

Newsletter December 2023: EUSDR Priority Area 9 "People & Skills"

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

2023 is coming to a close. We want to take this opportunity to thank you for the continuously good cooperation within this Priority Area in conducting fruitful events and conferences bringing together representatives and exchanging knowledge with other Macro-Regions.

We invite you to join us in looking back at the last months. At the same time, we very much look forward to the Austrian EUSDR Presidency, with one of the foci being boosting skills and competences in the Danube Region. After a year full of online events, we are happy to announce that next year several on-site events will be organised. We very much look forward to seeing you again in person.

We also invite you to have a look at the information on the Seed Money Facility Call open until end of March 2024 to apply for funding for the project generation process.

Continue reading to find out more about the latest developments, events and initiatives of Priority Area 9 'People & Skills', and what to expect next year.

Thank you for all your interest and contributions to our work! We continue to stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

Best wishes for 2024,

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

CALL FOR ACTION

Seed Money Facility Call of the Danube Region Programme

The recently opened Seed Money Facility call is open for applications to prepare project proposals with strategic importance of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, including Priority Area 9 'People and Skills'. Under this call, the DRP seeks proposals for transnational cooperation projects contributing to the development of a more innovative, sustainable and more social Danube region.

The Danube Region Programme recently launched a new matchmaking platform designed to help potential applicants find partners and share ideas for transnational projects in the Danube Region.

- ✓ Timing of the call: 27 November 2023 – 29 March 2024
- ✓ Budget: Up to EUR 100,000 per project
- ✓ Co-financing rate: 80%
- ✓ Project duration: Up to 12 months.
- ✓ Eligibility of partners: Local, regional, national public bodies/ bodies governed by public law (including EGTCs), international organisations and private non-profit bodies.
- ✓ Project partners: Minimum two partners and a maximum of five partners from at least two different countries of the programme area
- ✓ Project outputs: Main Project Work Plan, Report of the state of play, Report on funding possibilities

Please have a look at our [PA9 website](#) and the [website of the Call](#) to learn more about the Seed Money Facility Call. We would highly welcome your project proposals related to our Priority Area.

HIGHLIGHTS

Seed Money Facility Webinar | 13 December 2023 | Online

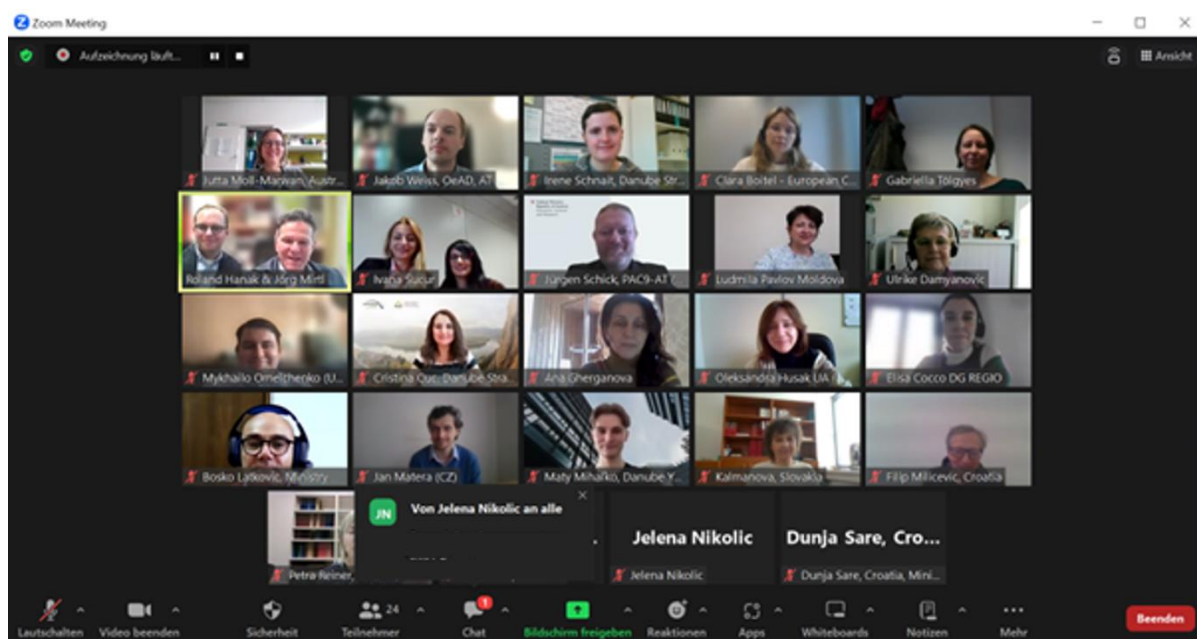
In the webinar we informed interested stakeholders on the ongoing Seed Money Facility Call of the Danube Region Programme contributing to the objectives of the EUSDR. It included a session dedicated to the development of strategic projects in the field of Education & Training and Labour Market Policies.

More information is available on our [website](#).

25th Steering Group Meeting of Priority Area 9 | 28 November 2023 | Online

How are the labour markets and education system evolving in the Danube Region? The members of the PA9 Steering Group met online to discuss current developments, to get informed about funding opportunities and to receive updates from important

cooperation partners from the Danube Region and the European Union. Find out more about the Steering Group meeting [here](#).



