

EUSDR | PA9 - People and Skills

Rolling Work Programme "Education and training, labour market and marginalized communities"

November 2023

I. Roles and responsibilities

The PA9 Work Programme is envisioned to be implemented in particular through the proceedings of PA9 Steering Group meetings, working group sessions, stakeholder conferences and through the implementation of projects and work in networks on the ground. Successful execution of the Work Programme will require commitment and concerted effort from all stakeholders directly involved in the process.

II. Overall objectives and activities

In efforts to meet the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and in accordance with GAC Conclusions of 13 April 2011, PA9 plans to engage in the following activities:

Coordination

- Fulfilling tasks towards the EC and relevant ministries in the participating states in regards to reporting, participating in working meetings etc.
- Providing a platform for exchanging and coordinating initiatives, stakeholders, policy processes and information.
- Establishing and maintaining a network consisting of the national counterparts relevant to the Priority Area Coordinators.
- Identifying the possible relevant stakeholders, with particular emphasis on Project Leaders.
- Finding agreement on realistic and feasible targets relevant to the macro-region with the involvement of the Commission and all relevant stakeholders.

Implementation

- Working on the implementation of PA actions, in close contact with the EC and relevant EU agencies, together with relevant stakeholders at different territorial level and of different background.
- Initiating new projects and initiatives in the eight related actions.
- Providing assistance to Lead Partners in order to facilitate the implementation of projects and further development as well as screening of project ideas. This assistance emphasizes available European funding opportunities and makes use of already existing sources of information.
- Compiling a list of on-going projects and possible project ideas under the Priority Area.
- Organising thematic (policy) workshops.
- Fulfilling tasks with regard to specific EUSDR funding facilities.

Communication

- Providing relevant information on the Strategy to the stakeholders and citizens, including to associate civil society concerned and to promote public awareness.
- Promoting the EUSDR/PA9 at relevant conferences and events primarily within the Danube Region but if relevant also in other countries.
- Continuously updating the PA9 website and spreading information on Social Media channels.

<p>Overall outputs and events in cooperation with SG (please refer below for specific work area related activities)</p>	<p><u>Meetings and events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 meetings of PA9 Steering Group (June, Dec. 2011; June, Nov. 2012; May, Oct. 2013; May, Nov. 2014; May 2015, March, Oct. 2016; June, Oct. 2017; June, Nov. 2018; May, October 2019; June, Nov. 2020 (online); May, Nov. 2021 (online), June 2022, November 2022 (online), June 2023 (online), Nov. 2023 (online))• 11 Stakeholder Conferences, each with up to 160 international participants, partially Minister's level: June 2012, December 2013, November 2014, October 2016 in Vienna, October 2017 in Chisinau, November 2018 in Vienna, October 2019 in Chisinau, June 2020 online, June 2021 online, June 2022 in Vienna and online, November 2023 online• PAC participation in relevant events on EU and regional level (e.g. Annual Fora, PAC and NC-PAC meetings, ERI SEE, CECE, ETF ENE), ongoing• Contribution to the Thematic Events in the framework of the Annual Forums/Presidencies of the EUSDR: November 2012, October 2013, June 2014, November 2015, November 2016, October 2017, October 2018, June 2019, October 2021, September 2022, May 2023• 8 meetings of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region, Munich, 7/8 July 2016; Vienna, 4/5 May 2017; Bratislava, 17/20 September 2018; Sofia, October 2019; Vienna, March 2020; December 2020 online; June 2021 online, December 2021 online, 4 July 2022• 12 eTwinning/Erasmus+ Conferences on School Cooperation in the Danube Region (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)• European Week of Regions and Cities, Thematic Workshop 'Skills for the Future of European Macro-Regions', 10 October 2023• Macro-regional week, Presentation of SI PLUS project, 8 March 2022• Meeting of macro-regional coordinators: "Macro-regional response to economic challenges: mobilising and building support measures", April 2020 (online); follow-up meetings in May and June 2020• EUSDR Youth Platform, December 2014, May 2016, December 2018, regular meetings of the core group for the youth manifesto• 'Meeting Macro-regional strategies as strategic frameworks for ESIF post-2020' on 27 March 2019 in Brussels• Thematic Workshop 'Solving future skills challenges in the Danube region', June 2019• Danube Civil Society Forum (DCSF) Participation Day (in cooperation with PA10): June 2014, October 2017 (Workshop Roma Empowerment), October 2018, October 2020• Meeting of Coordinators of Social Policy in Macro-Regional Strategies (EUSDR, EUSBSR and EUSALP) to strengthen the social dimension within macro-regional strategies, Stockholm 16 March 2023, presentation at the EUSBSR ESF MA Network; Bratislava 20/21 September 2018; Meeting of PA9 EUSDR,
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EUSBSR and EUSALP with ESF Committees, Brussels December 2018

- Presentation of PA9/EUSDR at the EUSAIR Forum in Sarajevo May 2023
- Interact capitalisation network, June 2021

Reports

- **‘Danube Region Monitor’: Preparation Workshop** in December 2017, contracting study September 2018; Workshop Discussion of Results in May 2019; **Publication of the Danube Region Monitor ‘People and Skills’ by the end of 2019**
- **Danube Region Monitor II:** Workshop Discussion of Results in March 2022; publication of the 2021 update in May 2022
- **PA9 Progress reports** 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 (2x), 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 (2x), 2021 (2x), 2022 (2x)
- **Contribution to the European Commission report on the implementation of the EU macro-regional strategies** 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022

