



Newsletter December 2020: EUSDR Priority Area 9 "People & Skills"

Dear stakeholders of Priority Area 9 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region!

The team of Priority Area 9 "People and Skills" looks back on challenging months. In this newsletter you find useful information on recent PA9 activities and events.

In addition, we wish you nice and relaxing holidays and the best possible start to the new year 2021 that we are all looking forward to!

Stay healthy!

The team of EUSDR Priority Area 9 "People & Skills"

HIGHLIGHTS

7th Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region | 01 December 2020 | Online

The 7th Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities focussed on the developments in ESF planning and programming in the different participating countries and on the discussion of a joint focus on topics for transnational cooperation within the ESF. Moreover, a call on social innovation issued by DG EMPL was discussed, as well as respective potential for action in the future.

19th Steering Group Meeting of Priority Area 9 | 26 November 2020 | Online

The 19th Steering Group Meeting was held online for the second time in 2020. Participants discussed the respective measures related to COVID19 in the fields of labour market and education policies. Moreover, an overview on the activities of the Slovak EUSDR Presidency was given (see below for more information). At the heart of the discussions was a planned cooperation with the European Training Foundation, dealing with Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs).

9th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region | 22 October 2020 | Online

PA9 had the opportunity to host one of the sessions of the Forum, which dealt with the social perspective of sustainable regional development. Its main focus was the question of how to improve social and education policies as well as civil protection within a sustainable regional development in the Danube Region and emphasized the important role of Social and Labour Market Policies, Education, Vocational Education and Training for Social Fairness, Sustainable Development and Resilience. It also touched upon Learning and Competences to support the Green and Digital Transition. The panel was facilitated by Roland Hanak/PAC9

and assembled participants from the Croatian Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, the European Training Foundation, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the Croatian Ministry of Interior.

7th Danube Participation Day | 21 October 2020 | Online

Back-to-back with the EUSDR Annual Forum the Danube Participation Day took place one day earlier under the motto “Youth in the EU Danube Strategy: Towards a common vision”. Jürgen Schick/PAC9 highlighted in his welcome address activities of the Priority Area in the field of youth, like equipping young people with the right skills, supporting NEETs and fighting youth unemployment. PA 10 together with the Danube Civil Society Forum informed about their draft [“Guidance Paper on Youth Participation: WHY, HOW and WHAT?”](#) with focus on how to better integrate the youth perspectives into the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The European Commission presented the recently published “European Youth Manifesto” with relevant findings for PA9. Young people in the study were asked to name priorities of the future European Territorial Cooperation and mentioned prominently “Improving young people’s skills & increase access to training opportunities” and “Boosting employment for young people in Europe”. PA9 was also honoured to hold the workshop “Youth, Education & Skills” during the Participation Day discussing what education and skills young people need to actively participate in civil society, politics and the labour market.

Slovak EUSDR Presidency 2021

On 1 November 2020 Slovakia took over the EUSDR Presidency from Croatia. At an informal NC-PAC Meeting on 27 November 2020 the Slovak EUSDR Presidency introduced their fellow EUSDR stakeholders to the [Slovak EUSDR Presidency programme](#) for 2021. The main priorities of the Presidency can be split into institutional and thematic topics.

Institutional priorities:

- *Cooperation of stakeholders involved in implementation of the Strategy*
- *Cooperation among Priority Area Coordinators*

Thematic priorities:

- *Climate change and protection of biodiversity*
- *Digitization and Innovation ecosystems*

Priority Area 9 is looking forward to the coming year under the Slovak EUSDR chairmanship and will be happy to closely collaborate with the Slovak Presidency team.

New EUSDR Communication Strategy

The Danube Strategy Point (DSP), the EUSDR secretariat, has published a new [EUSDR communication strategy](#). The document aims at facilitation communication of the EUSDR’s vision and goals for the Danube Region both internally and externally. For this purpose, the Communication Strategy defines amongst other things the EUSDR **mission** (“EUSDR is connecting people to improve quality of life through sustainable development in the Danube Region”), **vision** (“Together we build a prosperous region with a healthy environment, equal societies and high living standards”) and **slogan** (“Danube Region Strategy – Prosperity through Diversity”).

Third report from the European Commission on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies (MRS)

In its [report](#) on the implementation of MRS, the Commission emphasized the role of MRS in providing answers to the COVID19 crisis and highlighted the interfaces of MRS with other strategies such as the European Green Deal or the European Digital Strategy. The Commission also highlighted the importance of embedding the Strategy's priorities into the funds and programmes of the upcoming period.

EUSDR Collection of best-practice examples concerning remote schooling / digital education

In response to the current COVID-19 crisis all European countries and educational institutions have established a variety of policy actions and distance learning as well as digital skills provision measures. Starting a cross-MRS initiative, PA9 together with PA7 reached out to its Steering Group members and partners to collect good practices regarding remote schooling / digital education from Danube Region countries. This [preliminary collection](#) can serve as a source for ideas for all interested parties. The list includes various activities like summer schools, online learning platforms and digital skills provision for teachers.

OUTLOOK 2021

February 2021: EUSDR PAC Meeting

May 2021: 8th Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region

May 2021: EUSDR PAC Meeting

June 2021: 20th PA9 Steering Group Meeting (tbc)

June 2021: Danube Region eTwinning conference

June 2021: EUSDR NC-PAC Meeting

Visit our website and Facebook page

Priority Area 9 "People & Skills" has updated its [website](#) and is constantly posting news on [Facebook](#)! Check out useful information on current projects and initiatives, available funding opportunities, upcoming events, studies as well as possibilities for cooperation and much more!

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