



EUSDR | PA 09 - To Invest in People and Skills

Education and training, labour market and marginalised communities

WORK PLAN 2011-2013

As of June 2012

I. Roles and responsibilities

The PA 9 Work Plan is envisioned to be implemented in particular through the proceedings of PA 9 Steering Group meetings, working group sessions, stakeholder fora and through the implementation of projects and work in networks on the ground. Successful execution of the Work Plan will require commitment and concerted effort from all stakeholders directly involved in the process.

II. Overall activities

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 envisions the following activities:

- Establish a network consisting of the national counterparts relevant to each Priority Area Coordinators;
- Identify the possible relevant stakeholders, with particular emphasis on Project Leaders;
- Provide relevant information on the Strategy to the citizens, including to associate civil society concerned and to promote public awareness;
- Examine the Commission's target examples and find agreement on realistic and feasible targets relevant to the macro-region with the involvement of the Commission and all relevant stakeholders;
- Compile 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;

- Provide 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 are:

<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, 160 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 and further development of PA9 targets and objectives	December 2011 and ongoing	SG
• PAC Participation in relevant events on EU and regional level (e.g. ERI SEE, EU-Roma network)	ongoing	PAC
• Running of PA9-Website	ongoing	PAC

III. Targets

The targets in PA9 - 'To invest in people and skills', as set by the Steering Group, are:

- Highlighted target for PA9: Contribution to the 'Education and Training 2020' strategic framework and its four strategic objectives.
 - Action: To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies.

- Action/Work area: “To support lifelong learning and expanding learning mobility”¹
- Action: To support creativity and entrepreneurship.
- Action/Work area (new²): To promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through education and training.
- Target: Contribution to the achievement of EU 2020 targets, in particular with regard to smart and inclusive growth
 - All actions support this target.
- Target: Efficient cooperation between relevant actors through involvement and extension of existing regional cooperation networks and initiatives.
 - This target is valid for all actions and is a general strategic objective.
- Target: To foster creative partnerships at the interface of education, training and culture.
 - This target is valid for all actions and is a general strategic objective. Particular actions are:
 - Action: To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments.
 - Action: To support creativity and entrepreneurship.
- Target: Contribution to the improvement of labour markets and social inclusion in the region.
 - Action: To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments.
 - Action: To fight poverty and social exclusion of marginalised communities in the Danube Region, especially the Roma communities.
 - Action/Work area (new³): To promote gender equality on the labour market, especially in payment.
 - Action/Work area (new⁴): To promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through education and training.

¹ As adopted by SG, December 2011

² As adopted by SG, December 2011

³ As adopted by SG, December 2011

⁴ As adopted by SG, December 2011

- Target: Contribution to higher synergies of education systems and labour market demands on all levels.
 - Action: To improve cross-sector policy coordination to address demographic and migration challenges.
 - Action: To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments.
- Target: Establishment and implementation of a small project funding mechanism.
 - This target supports all actions.

IV. Actions/Work areas

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.⁵

Specific ongoing activities and projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• <u>Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group</u>	<u>tba</u>

Cooperation platforms and networks:

- **Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE)** – Regional Platform for Cooperation in Education and Training; Specific activity: Establishment of an International

⁵ 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.

ERI SEE Secretariat in Belgrade in 2012 (Lead/Chair: RS)

- **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 -

Governance and policy action:

- **Cluster of knowledge on evidence –based policy making in education** (Lead: RS) Jun 2011 - Dec 2013
- **Improving quality assurance (QA) in Vocational Education and Training (VET) through schools’ networks** (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET) Aug 2010 - Feb 2013

Attractiveness and relevance of VET:

- **Cluster Modernising VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET** (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET) May 2011 - Oct 2012

Professional development of teachers, trainer and school leaders:

- **International Cooperation For School Leadership (ICSL)** (Lead: HU – Tempus Public Agency) Feb 2011 - Jan 2013

Various:

- Projects linked to LLP, such as Comenius, Leonardo, etc.⁶ (Proposed by AT – OeAD, Austrian agency for international mobility and cooperation in education, science and research) Variable

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

Title (Lead)