Policy development

- **Revision of the Action Plan** of PA9, completed in April 2020
- Identifying three **strategic priorities of EUSDR PA9** for the embedding in the new EU programmes 2021-2027 and the 2nd Seed Money Facility Call
- Submission of the **PA9-DTP-PAC-Coordination Project** (October 2019) and of the **DRP-PAC-PA 9-Coordination Project** (September 2022)
- **Joint proposals of the Priority Areas 7_8_9** of the EUSDR on “Better embedding of the EUSDR’s prosperity pillar into suitable funding instruments within the new MFF (2021-2027)” (November 2018)
- **Revision of PA9 targets** and actions, 2016
- **Position paper** "Proposals for integrating education and training and ensuring a social dimension in the future programme" for the ETC DANUBE Transnational 2014-2020
- **Capitalization Strategy** of the Danube Transnational Programme **Pole 9 “Educational Governance”** and **Pole 10 “Migration and Inclusive Governance”**
- **Strategic meeting** of Working Groups related to education (Working Groups 1, 3, 4, 5), October 2012
- Agreement on and further development of **PA9 targets and objectives**, 2011
- **Workshop Conclusions** in the framework of the 4th Annual Forum of the EUSDR on "Enhancing skills and competences through educational cooperation", "Labour Market Know-How Exchange in the Danube Region" and "Roma and Sinti: Participation as a key to empowerment", Ulm, November 2015
- **Conclusions of the Strategic Meeting** “Fostering Cooperation and Institutional Capacity for Roma Integration in the Danube Region”, Vienna, 9-10 October 2014
- **Workshop Conclusions** on "Investing in inclusive and innovative education and training for better socio-economic outcomes", June 2014

Communication

- **Mapping and labelling** of existing and new projects and initiatives, 2011 and ongoing
- Identification of PA9 **Danube Region Flagship initiatives**, 2022 and ongoing
- Running of **PA9 website**, ongoing (<https://peopleandskills.danube-region.eu/>)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Media (Informing stakeholders about events, calls and other activities through social media channels such as Facebook and YouTube) • PA9 Project Folder (1st edition June 2014, 2nd edition June 2015, 3rd edition September 2016, 4th edition September 2018) • PA9 Info Folder 2019 • PA9 Publication on the occasion of 10 years of EUSDR/PA9 implementation, published in June 2022 • 2022 update of the 'Danube Region Monitor' and creation of an online database • Production of two videos on PA9, published on Youtube and the PA9 website
Next steps and planned outputs (please refer below for specific work area related activities)	<p><u>2024</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of the 12th PA9 Stakeholder Conference and the 26th PA9 Steering Group meeting • Contribution to the objective of boosting skills and competences during the Austrian EUSDR presidency • Cooperation with other PAs in the framework of selected meetings • Update of the Danube Region Monitor • Facilitating the development of new projects • Identification of PA9 Danube Region Flagship initiatives • Mapping and labelling of new projects and initiatives • Communication activities (Running of PA9 website, updating social media channels, project folder, ...)

III. Actions

ACTION 1: Intensify Cooperation in Labour Market Policies

Description: By intensifying the cooperation between labour market stakeholders' reforms will be enhanced. The focus will be on active labour market policies, common peer learning/peer counselling in the Danube Region, skills mismatch, labour market information systems, vocational re-education and re-training, dual education as a measure of active labour market policies, transition from school to work.

TARGET: Continue the cross-border dialogue by maintaining at least one Network-Meeting, one Peer Learning Meeting or one Stakeholder Conference per year.

Key projects, outputs and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apr 2008 - Jun 2014: Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austro-Hungarian Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.HU) (Lead: AT – L&R Social Research) • Nov 2009 - Dec 2014: Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austrian-Slovenian Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.SI) (Lead: AT – L&R Social Research) • Bilateral Exchange in Labour Market Policy Austria - Moldova (ongoing) (Lead: AT – L&R Social Research) • Dec 2012 - May 2014: Virtual Education Network Austria-Bulgaria (Lead: AT – ÖSB Consulting) • Oct 2013 - Jan 2015: Virtual Qualification Network with Romania (Lead: AT – ÖSB Consulting)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar 2013 - Feb 2015: Bilateral Exchange in Labour Market Policy Austria – Ukraine (Lead: AT – ÖSB Consulting) • 2013 - 2016: Labour Market Policy Measures for the Austrian-Moldovan Cooperation within the Construction Industry (Lead: AT – L&R Social Research) • 2017 - 2019: New Danubian Governance in Labour Market Relevance of Higher-Education (EDU-LAB) (Lead: GE – European Foundation of Education) • 2017 - 2018: Feasibility Study on the Topic: Labour Foundations in South-Eastern Europe – Needs and Implementation Options (Lead: FAB – Verein zur Förderung von Arbeit und Bildung) • January 2017 - June 2019 Learning by Doing – Targeted capacity building of VET partnerships in the Danube region for the effective modernisation of VET systems (Lead: Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry) • 2017 - 2019: Joint Opportunities in Business for Youth (JOBS4Youth) (Lead: Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises, Sector Development) • 2017 - 2019: Strengthening Social Entrepreneurial Landscape through Involving Socially Responsible Corporate Practices in Entrepreneurial Competences and Skills Enhancement in the Danube Region (SENSES) (Lead: IFKA Public Benefit Non-Profit Ltd. For the Development of the Industry) • 2018 - 2023: Labour Market Policy Support Programme for the Republic of Moldova (Lead: L&R Social Research) • Workshop 'Creating a more Efficient Labor Market in the Danube Region' (22 May 2019, Chisinau) • Workshop Solving Future Skills Challenges in the Danube Region' in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova on 11/12 June 2019 • Workshop “Empowering People with Disabilities through Employment Support” (23/24 October 2019, Chisinau) • Meeting of the Network “ESF-Managing Authorities in the Danube Region” (19/20 September, Bratislava; 8/9 October 2019, Sofia; 9/10 March 2020, Vienna, December 2020 online, June and December 2021 online, 3 July 2022, Vienna) • 2021 - 2023: Social Innovation Plus – Competence Centres (Lead: Austria together with Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia and Baden-Württemberg) <p>Projects in Bulgaria of the ESF OP Human Resources Development (2014-2020) – Component 2 “Transnational and Danube Partnerships for employment and growth”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulgarian-Romanian Network for social innovations in the garment industry, BM 88 EOOD • Support to employment in the water sector, cooperation BG/HU, Bulgarian Water association
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border innovative models for tourism, cooperation BG/RO/BE, SD 2016 EOOD • Transfer of innovative practices in the area of management and brokering of real estates, Emerald-Nadezdha EOOD • Social innovations in extraction of aggregates and manufacturing of concrete mixes, transfer of practices from countries in the Danube region, Evroistroi V.Tamovo LTD <p>Project in Romania in the ESF OP Human Capital 2014-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ReCONNECT - ADAPTATION TO CHANGE – Integrated anticipation, monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the labor market and education (National Employment Agency)
<p>Next steps, planned outputs and projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of the ESF Managing Authorities in autumn 2023 in cooperation with PA10

