



Newsletter September 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 "Investing in People and Skills" looks back on challenging months for all of us. Nevertheless, cooperation seems to be more important than ever. Therefore, we are looking forward to continuing macro-regional collaboration in the thematic fields of PA 9. In the light of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, topics of PA9 such as quality education and digital learning, the integration of marginalized groups or fighting unemployment will matter more than ever.

We hope you are healthy and had a relaxing summer despite the challenging circumstances.

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

HIGHLIGHTS

8th Stakeholder Conference | 18 June 2020 | Online event

This year the Stakeholder Conference of Priority Area 9 took place online for the first time. The event was adapted to the current situation and was held under the topic „Smart and Social Responses to the Crisis: How Education, Training and Labour Market Policies can Contribute towards a Resilient Danube Region“. Around 70 participants were online to learn about challenges of and reactions to the COVID-19 crisis in labour market and education systems in the Danube Region and beyond. Experts from the European Commission (DG EMPL and DG EAC), ERI SEE (Education Reforms Initiative of South Eastern Europe), the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies (wiiw) and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research further discussed learnings and potential chances of the crisis. The Austrian PA9 Priority Area Coordinators Roland Hanak and Jürgen Schick informed about the recently published revised EUSDR Action Plan.

The event was recorded and can be viewed [here](#).

In addition, find all relevant documents [here](#).

Prior to the conference, PA9 disseminated [video inputs](#) from the OECD and macro-regional colleagues from the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region/Autonomous Province of Trento.

18th Steering Group Meeting of Priority Area 9 | 19 June 2020 | Online event

One day after the Stakeholder Conference the Steering Group of Priority Area 9 met online. The representatives of nine Danube Region countries briefed about the consequences of the crisis and the reaction to it in their states in the fields of education and labour market policy. The discussion included the recently published new EUSDR Action Plan, the potential embedding of PA9 priorities in the new EU programmes and past PA9 events. The European

Training Foundation informed about the planned establishment of an “International Network for Centres of Vocational Excellence”, open for Danube Region countries to cooperate. More info: <https://peopleandskills.danube-region.eu/events/18th-steering-group-meeting/>

Meeting of Macro-regional Coordinators | 28 April 2020 | Online event

PA9 participated at a meeting of macro-regional coordinators discussing common challenges caused by the COVID-19 crisis. The aim of the meeting was to identify possible areas of cooperation across macro-regional strategies (MRS) to mobilise support for regional response to the economic challenges caused by the current health crisis and related preventive measures. Moreover, the meeting was used to start building joint initiatives between all four MRS. PA9 especially invested in the discussion on two potential initiatives: “4MRS Dialogue on future labour market and competence supply” and “Task force: Home-schooling”. The exchange about these topics will continue in autumn.

6th Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region | 9-10 March 2020 | Vienna, Austria

The meeting aimed at identifying policy areas and necessary factors for successful transnational cooperation in the European Social Fund Plus 2021-2027 in the Danube Region to make use of the full potential of ESF Managing Authorities and Macro-Regional Strategies. For the upcoming programming period, the network identified common topics such as women in the labour market, social innovation and the integration of marginalized groups such as the Roma. In order to facilitate the discussion and to identify convergences in planning, the organisers provided a comparative analysis of the European Semester: Country Specific Recommendations (Annexes D), which was made available in the [ESF MA Network section](#) of the PA9 website.



Thematic Conference - School cooperation in the Danube Region: Online Edition | 04 June 2020 | Online event

The annual event “eTwinning Danube Region Conference” took place in early June 2020, for the first time in an online format. The conference was organised by the Austrian National Agency for Erasmus+ Education in cooperation with EUSDR Priority Area 9. The conference represents a valuable platform for teachers to share experiences and initiate joint project ideas. Priority Coordinator Jürgen Schick from the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research highlighted the importance of cooperation in the educational field especially in challenging times. Around 40 teachers from twelve Danube Region countries, teaching pupils aged 11 to 19, participated at the event. 11 projects were successfully registered as a result of the conference and every participant is involved in at least one of the projects.

More info: <https://peopleandskills.danube-region.eu/events/thematic-conference-school-cooperation-in-the-danube-region-online-edition/>

Publication of the New EUSDR Action Plan

The new [EUSDR Action Plan](#) was published by the European Commission in April 2020. The document sets the strategic direction of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region for the coming years and includes the updated actions of each Priority Area. It is therefore a valuable tool to help unlocking the full potential of the Danube Region. The Action Plan is also the crucial document bringing the EUSDR forward by embedding it into the post-2020 programmes and enforcing cooperation with other macro-regional strategies. The process of the revision of the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region had started in 2018 and was followed by intensive discussions on various levels.

Priorities of EUSDR PA9 for 2nd Seed Money Facility Call and Embedding in new EU Programmes 2021-2027

The Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) plans to publish the 2nd Seed Money Facility (SMF) call soon, which aims at supporting the development of complex strategic transnational projects in the Priority Areas. Therefore, the Croatian Presidency asked the Priority Areas to come up with a shortlist of up to three strategic topics/priorities for project proposals. After consultation with the Steering Group PA9 decided to include the following three priorities, which are closely linked to the new Action Plan: 1. Promote the acquisition of digital skills and competences and to avoid the digital divide on labour markets and in education and training. 2. Enhancing Vocational Education and Training. 3. Equal opportunities in education and training as well as inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups. These priorities will also be taken into consideration (with exception of the ESF – see separate action taken above) for the embedding into the new EU programmes 2021-2027.

9th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

The 9th EUSDR Annual Forum, jointly organised by the Republic of Croatia, the European Commission and the Danube Transnational Programme with the support of the Danube Strategy Point, will take place on 22nd October 2020. The Annual Forum is a great opportunity for the promotion of deeper and wider cooperation between EUSDR countries. The plenary and thematic sessions will focus on interlinks between the European Green Deal and the new EUSDR Action Plan. Another important point on the agenda will be a session on financial support for the Danube Region within the process of Embedding the objectives and actions of the EUSDR into the European, national and regional programmes after 2021.

The 9th EUSDR Annual Forum will also host the 7th Danube Participation Day as a back to back event, focussing on Youth Participation in the Danube Region. This event will take place online on 21st October 2020.

More details and information on registration can be found soon here: <https://eusdr2020.hr/>

OUTLOOK 2020

October/November 2020	19 th PA9 Steering Group Meeting (tbc)
21 October 2020	7 th Danube Participation Day, Online
22 October 2020	9 th EUSDR Annual Forum, Online
Autumn 2020	Launch 2 nd Seed Money Facility Call (tbc)
01 November 2020	Start of the Slovakian EUSDR Presidency

Visit our website and Facebook page

Priority Area 9 “People & Skills” 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!

PA 9 | People & Skills

<https://peopleandskills.danube-region.eu/>
<https://www.facebook.com/EUSDRPA9/>

If you don't wish to receive a newsletter from us, please click the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Labour, Family and Youth

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Education, Science
and Research



MINISTERUL SĂNĂTĂȚII,
MUNCII ȘI PROTECȚIEI SOCIALE
AL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA



MINISTERUL
EDUCAȚIEI, CULTURII
ȘI CERCETĂRII



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND SCIENCE
OF UKRAINE

Project co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF, ENI)