 9 in Vienna. The meeting is aiming at promoting transnational cooperation to ESF Managing Authorities and at raising further awareness of the EUSDR in the ESIF. The second activity addresses better

⁵ The topics of the proposed workshops may be adapted according to the results of the discussion at the D-LAP Meeting on 21 March 2017.

cooperation between different ESIF programmes and MRS concerning thematic objective 11⁶. PAC 10 will be cooperating together with INTERACT and representatives from the ESIF and other MRS in order to better implement the objective.

ČEPON refers to the workshops and seminars of the Centre for Excellence in Finance that address institutional capacity building in the Danube Region. ČEPON also announces the EU Macro-regional Strategies Conference on Media and Communication that will take place in September or October 2017.

SCHICKER asks if there are any questions or comments to the work plan. There are no further questions, comments or objections to the planned PAC 10 activities in 2017.

SINGER makes a plea to the members of the Steering Group for communicating any activities related to PA 10 (events, projects etc.) to the PACs in order to better disseminate and communicate the information at macro-regional level.

Blaž BARBORIC (Geodetic Institute of Slovenia, SI) adds that the Danube Transnational Programme implements a Capitalisation Strategy. Against this background, the project partners of the approved DTP projects will organise joint events and will keep PA 10 community informed on their activities.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note of and endorse on the work plan 2017 of PAC 10.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note of the progress on the elaboration of the Agenda for Civil Society
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note on and endorse the proceedings concerning the organisation of the EUSDR Participation Day 2017.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group may send suggestions for speakers for the Participation Day as well as for the Bled Strategic Forum to the PACs.
- PAC 10 encourages the Steering Group members to send information on PA 10 related activities (events, projects etc.) to PAC 10 for further communication/dissemination etc.

Up-date on the Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF)

SCHICKER presents an up-date to the Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF), recalling the general information on the funding facility, discussing the timetable as well as the applications submitted to the DSPF in each Priority Area (see Annex V). SCHICKER also mentions that the healing procedure for formal corrections will end by the middle of next week. The meeting of the Advisory Board will take place in the second week of May in order to finalise the first step of the selection procedure. Subsequently, the jury will have to select out of 15 projects.

POLI points out that the CEI submitted an application to the DSPF and therefore abstain from voting within the DSPF Advisory Board.

SCHICKER presents the applications submitted under PA 10 (see Annex VI) and mentions that despite five out of nine projects were agreed upon for recommendation to the Advisory Board by the Steering Group, all applications will be available to the Advisory Board. ČEPON asks why the Advisory Board will

⁶ Thematic objective 11 of the programming period 2014-2020: “Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration”

get all applications. SCHICKER explains that the Advisory Board shall have access to all applications for the pre-assessment process.

SCHICKER asks if there are any further questions or comments to the DSPF.

POLI remarks that the CEI disseminated the information on the issuing of DSPF call, but recorded that also prominent organisations faced difficulties to deal with the objectives of the DSPF because of its geographical scope. As the CEI is covering both the EUSDR and the EUSAIR, it was fine with this scope.

Outcomes:

- The Steering Group takes note that 56 projects were submitted to the DSPF of which 9 projects were related to PA 10. 5 of the 9 PA 10 related applications were recommended for further assessment by the Steering Group via written procedure.
- CEI announced that it cannot be part of the pre-selection assessment as it is partner to a project submitted to the DSPF.

Presentation of DTP projects

SINGER states that PA 10 is taking part in the Capitalisation Strategy of the DTP. The strategy is addressing 11 thematic poles and PA 10 is part of the two thematic poles dealing with “Migration” and “Participatory Governance”. Currently, the strategy encompasses the approved DTP projects but any project, organisation and/or stakeholder who is interested in the topics is welcome to take part in the strategy. In order to present the PA 10 related initiatives and projects in place, PAC 10 invited three project partners⁷ to present their projects to the Steering Group. PAC 10 is involved in two of them as Associated Strategic partner⁸. In the up-coming Steering Group meetings, further projects will be presented. Also, PAC 10 wants to keep the Steering Group posted on the findings of the present projects.

BARBORIC presents the project “Attractive Danube” (see Annex VII)

KOZINA presents the project “AgriGo4Cities” (see Annex VIII).

SINGER concludes that the project presentations offer the opportunity to learn of existing initiatives and to follow their progress and use their findings as well as to provide input. POLI appreciates the initiative of PAC 10 to provide the opportunity to hear from concrete consistent initiatives.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group take note of the opportunity to take part in the DTP Capitalisation Strategy.

EUSDR Narrative

SCHICKER opens the discussion on a (new) narrative of the Danube Region. Following the discussion at EU level and the developments within the Danube Region, we should ask the question whether we

⁷ Only two projects were presented as the third project partner (Karin Rainer, AEI – “CrowdStream” could not attend the meeting due to the strike at the airport Berlin Tegel.

⁸ PAC 10 (City of Vienna) is Associated Strategic Partner in the project „CrowdStream“ and „ATTRACTIVE DANUBE“.

need a Danube Region as it is currently conceptualised. According to a study by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies for economic and geopolitical reasons, it makes sense to address this region and is crucial for the whole European Union because of manifold geopolitical interests of Russia, Turkey, Arabian countries and China. Against this background, PA 10 it should be discussed whether we should develop a common narrative on the Danube Region. SCHICKER asks if the members of the Steering Group are interested that PAC 10 should continue the development of a narrative including the Steering Group in the process.

HOLZNER points out that it is very difficult to have a common narrative. Baden-Württemberg started to focus on story telling so that the Danube Region and the strategy become more tangible for citizens. However, HOLZNER is reluctant to the idea of finding one narrative but likes to be contradicted and thus would be interested in being included in the development of such a narrative. He agrees that the geopolitical aspect is very essential and that the European Union seems to undersell itself, which could be dangerous in the long run.

POLI remarks that a good narrative is the challenge for cohesion policy and pivotal for its recovery. A better fine-tuned panel of tools is needed that properly address the specific features of unbalanced regional development between EU members and non-EU members.

SCHICKER concludes that the common narrative should provide a common picture of the region and shape future discussions on funding. SCHICKER asks if the Steering Group has any further comments or objections to the issue. There are no further comments or objections.

Outcomes:

- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group endorse further proceeding in regard to jointly developing a common narrative to the Danube Region.
- The members of the PA 10 Steering Group reaffirm the importance of a common narrative to communicate better the strategy and its benefits for the citizens.

Discussion & Outlook

SCHICKER briefly summarises the discussions of the meeting and asks for any concluding remarks or objections to the topics discussed? There are no further comments or objections from the members of the Steering Group.

ČEPON asks the DSP to reconsider the potential dates for the horizontal workshop, as there are already many events in the beginning of May. VILFAN replies that the DSP tries to fix a suitable date, but it will be difficult to find a date that suits all 24 PACs.

SINGER announces that the CoDCR will have its annual conference on 26 and 27 April 2017 in Ulm.

SINGER mentions that PAC 10 is planning to re-organise the content of the PA 10 website in order to present the information more user friendly. PAC 10 currently elaborates the draft concept that will be sent to the Steering Group.

SCHICKER closes the 12th meeting of the PA 10 Steering Group.