



EUSDR | PA 09 - To Invest in People and Skills

Education and training, labour market and marginalised communities

WORK PLAN 2011-2013

December 2011

In efforts to meet its objectives within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and in accordance with GAC Conclusions of 13 April 2011, the Steering Group of PA 9 agrees to adhere to the following work plan:

- Establishing a network consisting of the national counterparts relevant to each Priority Area Coordinators;
- Identifying the possible relevant stakeholders, with particular emphasis on Project Leaders;
- Providing relevant information on the Strategy to the citizens, including to associate civil society concerned and to promote public awareness;
- Examining the Commission's target examples and to find agreement on realistic and feasible targets relevant to the macro-region with the involvement of the Commission and all relevant stakeholders ;
- Compiling a list of on-going projects and possible project ideas under the Priority Area. This list shall be continuously updated during the implementation and also be included into the first Progress Report issued by the Commission by the end of 2012;
- Providing assistance to Lead Partners in order to facilitate the implementation of projects and the further development and screening of project ideas. This assistance shall emphasize available European funding opportunities and rules and make full use of already existing sources of information. During the implementation of individual actions and projects the voluntary nature of participation should be preserved.

Specific PA 9 overall activities

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Responsible</u>
• 2 meetings of PA9 Steering Group per year	Spring and autumn 2011, 2012, 2013	PAC
• Stakeholder Forum, 200 people, international conference in Vienna, Minister's level	June 2012	PAC
• Establishment of up to 8 thematic working groups, following 8 actions, depending on commitment of DRC	2012, 2013	PAC + DRCs (N.N.)
• Mapping and labeling of existing projects and initiatives	ongoing 2011, 2012, 2013	PAC + SG
• Mapping and labeling of new projects and initiatives	ongoing 2011, 2012, 2013	PAC + SG
• Agreement on PA9 targets and objectives	December 2011	SG
• PAC Participation in relevant events on EU and regional level (e.g. EU-Roma network)	ongoing	PAC
• Running of PA9-Website	ongoing	PAC

Work area 1

“To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies” (Action 1)

Fostering efficiency, innovation and good governance in education and training is crucial in the face of the challenges posed by globalisation, demographic changes, rapid technological developments and increasing pressure on public budgets. This should be done in particular through the exchange of best practices of different education and training systems through transnational cooperation, joint development of programmes and materials, promotion of research on the economics of education, peer learning, and capacity building, i.e. for evidence-based policy and practice and for facilitating the policy learning process, strategy formulation and policy action. Specific added value lies in the inclusion of third countries and best use should be made of already existing programmes and cooperation structures.¹

Specific ongoing activities and projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) – Regional Platform for Cooperation in Education and Training; Specific activity: Establishment of an International ERI SEE Secretariat in Belgrade in 2012 (Lead/Chair: RS)	2004 -
• Central European Cooperation in Education (Rotating lead: SI in 2011, AT in 2012)	2007 - 2012
• Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital of the Regional Cooperation Council (Lead: RO, AT, HR)	2008 -
• Cluster of knowledge on evidence –based policy making in education (Lead: RS)	Jun 2011 – Dec 2013
• Cluster Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET)	May 2011 – Oct 2012
• aces - Academy of Central European Schools (Lead: SK - VČELÍ DOM ² , AT)	Jan 2011 – Jun 2012 (follow-up project cycles)
• EU-Comenius multilateral network "Collaboration of Schools and Communities for Sustainable Development" (CoDeS) (Lead: CH - Stiftung Umweltbildung Schweiz)	Oct 2011 – Sep 2014
• International Cooperation For School Leadership (ICSL) (Lead: HU – Tempus Public Agency)	Feb 2011 – Jan 2013
• Projects linked to LLP, such as Comenius, Leonardo, etc. ³ (Proposed by AT – OeAD, Austrian agency for international	Variable

¹ The main aim is to reinforce the European Area of Education (EAE) thus contributing to the success and sustainability of the EU integration process. Country specific needs and the demands of the EAE according to the EU Work Programme "Education and Training 2020" need to be taken into account and follow up. Work should build upon already existing bilateral cooperation projects and multilateral initiative.

² Civic association in Bratislava, Slovak Republic

mobility and cooperation in education, science and research)

Work area 2

“To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments” (Action 2)

To increase innovative capacities of the labour force in the Danube Region, new forms of partnerships and cooperation among key stakeholders (labour market, education and training, research and employers) need to be further developed. Employers (private, public and voluntary) have an important role to play in identifying the knowledge, skills and competences needed in working life. To increase the employability and entrepreneurial potential of all learners, communication and active cooperation should be further developed between education and training institutions on the one hand and employers on the other.