Duration

⁶ Individual projects might be added at a later age

- Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group tba

- **Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austro-Hungarian Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.HU)** Apr 2008 – Dec 2013
(Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)
- **Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austrian-Slovenian Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.SI)** Nov 2009 – Oct 2014
(Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)
- **Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austrian-Slovak Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.SK)** Jul 2008 – May 2012
(Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)
- **Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austrian-Czech Expert Academy (EXPAK AT.CZ)** Nov 2009 – Dec 2012
(Lead: AT - L&R Social Research Institute)
- **Cooperation in Labour Market Issues: Austria-Bulgaria (KOOP AT-BG)** Oct 2009 – Dec 2012
(Lead: AT - ÖSB Consulting)
- **Cooperation in Labour Market Issues: Austria-Romania (KOOP AT-RO)** Sep 2009 – Dec 2012
(Lead: AT - ÖSB Consulting)
- **Network for Labourmarket Cooperation in the Border Region Hungary-Austria (NETLAB_)** May 2008 – Dec 2012
(Lead: AT - Regionaler Entwicklungsverband Industrieviertel)
- **Bilateral Exchange in Labour Market Policy Austria – Moldova** (ongoing)
- 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”**

Planned projects

Title (Lead)

- **Mastering Skills of European Professional Medics (MED)**
(planned to apply for funding in programming period 2014-2020, Lead: Business Support Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises - Ruse)
- **Establishing of a Network of Agricultural Training Centres**
(planned to apply for funding in programming period 2014-2020, Lead: Business Support Centre for Small and Medium Enterprises - Ruse)
- **Qualification Network Danube Area** (project start 2012, Lead: Vocational Training Institute Burgenland)

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">• <u>Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group</u>	<u>tba</u>
<u>Transversal key competences, entrepreneurship education, innovative learning environments and creative partnerships:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empowering Young People - Connecting Europe (EUSDR-Pilot Project; Lead: AT – MoE)	Jan 2012 - Dec 2013
<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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ET-Struct: Economic Educational Territorial - Structure (Lead: AT – European Office, Vienna Board of Education)	Jan 2010 - Dec 2012
<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

Planned projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
<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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• E-Log - Online Competency-Oriented Education in	Nov 2012 - Nov 2015

Logistics (Lead: BG - Human Resources Development Agency)

- **Innovative Competency-Oriented E-learning in Tourism – ICOELIT** (Lead: BG - BSC SME, Ruse) Nov 2012 - Nov 2015

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.⁷ 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>
• Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group	<u>tba</u>
• LLP Contact and Project Preparation Seminar on “Transition from school to work”, Vienna	<u>Oct 2012 (tbc)</u>

Learning mobility:

- **Capacity Building Mobility Programme** (Lead: AT, Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital) 2008 - (annual cycles)
- **CEEPUS - Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies** (Lead: N/A, Central office in AT) May 2011 - Apr 2018

European reference tools:

- **Development of National Qualification Frameworks** (Lead: HR) Oct 2011 - Dec 2012
- **Training on competence based assessment for VET teachers** (Lead: RO – National Centre for TVET) Aug 2010 - Feb 2013

⁷ 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

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group	<u>tba</u>
• aces - Academy of Central European Schools (Lead: SK - Vceli Dom, AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum)	annual project cycles
• Collaboration of Schools and Communities for Sustainable Development (CoDeS) (EU-Comenius multilateral network; Lead: CH - Stiftung Umweltbildung Schweiz)	Oct 2011 - Sep 2014

Specific finished activities and projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• EdTWIN - Education Twinning for European Citizenship in the Centrope 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

Title (Lead)

Duration

- Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group tba

- **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
- **Central European Knowledge Platform for an Ageing Society** (CE-Ageing Platform) (Lead: AT - Centre for Social Innovation) Jan 2011 – Dec 2013
- **Re-Turn – Regions benefitting from returning migrants** (Lead: DE - Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography)
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- **Migration for Development in the Western Balkan** (MIDWEB) (Lead: IOM)
- **Capacity Building of Institutions involved in Migration Management and Reintegration of Returnees in the Republic of Serbia** (Lead: IOM)

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.⁸ 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 Inclusion⁹, 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

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group	<u>tba</u>
• European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds (EURoma)	ongoing
• THARA Novi Vidici (Lead: Volkshilfe Österreich)	Feb 2012 – Jan 2013

Planned projects

<u>Title (Lead)</u>	<u>Duration</u>
• NSRS in the Danube Region (Ministry of Education of Romania)	tba

Work area 8

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

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

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 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.

Specific ongoing activities and projects

Title (Lead)

Duration

- Meeting of PA9 Thematic Working Group

tba