ACTION 2: Digitalisation and Innovation in the World of Work

Description: To avoid the digital divide (by age, gender, region, high and low skilled work) on labour markets in the Danube Region there will be a focus on the following activities: reduce the lack of knowledge and skills in IT, exchange and development of common social security standards for platform and crowd work, necessary adaptations of existing labour law in the Danube Region.

TARGET: Implement and maintain a "Working Group Digitalisation" together with Social Partners (one meeting per year)

<p>Key projects, outputs and events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 - 2019: Danube@work (Lead: Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB)) • 2019 - 2021: Capacity Building in Digitization for Women in Danube Region (Baden-Württemberg Foundation) • 2014 – 2020 INTERREG V-A Austria – Hungary DigiUp 4.0 Upskilling - Digital competences of young people to counteract skills shortage in the industry 4.0 (translated by PA9) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania – Bulgaria MOBGIRU Integrated employment interventions in the Border Cooperation Region, Giurgiu - Ruse • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania – Bulgaria MOWEUP MObility of Workers and unEmployed Upgrade • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia – Hungary Smart Communities - Virtual Education and Research and Development and Innovation Network in the Slovakian - Hungarian border region • 2020 - 2021: Digital Danube Network. An international cooperation between trade unions and social partners in the Danube region (Lead ÖGB Austria) • 2021 - 2022: DIGI-O - Offensive for new jobs through digitalization in the Austrian- Hungarian border region. (Lead: L&R Social Research)
<p>Next steps, planned outputs and projects</p>	<p>Establishment of a network of Social Partners</p>

ACTION 3: Integration of Vulnerable Groups into the Labour Market

Description: We define vulnerable groups as persons belonging or perceived to belong to groups that are in a disadvantaged position or that are marginalised. The future activities will focus on: tailor made measures and projects developed with the concerned groups, e.g. case management, subsidies to keep up employment or new models of entrepreneurship for unemployed, social entrepreneurship, or targeted measures for young people to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

TARGET: Implement a "Network Empowering Roma" together with PA10 (one meeting per year).

<p>Key projects, outputs and events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing: European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds (EU Roma) • Feb 2015 - Sep 2015: THARA – Amaro Than (Lead: AT – Volkshilfe Österreich) • Ongoing: ESRA - Hungarian Product and Cultural Fund as umbrella organisation, modelled on the experiences of a well-functioning Hungarian Product and Cultural Fund operation. (Lead: HU, ESRA) • Strategic Meeting “Fostering Cooperation and Institutional Capacity for Roma Integration in the Danube Region”, Vienna, (9-10 October 2014) • EU Roma Network Meeting, Vienna, (27th/28th November 2014) • Workshop on East West Cooperation for Roma Integration, organised by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, 26th March 2015 • 2017 - 2019: Changing Discourses, Changing Practices: The Roma as Human Resource (RARE) (Lead: HU Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESFRomaEmpowerment Projects in Austria • From 2022 onwards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o THARA PASO PO PASO: Future step by step. Volkshilfe Austria, Vienna o NEVO DROM - New Path, Adult Education Center Vienna o VA A AN - Hand in Hand, Caritas Salzburg o OPRE ROMNJA - Let's go! Career guidance center, itworks GesmbH, Vienna o ROMA EMPOWERMENT FOR RETAIL SALES, BFI Vienna o EMRO - Empowerment for Roma and Romnia, Caritas Graz o PRADO DROM - My path to success, Trendwerk Oberwart o (2016-2019): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Laco Drom – Good Way, Mentor Management Entwicklungs Organisation GmbH & Co OG o Support at Authorities and early childhood education for Roma and migrants furthest from the labour market, Verein Vida Pavlovic o Maro drom - Our way. Project for Integration of Roma and Sinti in Upper Austria, Volkshilfe Oberösterreich o Roma / Romni Qualification- and Counselling Center for Roma, Itworks / Kulturverein österreichischer Roma
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- **THARA Romani Zor! Future – Empowerment of Roma!** Volkshilfe Österreich
- **Cambro: Open Space for Learning and Counselling**, Caritas der Erzdiözese Wien
- **ROMANO ZURALIPE**, Programme for Empowerment from Roma and Romnja on the Labour Market, Romano Centro
- **ZORROM** - Empowerment, Caritas der Diözese Graz-Seckau
- **Recognition, Competence and Information**, Centre for Social Innovation
- **Dumo Ikeriba** – Empowerment of Roma in the Labour Market, Phurdo Salzburg – Centre for Roma and Sinti