Specific ongoing activities and projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austro-Hungarian Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.HU) (Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)	Apr 2008 – Dec 2013
• Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austrian-Slovenian Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.SI) (Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)	Nov 2009 – Oct 2014
• Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austrian-Slovak Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.SK) (Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)	Jul 2008 – Dec 2011
• Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austrian-Czech Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.CZ) (Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)	Nov 2009 – Dec 2012
• Cooperation in Labour Market Issues: Austria-Bulgaria (KOOP AT-BG) (Lead: AT - ÖSB Consulting)	Oct 2009 – Dec 2012
• Cooperation in Labour Market Issues: Austria-Romania (KOOP AT-RO) (Lead: AT - ÖSB Consulting)	Sep 2009 – Dec 2012
• Network for Labourmarket Cooperation in the Border Region Hungary-Austria (NETLAB_) (Lead: AT - Regionaler Entwicklungsverband Industrieviertel)	May 2008 – Dec 2012
• Mastering Skills of European professional medics (MED) (Lead:	
• IPA 2011 project: “Preparation of Serbian Labour Market Institutions for European Employment Strategy” (Lead: Serbian Ministry of Economy and Regional Development)	

- IPA 2008 project: “Forecasting and NES data management”

Work area 3

“To support creativity and entrepreneurship” (Action 3)

A reorientation towards entrepreneurship and creativity, which constitutes a prime source of innovation, is important as a prerequisite for businesses, in particular for small and medium sized enterprises, and thus for Europe's competitiveness. This could be achieved through the introduction of innovative learning programmes to support creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of education, through the promotion of intercultural dialogue or through language training, making use of the linguistic and cultural diversity of the Danube Region. Broader learning communities and creative partnerships, involving representatives of cultural actors, civil society and other stakeholders, should be promoted with a view to creating a climate conducive to creativity and professional and social needs, as well as individual well-being.

Specific ongoing activities and projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO NET - Support for Training Firms in SEE (Lead: AT - KulturKontakt Austria) 	Jan 2010 - Dec 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training the teachers from economic VET schools to implement the training firms method (Lead: RO) 	Aug 2010 - Feb 2013

Planned projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowering Young People - Connecting Europe – PILOT PROJECT (Lead: AT – MoE) 	Jan 2012 - Dec 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART i.e. - SMART Training Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Sustainable Economic Sectors (Lead: AT - European Office, Vienna Board of Education) 	Jul 2012 – Dec 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity and business – unlocking the potential (Lead: BG - Human Resources Development Agency) 	15 months from the date of signing the contract – depends on the process of evaluation

Work area 4

“To support lifelong learning and expanding learning mobility” (Actions 4 and 5 curr.)

Comprehensive LLL strategies and their implementation have been identified as a priority for the development of knowledge societies. Making these effective and increasing their impact for individual learners remains a critical challenge. Institutional capacity building of LLL bodies is a prerequisite for implementing these policies. Countries in the Danube Region will coordinate on the development of National Qualification Frameworks. Specific added value lies in supporting non-EU Member States in drawing up their National Qualification Frameworks.⁴ Specific attention should be drawn to rural areas and to developing alternative employment opportunities and economic diversification for people occupied in traditional sectors where restructuring is still under way such as agriculture.

Specific ongoing activities and projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital Capacity Building Mobility Programme (Lead: AT)	2008 – (annual cycles)
• Training on competence based assessment for VET teachers (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET)	Aug 2010 – Feb 2013
• Improving quality assurance (QA) in Vocational Education and Training (VET) through schools' networks (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET)	Aug 2010 – Feb 2013
• CEEPUS - Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (Lead: N/A, Central office in AT)	May 2011 – Apr 2018
• HR Development of National Qualification Frameworks (Lead: HR)	Oct 2011 – Dec 2012

Planned projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• Implementation of a cooperative university in Romania (Lead: DE - Cooperative State University Mannheim)	Oct 2012 -
• Danube region cooperation in research and education programs (Lead: AT - University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, School of Management, Steyr)	May 2012 – May 2017

⁴ Coordination should be sought with the European Training Foundation.

Work area 5

“To promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through education and training” (Action 5 NEW)

Education and training systems should enable all individuals to acquire and develop skills and competences required for their employability and to foster tolerance, intercultural dialogue and non-discrimination. Equal opportunities in learning can contribute towards the social inclusion of individuals from minorities and vulnerable groups, and active citizenship. Barriers for drop-outs to return to education and training need to be removed as well as preventive approaches and cooperation between education sectors strengthened. Mutual learning on best practices should be developed.