11th Stakeholder Conference | 13 and 14 November 2023 | online

'Towards more resilient, safer and smarter Danube region' was the slogan of the online Stakeholder Conference dealing with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as coping with the war in Ukraine. Education, social and labour systems have been under significant pressure for several past years and thus require innovative approaches and increasing resilience to be able to respond to these challenges.

The conference was structured around four panels focusing on digital skills, lifelong learning, Vocational Education and Training and the labour market, and resilience and safety in Ukraine. It included inspiring insights and good practice examples from other Priority Areas and macro-regional strategies, promoting the importance of transnational and cooperation across the four macro-regional strategies (Danube, Baltic Sea, Alps, Adriatic and Ionian) in Europe.



Panel Discussion 1: Promotion of digital skills and competences in the Danube region and beyond

- Role of digitalization in coping with war consequences in Ukraine
- Digitalization and social inclusions in schools
- Post-Covid and digital literacy in Finland
- Key projects of EUSDR PA8 “Competitiveness”, WG “Digital Danube”



Panel Discussion 2: Lifelong learning for adults and underprivileged categories in the Danube region and beyond

- Cooperation with ETF
- Micro credentials
- Lifelong learning in the Odesa region
- Adaptation and reskilling for migrants in Lithuania: Presentation of the project’s results



Panel Discussion 3: Enhancing cooperation between VET and labour market in the Danube region

- Moldovan priorities and plans for the VET development
- DG EMPL efforts on increasing European VET sector potential
- Chernivtsi region VET overview: key projects and initiatives
- Austrian VET priorities and recent developments



Panel Discussion 4: Resilience, safety and rehabilitation in the Danube region

- HaDEA; EU4Health Program, cooperation with Ukraine
- Ivano-Frankivsk VET sphere resilience
- Folk education in Ukraine: “High Folk School Vovchok”
- Civil education and tacmed

Have a look at the Report and the presentations of the Stakeholder Conference [here](#).

Workshop at the European Week of Regions and Cities | 10 October 2023 | Brussels

A workshop under the title ‘Skills for the future of European Macro-Regions’ was conducted at the European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels. The Workshop focused on digital skills and innovation in education and VET. Speakers from different backgrounds were invited to the panel, including Roland Hanak (Austria), Iryna Shumik (Ukraine), Merle Andrashko (Germany; Baltic Sea Strategy), and Alexander Zier (Germany) and Nadija Afanasieva (UA) as moderator.

An inspiring discussion among the participants included topics such as brain drain and priorities and trends in the VET sphere within the Danube and the Baltic Sea Region. Both participants and speakers enriched their knowledge with new facts and best practices from the Danube and Baltic Sea regions.

Danube Region Platform on Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)

Skills for the green and fair transition in the Danube Region are high on the political agenda in many Danube Region countries. A questionnaire was sent out to the policy platform members to learn about current developments and trends in greening of VET and VET excellence in the Danube Region. The results of the survey show that the topics are high on the political agenda in many Danube Region countries and confirm the need of continuing our efforts and work on the Platform.

Our work resulted in the presentation of the Platform at the ETF side event of the Forum of Vocational Excellence in Amsterdam, and at the joint GRETA webinar,

presenting our Danube Region Platform to a wider audience. Stay tuned and find out more about the Platform here.



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Danube Strategy Flagships

To promote the visibility of projects or processes that contribute to the implementation of the EUSDR, strategic initiatives were honoured as “Danube Strategy Flagships” across all Priority Areas. Under Priority Area 9, two initiatives were chosen this year:

- [Bringing the Danube Region into Classrooms: Promoting cooperation of schools and teachers](#) connects teachers in the Danube Region through annual conferences that promote the development of joint school cooperation projects.
- The [Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe](#) (ERI SEE) works on enhancing and facilitating regional cooperation in the area of education and training.

The Austrian EUSDR Presidency

With 1 November 2023, Austria took over the EUSDR Presidency from Slovenia, under the slogan 'Shaping Transformation, Creating Opportunities: A Prosperous, Resilient and Secure Danube Region'. One of the thematic priorities of the presidency will be on 'Boosting skills and competences'. The objective of the Austrian presidency is to achieve an even closer cooperation in the Danube Region, to highlight the clear added value of the EUSDR and its projects, to bring the EUSDR closer to its citizens and to continue building up a prosperous and resilient Danube Region. The Austrian presidency will last until 31 December 2024.



Austrian Presidency of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Please visit the [website](#) of the Austrian EUSDR presidency for more information.

OUTLOOK 2024

Save the date

- 3rd Meeting of the Danube Region Platform on Centres of Vocational Excellence | April | Vienna
- 12th PA9 International Stakeholder Conference: 'Fair, Green and Digital Transition in Education and Labour Market Policies' | 23rd May | Vienna
- eTwinning seminar | 6th and 7th June | tbc.
- 13th EUSDR Annual Forum | 20th and 21st June | Vienna

MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website and Facebook page

Stay updated on current projects and initiatives, upcoming events, available funding opportunities, interesting research and publications, as well as possibilities for cooperation and much more on the PA9 [website](#) and [Facebook page](#).

PA 9 | People & Skills

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