Projects in Bulgaria of the ESF OP Human Resources Development (2014-2020) – Component 2 “Transnational and Danube Partnerships for employment and growth”

- **Bulgarian Medical Association and the Danube partnerships for exchange of innovative practices and experiences**, Improvement of the socio-economic situation (health, equal opportunities and non-discrimination) of marginalized groups, exchange of experience at the BG-RO border, Bulgarian Medical Association
- **Social Innovations for a more efficient social inclusion of disadvantaged Roma women**, cooperation with the State Ministry of Baden-Württemberg, Integro Association
- **Agents of Change**, innovative models for the integration of NEETS, United Partners
- **Innovative educational center**, innovative practices in HR in the Danube Region, Association “Bocaya”

Interreg projects:

- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania – Bulgaria CBC **LABORLAB Developing an integrated and inclusive labor market at cross-border level**
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania – Bulgaria **Combined Efforts in Support to Disadvantaged People on the Labour Market in the Cross-Border Area**
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania – Hungary **CHESST START RO-HU Joint development of a cross-border chess-based social inclusion tool**
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania – Hungary **Verba Docent Adult education in the field of healthy life and sustainable living environment**
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovenia - Croatia **2SoKroG "Social activation to ensure a healthy, safe and more accessible cross-border area Social activation to ensure a healthy, safe and accessible border area"**
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovenia – Hungary **Establishing an age-friendly region in the border region by developing long-term cooperation to promote safe and active aging**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube DTP1-161-4.1 YOUMIG Improving institutional capacities and fostering cooperation to tackle the impacts of transnational youth migration • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube DTP1-183-4.1 DRIM Danube Region Information Platform for Economic Integration of Migrants • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube DTP1-320-4.1 RARE Changing Discourses, Changing Practices: The Roma as Human Resource • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube DREAM ROAD: Danube REgion for improved Access and Mpowerment of ROmA Development • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube Integrated Innovative Systems for Roma Education and Labour Inclusion Support to National Policies for Inclusion of Roma and Marginalized Groups in Education and Labour Market through Promoting Innovative Systems, Integrating Mainstream and Community Development Interventions (Lead: BG – C.E.G.A.) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube RISE FREE Reaching for Inclusiveness and Improved Skills through ICT-enabled Education, fostering Refugees´ Employability and Entrepreneurship • 2018 - 2019: Support to National Policies for Inclusion of Roma and Marginalized Groups in Education and Labor Market Through Promoting Innovative Systems, Integrating Mainstream and Community Development Interventions (Lead: BG – C.E.G.A.) • 2015 - 2016: ROMAEDU – DANUBE - Integration of Roma Children into Education System – Countries of Danube Region (Lead: SI – Institute for Romological Studies, Education and Culture) <p>Projects funded by the “Perspektive Donau” programme of Baden-Württemberg-Stiftung fostering the integration of Roma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity Building for Roma families in Belgrade (mother centers) 2017-2020 • Capacity Building for Roma women in Viscri, 2017-2020
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ACTION 4: Fighting Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion for All

Description: Concrete issues of this action are: empowering groups at risk of poverty to get access to the labour market, actions to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty will complement each other and apply on integrated approaches, therefore long-term policies are needed, diversification of social services and measures developed together with people at risk of poverty.

TARGET: Continue the cross-border dialogue by maintaining at least one Network-Meeting, one PeerLearning one Stakeholder Conference per year.

Key projects, outputs and events	<p>Interreg projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania – Bulgaria RN4SC Regional Network for Social Cohesion• 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Czech Republic - C855 - A common path to a new home• 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovenia - Austria INVOLVED Soziale Integration arbeitsmarktferner und ausgrenzungsgefährdeter Menschen durch ehrenamtliches Engagement und neue Formen der Beschäftigung• 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovenia - Austria REGIO HELP Improving bilateral regional social and health management to strengthen social cohesion [Unofficial translation provided by Interact]• 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovenia - Croatia STAR - Age without borders• 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube ActiveHome - Activation of homeless <p>ESF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2016-2019: Bridging Young Roma and Business: Intervention for inclusion of Roma youth through employment in the private sector in Bulgaria and Hungary (Bridge to Business) <p>Publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balázs Benjámín Budai / Mátyás Gáspár: A proposal to solve two critical social problems as part of the digital transformation. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, 2021.
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ACTION 5: Quality and Efficiency of Education and Training Systems

Description: Concrete issues of this action are:

- enhancing the anticipation of skills needs and strengthen the labour market relevance of skills,
- strengthening vocational education and training (VET), in particular work-based learning in all its forms,
- developing quality assurance mechanisms and increasing evidence-based policy and practice to monitor and design reforms,
- promoting of teaching at all levels (recruitment, selection and induction; attractiveness of profession, initial education and professional development)

TARGET: Strengthen regional exchange, peer learning and cooperation in projects and networks (at least one activity and/or one new project/initiative per year) and make available a Danube Region monitoring tool on current developments in education and training systems.