Specific ongoing activities and projects

Title (Lead)

Duration

- EdTWIN - Education Twinning for European Citizenship in the Centropo Region (Lead: AT - European Office of the Vienna Board of Education) May 2008 – Dec 2011

Work area 6

“To improve cross-sector policy coordination to address demographic and migration challenges” (Action 6)

Enhanced efforts should be pursued to develop knowledge on the status quo, on drivers and impacts of migration flows and demographic change, so to develop a basis for enhanced cooperation of different policies at all levels of governance. Cross-sector policy coordination between relevant government departments, education authorities, social services, healthcare services, cultural policy authorities, housing and spatial planning authorities as well as asylum and immigration services at local, regional and national level, as well as dialogue with civil society are essential to ensure an adequate level of support. Spatial consequences of migration-induced social, economic and cultural changes and possible responses in the framework of urban and rural development should be considered. Cooperation with existing organisations, such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), with their existing analysis and recommendations, would be particularly useful.

Specific ongoing activities and projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitoring of Skilled Workers (FAMO - regular survey of supply and demand of skilled workers at the border region of eastern Austria and Slovakia) (Lead: AT - Paul-Lazarsfeld-Gesellschaft für Sozialforschung)	Aug 2008 – Jul 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Central European Knowledge Platform for an Ageing Society (CE-Ageing Platform) (Lead: AT - Centre for Social Innovation)	Jan 2011 – Dec 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Re-Turn – Regions benefitting from returning migrants (Lead: DE - Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration (Lead:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Programme Promoting Peace Building in Southern Serbia (Lead:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Migration for Development in the Western Balkan (MIDWEB) (Lead:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Capacity Building of institutions involved in Migration Management and Reintegration of Returnees in the Republic of Serbia (Lead:	

Work area 7

“To fight poverty and social exclusion of marginalised communities in the Danube Region, especially the Roma communities” (Action 7 and 8 curr.)

To make full use of the Danube Region's population specific focus needs to be put at empowering in particular groups in risk of poverty and ensuring them access and opportunities. Children, old people, mentally and physically disabled, immigrants, homeless, representatives of marginalised ethnic groups are the most vulnerable. Actions to reduce the number of people in risk of poverty need to complement each other, applying an integrated approach.⁵ Especially on Roma communities, whose living conditions are often especially dire and with no place in 21st century Europe, special attention must be paid. . Hence the coordination of efforts between existing initiatives and actors such as the Roma Decade (2005-2015), EU Roma platform for Roma Inclusion⁶, EU-Roma network and NGOs active in this field in the Danube Region is indispensable for improving the situation for Roma.

Specific ongoing activities and projects

Title (Lead)

Duration

- THARA Romani Butji – Innovative Roma Employment
(Lead: Volkshilfe Österreich) Aug 2011 – Jan 2012

Work area 8

“To promote gender equality on the labour market, especially in payment” (Action 8 NEW)

Equality between women and men is one of the European Union's founding principles. The principle of equal pay for equal work dates already back to 1957, when it became part of the Treaty of Rome.

To create equal opportunities for women and men on the labour market, discrimination, educational stereotypes, labour market segregation, precarious employment conditions, involuntary part-time work and the unbalanced sharing of

⁵ In particular such actions could focus on the eradicating of child poverty, improving equity in education programs (from early childhood to postgraduate training), reducing the number of early school leavers¹²⁴, providing access to health care, promoting active inclusion in the labour market, making efforts to provide decent housing for everyone, tackling indebtedness or on providing conducted training programs for local officials on governance of multiethnic communities.

⁶ The Roma inclusion Platform was endorsed and launched during the Czech Presidency in October 2008. Its main objective is to call governments and main stakeholders to debate Roma inclusion, on topics such as education, health and housing, meeting on a twice-yearly basis.

care responsibilities with men must be overcome. The full realisation of women's potential and the full use of women's skills must be fostered with the emphasis to facilitate a better gender distribution on the labour market and to allow the number of quality jobs for women to be increased.

Besides the discrimination against women in career opportunities, the discrimination against female employees with regard to their wage level is imminent. The so called gender pay gap (the average difference between men's and women's hourly gross earnings across the economy as a whole) in the EU remains at 17.8%, with heights around 30% in some EU member states

To ventilate this topic a stakeholder forum involving social partners, should be initiated. This forum should explore possible ways to improve the transparency of pay as well as the impact on equal pay of arrangements such as part-time work and fixed-term contracts.