

8th International Stakeholder Conference of Priority Area 9 “People and Skills” of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region - ONLINE

Smart and Social Responses to the Crisis: How Education, Training and Labour Market Policies can Contribute towards a Resilient Danube Region

Date: Thursday, 18 June 2020

Format: Online conference about challenges and future priorities with respect to developing effective approaches to skills and labour market policies and related projects. Participants are invited to bring along questions, ideas, and initiatives. Prior to the event participants will receive two online key note inputs for the conference.

Hosted by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Family and Youth and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (Republic of Austria).

By adopting a new Action Plan in April 2020, the countries of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) have given themselves a new strategic framework for cooperation in the coming years. This important step was taken at the edge of major pan-European developments:

- The ongoing Corona crisis has put significant stress on the labour market and education systems and institutions in the Danube Region. Unemployment, major changes to how we learn, teach, communicate and collaborate within educational systems and socio-economic challenges are only some of the societal symptoms of the crisis. With widening social gaps and the existing digital divide, disadvantaged and marginalised groups in the Danube region are at a particular risk of exclusion.
- Within the upcoming new multi-annual financial framework (2021-2027) new opportunities might arise to invest in a smarter and social Danube Region. Bringing together EU Member States and their partner countries in the Danube region in a joint endeavour, the EUSDR’s objectives contribute to improving the quality of people’s lives through integration and cooperation across borders.
- The Danube Region needs to strengthen its economic and social performance. Adopted in 2017, the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) provides a new framework for equal opportunities and access to the labour market and education and training, as well as fair working conditions, social protection and inclusion. It should bring fairness into every citizen’s life.
- The European Green Deal (adopted in 2019) aims at a climate-neutral European Union and puts sustainability – in all of its senses – and the well-being of citizens at the centre of European action.
- The European Strategic Agenda (adopted in 2019) intends to build a green, fair and social Europe with a vibrant economic base.

In order to cope with the ongoing crisis, digital skills as well as sound responses to an ever-changing labour market are needed. Achieving the European Education Area, the updated Skills Agenda, the new Digital Education Action Plan and the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion to be presented by the European Commission in 2020, will be important points of reference for further steps. The 8th International Stakeholder Conference of PA9 takes stock of existing initiatives and developments and discuss how cooperation in education and training as well as labour market policies can contribute to a strong, social and resilient Danube Region.

Selection of questions to be discussed

- What impact does the crisis have on the labour markets and education systems in the Danube Region?
- Learning and working from home: what does this mean for employees, students and teachers?
- What effects can be seen for disadvantaged groups and the existing digital divide?
- What are main lessons learnt from the crisis for strong and resilient labour markets and education systems in the Danube Region?

Key note inputs will be made available for the participants prior to the online conference

- Tracey Burns, Senior Analyst, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD
- Action Group 3, led by Autonomous Province of Trento, EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

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09.45 **Setting up and checking in**

Click on the meeting link, set up your settings and get familiar with the meeting tool

10.00 **Start of conference**

Welcome and introductory words

10.10 **Welcome to the meeting**

- Roland Hanak, Priority Area Coordinator, Federal Ministry of Labour, Family and Youth, Austria
- Jürgen Schick, Priority Area Coordinator, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria
- Valeriya Izhyk, Priority Area Coordinator, Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine
- Anna Gherganova, Priority Area Coordinator, Ministry of Health, Labor, Social Protection, Republic of Moldova

10.30 **Panel discussion**

‘Challenges of and responses to the crisis in the field of labour market and education systems’

- Katarina Ivanković-Knežević, Director of Social Affairs, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission
- Stefaan Hermans, Director of Policy Strategy and Evaluation in the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission
- Tina Šarić, Director of Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) Secretariat
- Hermine Vidovic, Senior Economist, The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw)
- Stephan Waba, Deputy Head IT Didactics, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria
- Moderator: Jörg Mirtl, L&R Social Research, Vienna

Including a break from 11.15 to 11.30

12.00 **Q&A**

Ask your question to the panel or a specific expert via the chat function

12.45 **Closing Remarks and Outlook**

13.00 **End of Conference**