<p>Key projects, outputs and events</p>	<p><u>Cooperation organisations, platforms and networks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2004 - ongoing: Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) - Regional Platform for Cooperation in Education and Training; Annual work programmes • Ongoing: European Training Foundation (ETF); Annual Work Programmes • 2007 - 2027: Central European Cooperation in Education and Training (CECE); Renewal of Memorandum of Understanding signed in March 2023 (Rotating lead: AT, CZ, HU, SK, SI) • 2008 - 2014: Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital of the Regional Cooperation Council (Lead: RO, AT, HR) <p><u>Attractiveness and quality of VET</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2012 - ongoing: Edu. Region - Education Network for the economic area and the labour market of Lower Austria and the Southern Czech regions (Lead: AT – Landesakademie NÖ) • 2016 - ongoing: WBA4WBL - Western Balkans Alliance for Work-Based Learning (Lead: ERI SEE) • 2023 - 2026: EQAVET-NRP-RO – 2023 – European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training National Reference Points (Lead: RO – National Center for TVET Development, NCTVETD) • 2023 - 2025: RESET - Renewable Energy for Standards in Education and Training (Lead: ERI SEE) • 2022 - 2024: Development of digital forms of learning and new certification programs in the field of arboriculture and urban forestry at the level of SE Europe (Lead: HR – Urbani šumari društvo s ograničenom odgovornošću za usluge, E+ KA2) • 2022 - 2024: Increasing the quality of work-based learning by strengthening the role of vocational practice coordinators (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in BA, ME, RS) • 2022 - 2024: InnoVET – Innovate and participate in digital and green transition of VET and Tourism (Lead: HR – Karlovac County Tourist Board, E+ KA2)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 - 2024: EQET SEE - Enhancements in Quality of Education and Training in South Eastern Europe (Lead: ERI SEE) • 2021 - 2023: COOP-NET: Strengthening experience-sharing between Centres of Vocational Excellence and other VET providers – using the potential of Centres of Vocational Excellence for the development of VET (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in MD) • 2019 - 2023: EQAVET-NRP-RO - European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training National Reference Points (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET Development, NCTVETD) • 2019 - 2021: TO REGOS – Towards Regionally-Based Occupational Standards (Lead: ERI SEE) • 2018 - 2021: Quality Development in Vocational Training (Lead: AT- OeAD, implemented in BA, ME, RS) • 2014 - 2020: Cooperation between Schools and the Business Sector in the field of tourism (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in BA, ME, RS) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovenia – Hungary – DUAL TRANSFER: Good practices and institutional cooperation in coordinating vocational education (Lead: SI – Pomurska gospodarska zbornica) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria - LEARN: Listen, Educate, Act and Read in a NETWORK • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Czech Republic - Joint Vocational Training at Secondary Technical Schools for the Development of Engineering Practice (Lead: CZ - Střední odborná škola Josefa Sousedíka Vsetín) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovenia – Czech Republic – D029: Respect, Pride, Expertise (Lead: SK) • January 2018 - December 2018: Inclusive VET – Career Guidance and Counselling to support access to relevant education and training pathways (Lead: AT – KulturKontakt Austria) • 2015 - 2017: FairGuidance (Lead: DE – ttg team training GmbH) • September 2014 - August 2017: DESK – Develop, Evaluate and Safe Knowledge – Knowledge Continuity in Vocational Education (Lead: DE – Landesakademie Esslingen) • November 2014 - October 2016: National Authorities for Apprenticeships: DALIVET - Development of Apprenticeship Learning in IVET in Romania (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET) • 2012 - February 2015: Optimizing the links between labour market and the educational system: modernising the vocational system in Romania (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET Development) • November 2014: Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in vocational education and training (AT, RO) • May 2011 - December 2013: ERI SEE Cluster Modernizing VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET Development)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2010 - August 2013: Improving quality assurance (QA) in Vocational Education and Training (VET) through schools' networks (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET Development) • June 2013: Thematic Working Group "Innovative VET Schools Network" • December 2012: Peer learning event on VET within ET 2020 & PA9 (organised by AT) <p><u>Leadership in education and school management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 - 2023: MFC – Management for Change (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in MD) • 2019 - 2022: Leadership and management skills for quality assurance at cluster schools (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in UA) • 2017 - 2020: FA-VET – Financial Autonomy for VET Schools (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in MD) • February 2011 - January 2013: International Cooperation for School Leadership (ICSL) (Lead: HU – Tempus Public Agency) <p><u>Promoting teaching at all levels</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 2010 - June 2014: Training on competence based assessment for VET teachers (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET Development) • 2012 - 2013: Capacity Building for Teachers of VET in the Danube Region (Lead: DE/BW) <p><u>Evidence-based policy and practice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2011 - December 2013: Cluster of knowledge on evidence-based policy making in education (Lead: RS) <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various projects linked to Erasmus+ (see an overview of Erasmus+ projects in the Danube Region here)
Next steps, planned outputs and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ongoing: Coordinating the Work of the South Eastern Europe Vocational Education and Training Network (Lead: ERI SEE)

ACTION 6: Relevant and High-Quality Knowledge, Skills and Competences

Description: Concrete issues of this action are:

- reducing low achievement in basic skills, covering language, literacy, mathematics, science and digital literacy,
- strengthening transversal and key competences, in particular entrepreneurship and language competences,
- addressing the development of digital competences, including media literacy, at all levels of learning,
- further exploring the potentials of innovative and active pedagogies as well as upgrading educational resources,
- promoting the establishment of platforms of “centres of vocational excellence” to act as catalysts for local business investment, supporting local innovation and smart specialisation strategies by ensuring supply of high quality skilled workers through flexible and timely offer of training.

TARGET: Engage in regular stakeholder and networking meetings to continue the cross-border and transnational dialogue and initiate project development (at least one activity and/or one new project/initiative per year)

<p>Key projects, outputs and events</p>	<p><u>Platforms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021 - ongoing: Danube Region Platform on Centres of Vocational Excellence (online kick-off event in November 2021, second online meeting in November 2022, Joint GRETA webinar October 2023, online survey among policy platform members June-October 2023), in cooperation with ETF <p><u>Fostering basic and key competences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 - 2022: CODES - Competence-Oriented Education for Elementary Schooling in cross-border Regions (Lead: AT - European Office, Vienna Board of Education) • 2014 - 2016: Workshops and conference on the topic green competences for eco-tourism in the Danube Region (Lead: RO – Ministry of Education and Scientific Research) <p><u>Entrepreneurship, business and financial education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Romania - Bulgaria - Developing a Common Approach to Education in Entrepreneurship at School • 2014 - 2020 Interreg IPA CBC Bulgaria - Serbia - To BOND entrepreneurial learning with primary and secondary schools and universities with the aim of curricula enhancement and entrepreneurial competences improvement for the purpose of facilitating employment of young people • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Hungary - ProVocEnt: Promoting Entrepreneurship in the Vocational Education • 2014 - 2018: VEN – Income Generation in VET Schools and Colleges (Lead: AT – KulturKontakt Austria) • January 2018 - December 2018: DIY-ACCEL - Piloting of Danube and Ionian Youth Entrepreneurship Acceleration (Lead: BG – Business Support Centre for SME, Ruse) • 2017 – 2021: Restart - Reinforce Entrepreneurial and Digital Skills of Students and Teachers to enhance the modernization of higher education in Moldova (Lead: MD – Serviciul relatii internationale ASEM)
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- September 2014 - August 2017: **ESCAPE – Enhanced Skills, Competence and Practice for the Economy** (Lead: AT – Business Academy Linz)
- 2013 - 2016: **Thematic Working Group "Creativity and Entrepreneurship"** (Meetings in Sofia, April 2013; Ruse, April 2014 and Bucharest, May 2015)
- January 2015 - December 2015: **Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship** (Lead: BG – Business Support Centre for SME, Ruse)
- July 2012 - December 2014: i.e. **SMART - SMART Training Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Sustainable Economic Sectors** (Lead: AT – European Office, Vienna Board of Education)
- August 2010 - February 2013: **Training the teachers from economic VET schools to implement the training firms method** (Lead: RO - National Centre for TVET Development)
- January 2012 - December 2013: **ECO NET - Support for Training Firms in SEE** (Lead: AT – KulturKontakt Austria)
- January 2010 - December 2012: **ET-Struct: Economic Educational Territorial - Structure** (Lead: AT – European Office, Vienna Board of Education)

Transversal competences, innovative learning environments and creative partnerships

- 2022 - 2025: **DECODE – DEveloping the COgnitivE Potential of Preschoolers from Disadvantaged Backgrounds** (Lead: CZ – Nakladatelství Dr. Josef Raabe, E+ KA2)
- 2022 - 2024: **The Curious and Flourishing Schools - Positive Education in Building of Character Strengths and Virtues** (Lead: RS – Institut za pozitivnu psihologiju, E+ KA2)
- 2019 - 2022: **Intergenerational Social Innovation Support Scheme** (Lead: AT- Vienna Board of Education, European Office)
- 2018 - 2022: **InnoSchool - Strengthening social innovation and entrepreneurial spirit of secondary school's student in Danube macro-region using highly innovative learning system** (Lead: CZ – DEX Innovation Centre)
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A: Austria – Czech Republic - **Schaffung von professioneller Flexibilität im Wirtschaftsbereich durch eine Übungsfirma** (Lead: CZ – Vyšší odborná škola, Střední škola, Centrum odborné přípravy)
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Hungary - **KIP ON LEARNING: Schools in a changing world - Inclusive, innovative and reflective teaching and learning - crossborder exchange of knowhow** (Lead:
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Hungary - **TALENTED LIFE: Common development of a TALENT program - Learning Innovative Forms of Education**
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG IPA CBC Bulgara – Serbia – **We have a dream**

Digital education and competences

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 – 2022 MELIA OBSERVATORY (Media Literacy Observatory for Active Citizenship and Sustainable Democracy) (Lead: SI – School of Advanced Social Studies) • 2020 - 2022 INTERREG V-A Austria - Hungary - DigiUp 4.0: Upskilling digital skills of young people to address the skills shortage in industry 4.0. (Lead: AT – Board of Education for Vienna) • October 2019 - September 2022: DigiMe – Digital and Media Competence for Pupils and Teachers (Lead: AT - Board of Education for Vienna) • 2019 - 2021 CODE - Competence opportunities for digital employment (Lead: BG – Human Resources Development Agency, Ruse) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Germany / Bavaria - Czech Republic: Digitálně internacionálně • 2013: Innovative Competency-Oriented E-learning in Tourism - ICOELIT (Lead: BG – BSC SME, Ruse) <p><u>Language competences</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 - 2025: deutsch.info - German for children with the Dandelin app (Lead: DE – STUDIO GAUS, E+ KA2) • 2022 - 2024: IDEAL – Innovative Digital Language Learning for the Healthcare Sector (Lead: AT – ipcenter.at, E+ KA2) • 2016 - 2020: Educational Cooperation in Border Regions – (BIG) AT-CZ, AT-HU, SK-AT (Lead: AT – European Office, Vienna Board of Education) • September 2003 – 2015: Sprachoffensive - Language Strategy (Lead: AT – Office Sprachkompetenz) <p><u>STEM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 - 2025: Crystal clear electronics videos (Lead: HU – XTALIN Engineering, E+ KA2) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Austria – Czech Republic – EduSTEM: Education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia – Austria – RoboCoop: Education through robotics driven by interregional cooperation • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Germany / Bavaria - Czech Republic: MINT von klein auf • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Czech Republic - Increasing the Technical and Professional Qualifications of Pupils in the Border Area of the Zlín and Trenčín Regions • September 2016 - September 2019: EDUGARD (Lead: CZ - Chaloupky) <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various projects linked to Erasmus+ (see an overview of Erasmus+ projects in the Danube Region here)
<p>Next steps, planned outputs and projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing implementation of the Danube Region Platform on Centres of Vocational Excellence and preparation of the third meeting planned for April 2024

ACTION 7: Lifelong Learning and Learning Mobility

Description: Concrete issues of this action are:

supporting mobility of learners and teachers as well as partnerships among schools and educational institutions,

- promoting balanced mobility and brain circulation as well as reducing brain drain
- addressing the transition phase within education and training and from ET to work, inter alia through high quality guidance,
- continuing LLL strategies and promoting adult learning (in view of governance, supply and take up, access, quality) and second chance opportunities,
- fostering transparency, validation and recognition of skills and/or qualifications and implementing EQF and NQFs

TARGET: Strengthen working together on similar policy challenges and make use of the potential of the Erasmus+ programme to increase the impact of macro-regional cooperation among education and training institutions (at least one activity and/or one new project/initiative per year)

<p>Key projects, outputs and events</p>	<p><u>Learning mobility</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2011 - ongoing: CEEPUS - Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (Lead: N/A – Central Office in AT) • 2012 - ongoing: eTwinning - Thematic Conferences on Learning, Teaching, Exchanging – School Cooperation in the Danube Region (Lead: AT – OeAD) • October 2019 - September 2021: STEP4Schools (Lead: AT – Linz International Business School) • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Austria – Czech Republic – C4PE: Concepts for Professional Education in Border Regions (Lead: AT – Universität für Weiterbildung Krems) • Sept 2017 - Feb 2019: VET4SCAPE - Vocational Educational Training for Skills, Competence and Economy (Lead: AT – Linz International Business School) • 2008 - 2013: Capacity Building Mobility Programme (Lead: AT – Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital) <p><u>Career guidance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 - 2024: Reach Out to the "Left-Behind" – improving guidance for working persons from the underprivileged milieu (Lead: AT – ÖSB Social Innovation, E+ KA2) <p><u>Lifelong Learning</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017 - 2020: Down to Earth – Earthen Architecture in the Danube Region (Lead: AT- Technical University of Vienna) • January 2015 - October 2015: Milestones of Learning Development – Strategic improvement and development of life-long learning programs within Danube Region (Lead: BA – South East European Youth Network) • October 2012: LLP Contact and Project Preparation Seminar on "Transition from school to work" (Lead: AT – KulturKontakt Austria) <p><u>Transparency, validation and recognition of skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2015: Removing Obstacles to the Recognition of Academic Qualifications in the Region – Seminar on the
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	<p>establishment of a fast-track procedure for the recognition of academic qualifications (Lead: ERI SEE and RCC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 (follow-up to the project "Development of National Qualification Frameworks"): Removing obstacles to Recognition of Qualifications (Lead: HR – ERI-SEE) • 2012 - 2013: Development of National Qualification Frameworks (Lead: HR – ERI-SEE) <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various projects linked to Erasmus+ (see an overview of Erasmus+ projects in the Danube Region here)
<p>Next steps, planned outputs and projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2024: eTwinning - Thematic Conference on Learning, Teaching, Exchanging – School Cooperation in the Danube Region

ACTION 8: Inclusive Education, Equity, Common Values and Sustainable Development

Description: Concrete issues of this action are:

- reducing early school leaving,
- addressing the diversity of learners, enhancing access to quality and inclusive education for all, including disadvantaged groups,
- addressing gender gaps in educational training (ET),
- promoting civic, intercultural and social competences, ownership of democratic values and fundamental rights at all levels of ET, while tackling discrimination, racism and stereotypes
- enhancing critical thinking, along with cyber and media literacy; promoting sustainable development through ET

TARGET: Enhance the dissemination of good practices and lessons learned through thematic events, policy exchange and other forms for knowledge transfer (at least one activity and/or one new project/initiative per year)

<p>Key projects, outputs and events</p>	<p><u>Inclusive Education and Equity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2010 - ongoing: Concordia Vocational Training (Lead: RO – Concordia Foundation) • 2020 – 2024: Inclusion4schools: School-community Partnership for Reversing Inequality and Exclusion: Transformative Practices of Segregated Schools (Lead: HU - John Wesley Theological College) • 2022 – 2025: New trends in inclusive education on the use of induction loops (IL) to minimize the communication barrier between the hearing impaired and intact society (Lead: CZ – Unie neslysicich Brno, E+ KA2) • 2022 - 2023: SAFE SPACE – Emergency psychological support for students and school teachers (Lead: Mohyla Academy, University of Kyiv, in cooperation with AT – OeAD, implemented in UA) • 2021 - 2023: Modelling an inclusive school supporting hidden learning disabilities of children with atypical development (Lead: AT – Life Labs Education, E+ KA2) • 2021 - 2023: TaTaBooks – Talking Tactile Books for Visually Impaired Children (Lead: AT – Economica Institute of Economic Research, E+ KA2) • 2020 - 2022: DREAM ROAD - Danube REgion for improved Access and eMpowerment of RomA Development (Lead: SI – Research and Educational Centre Mansion Rakican) • 2019 - 2022: Me and Your Stories (MYS) – Innovative multimedia storytelling resources to foster social inclusion through education (Lead: AT - atempo) • 2018 - 2023: I-VET – Inclusive Vocational Education and Training (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in MD) • 2019 - 2022: Inclusive Education in the Region Odessa (Lead: AT – OeAD, implemented in UA)
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- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Czech Republic - **Preparation for Further Education of Students With Mental Retardation** (Lead: SK)
- 2018 - 2019: **RISE FREE - Reaching for Inclusiveness and Improved Skills Through ICT-Enabled Education, Fostering Refugees' Employability and Entrepreneurship** (Lead: AT – Graz University of Technology)
- 2014 - 2020 INTERREG VB Danube **Integrated Innovative Systems for Roma Education and Labour Inclusion** (Lead: BG)
- 2015 - 2016: **RomaEdu-Danube - Integration of Roma Children into Education System** – Countries of Danube Region (Lead: SI – Institute for Romological Studies, Education and Culture)
- October 2014: Workshop on "**Empowering marginalised groups through education and training in the Danube Region**" (Lead: AT – KulturKontakt Austria) Youth
- December 2018: **Workshop on 'Early School Leaving and NEETs across the Danube Region'** (Lead: AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum, KulturKontakt Austria)
- June 2016: **2nd EUSDR Youth Platform "Learning Pathways to Social Cohesion: Synergies between Formal and Non Formal Education"** (Lead: AT - Interkulturelles Zentrum)
- December 2014: **1st EUSDR Youth Platform "Learning Pathways to Social Cohesion"** (Lead: AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum)

Civic, intercultural and social competences

- 2013 - ongoing: **(d)unaVision: Learning Journeys and Being Spaces for a Sustainable Future** (Lead: DE – ThinkCamp)
- 2022 - 2024: **Citizens' assemblies and other new forms of participation - in political education** (Lead: AT – Democracy Centre Vienna, E+ KA2)
- 2015 - 2022: **Danube Peace Boat E.U.R.O.P.E** (Lead: RS – Media Education Centre)
- 2017 - 2018: **aces – Academy of Central European Schools – ACT LOCAL! Fostering young people's active involvement and social engagement by supporting cross-sectoral initiatives of schools with non-school partners** (Lead: AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum)
- 2006 - 2016: **aces - Academy of Central European Schools** (Lead: SK – Vceli Dom, AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum)
- January 2012 - June 2014: **Empowering Young People - Connecting Europe** (EUSDR-Pilot Project; Lead: AT – BMB/KulturKontakt Austria)
- May 2008 - December 2011: **EdTWIN - Education Twinning for European Citizenship in the Centropoe Region** (Lead: AT – European Office of the Vienna Board of Education)

Sustainability

- 2022 - 2025: **INNOVATIVE STEPS – Innovative Sustainability Education for Prosperous Schools** (Lead: SK – Základná škola Jána Palárika, Majcichov, E+ KA2)
- 2022 - 2024: **Certified Corporate Sustainability Management Training in CEE** (Lead: HU – GB Sustainability Audit, E+ KA2)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022 - 2024: School Food Climate Challenge: creating educational digital tools for educators to inspire students to become true change makers in our transition to a sustainable food system in Europe (Lead: CZ – Skutečně zdravá škola, E+ KA2) • 2022 - 2024: We're moving into the future (Lead: HU – Miskolci SZC Berzeviczy Gergely Technikum, E+ KA2) • 2022 - 2023: EFDI - Ecological Future Diverse and Inclusive (Lead: AT – Lebenshilfen Soziale Dienste, E+ KA2) • 2020 - 2023: 1Planet4All - Empowering youth, living EU values, tackling climate change (Lead: CZ – People in Need) • 2019 - 2023: Game On! Don't let climate change end the game (Lead: HU – CEEWeb for Biodiversity) • Activities of the Danube Peace Boat E.U.R.O.P.E (Lead: RS – Media Education Centre), including the Danube+ Water Innovation Lab 2021 to build youth skills and know-how for a bio-based regional economy across the Danube watershed • 2014 - 2020 INTERREG V-A Slovakia - Hungary - FORBEST: Forest Based Education and Training (Lead: HU - Szirmabesenyő Nagyközség Önkormányzata) • January 2014 - December 2016: eschool4S - E-School for Sustainability in the Danube Region (Lead: DE – GIZ) • October 2011 - September 2014: CoDeS - Collaboration of Schools and Communities for Sustainable Development (EU-Comenius multilateral network; Lead: CH – Stiftung Umweltbildung Schweiz) <p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various projects linked to Erasmus+ (see an overview of Erasmus+ projects in the Danube Region here)
<p>Next steps, planned outputs and projects</p>	

ANNEX

Overview of PA9 Objectives

The objectives in PA9 – 'People and Skills', in accordance with the EUSDR Action Plan published in April 2020, are:

Contribution to a higher employment rate in the Danube Region, especially through tackling youth and long-term unemployment

Contribution to improved educational outcomes and relevant skills and competences in the Danube Region, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, active citizenship and well-being

Contribution to increased quality and efficiency of education, training and labour market systems

Contribution to ensuring inclusive education and training and promoting inclusive labour markets, equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as the promotion of civic competences and lifelong learning opportunities for all

Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels