**Draft Minutes for 10th SG Meeting of PA9**

**Date:** 16 -17 March 2016

**Location:** Hotel VisPas, Lapușneanu Str.26, MD 2004 Chisinau, Moldova

**Chair:** Priority Area 9 Coordinators of the Republic of Moldova and Austria

**Participants:**

1. Grecu Laura
2. Cristina Boaghi
3. Anatol Usatîi
4. Gherganova Anna
5. Cojocari Zoia
6. Roșca Adriana
7. Paierele Oxana
8. Enache Andrei
9. Vetters Nadja
10. Oriol Irina
11. Mereuță Cristina
12. Puntea Mariana
13. Kazich Tobias
14. Tolnai Attila
15. Platon Gabriela
16. Willsberger Barbara
17. Schick Jürgen
18. Ralph Michael
19. Musterele Jörg
20. Auxtova Lucia
21. Căpraru Marian
22. Kasparyan Christina
23. Stauss Cara
24. Clapan Carmen
25. Vilfan Matija
26. Kurpejovic Enisa
27. Onida Marco
28. Kalmanova Drahusa
29. Ionescu Andreia
30. Maravic Loredana
31. Putnik Henno
32. Schaumberger Gerhard
33. Ciochina Rodica

***Welcome an introduction***

**Laura Grecu** - Deputy Minister of Labor, Social Protection and Family, Republic of Moldova, mentioned that Danube Strategy provisions reflect largely the goals set by the Government of RM, as: adoption and promotion of European values and standards in all areas; developing bilateral relations between member states of the European Union and the states of the region; ensuring energy security of the country using EU instruments, joining European energy market, connecting Moldova to the European transport networks, enhancing competitiveness and creating new jobs.

**Cristina Boaghi** – DeputyMinister of Education, Republic of Moldova, stressed the importance of cooperation in the framework of EUSDR, especially for country as Moldova is. Also, she reiterated the added value of common projects of countries from the Danube Region. In this aspect, Mrs. Boaghi underlined that the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Moldova will continue to strengthen its involvement in the co-coordination of PA 9 of EUSDR, Investing in People and Skills.

**Anatol Usatîi** - Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Construction, Republic of Moldova.

Tangible results may be achieved (and will be achieved) within viable partnerships, advisory support and common standards. The entire macro-region can be developed in a sustainable and planned way with the involvement and consideration of your institutions active in the PA9.

Danube programme is the unique programme with transnational character eligible for the Republic of Moldova which could offer huge possibilities in creation of partnerships and exchange of experience in order to ensure an efficient and sustainable implementation of the Strategy (not only financial but as well as advisory support).

**Marco Onida**, European Commission – welcomed the participants and mentioned about the importance of Deputy Minister participating to the event. He also mentioned about the importance of creating DSP and the supports are offering by this structure.

**The Chair** introduced the context of the topic:

**Anna Gherganova,** PAC Moldova Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Protection, welcomed the participants.

**Adriana Roșca,** PAC Moldova, Ministry of Education, addressed greetings to all Steering group members, especially to the Austrian PACs for their continuous support in coordination of PA9.

**Jurgen Schick –** Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, Austria, expressed thanks to MD PACs for hosting the meeting, welcomed participants and addressed current challenges and developments in Europe on education systems and cooperation topics in the DR.

**Kurpejovic Enisa -** Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austria

 **Adoption of Agenda**

PACs state that the quorum is fulfilled according to the guidelines for the functioning of the Steering Group with 8 out of 14 countries present. Agenda is unanimously adopted by the SG.

 **Tour the table: Reform priorities in education & labour market policy**

***Schick (AT):*** Austria is implementing a major structural reform in the education system which will be continued and consolidated in accordance with the governmental work programme 2013-18. The overall policy focus is on both quality and equity. The reform measures that were rolled out range from early-childhood education to lifelong learning with the aim to enhance education outcomes and concern i.a. the following: reduction of the number of students in classes, reform of teacher education, new legislation on the employment and payment of teachers and educational standards. A special emphasis is attached to measures aiming at disadvantaged young people, in particular with a migrant background, through preventive, intervention and compensation measures. Measures concern i.a. the provision of second-chance education and the improvement of adult learning as well as the expansion of all-day school places and the improvement of the school-entry phase, in particular at the interface between kindergartens and primary schools. The ongoing nationwide introduction of the new secondary school ("Neue Mittelschule") has been recently evaluated.

***Willsberger (AT):*** Focus of the Austrian Labour Market Policy is 2016 on the following activities:

* Employment Initiative 50+ (150 Mio. EURO): This program provides additional reintegration opportunities for older unemployed and aid to wage costs for the recruitment of over-50s unemployed who've been more than 180 days registered unemployed.
* Youth Coaching is a service provided to counsel young people at risk of marginalisation or exclusion in matters relating to making decisions on their future educational and vocational pathways. By focusing on the young people’s individual needs, the service aims to coach them from the end of their compulsory schooling until their sustained integration into either a continuing education system or the labour market (2016: 35 projects in Austria).
* Competence Check for Asylum Seekers: Trainers support asylum seekers in their native language and in German to make the professional skills and experiences visible. The aim of the project is to increase their chances in the labour market.
* The department Bilateral Cooperation in Labour Market Policy is coordinating and financing (within the ESF) 12 national projects for and with Roma, with the emphasis on qualification and empowerment.

***Anna Gherganova (MD):*** Main challenges of labor market of Republic of Moldova are:

- Low employment rate that means that local labor market is not attractive

- Migration of labor force, that causes a continuous decrease of active labor force

- Low unemployment rate, determined by migration of labor force abroad

- Shortage of qualified labor force

Priorities:

Are those established by Association Agreement and refers to:

Development of a new employment strategy and low, focusing on

- Job creation in rural areas,

- Social inclusion of vulnerable groups, including roma people, PwD, youth, ect

- Decreasing of informal employment

- Management of migration

- reducing the gaps between education and labor market

***Roşca (MD):*** Educational issues in the Republic of Moldova are similar to those of other countries in the Danube Region and concern mainly i.a. promoting inclusive education, improving educational quality assurance, development of dual educational system (in cooperation with AT and GE), increase learning mobility and academic mobility within e.g. Erasmus+ and CEEPUS, improvement of qualification recognition and promotion of VET sector. Furthermore, measures are needed to foster employment rate of young / elderly people and to tackle the issue of undeclared work.

***Kasparyan (BG):*** The main priority of Bulgaria is: to increase the quality of education and training, to provide equal opportunities and equal access to education and training at all ages for active social inclusion and active civil participation and to follow new educational approaches and innovation in education. In addition, ensuring quality, effectiveness and improving the accessibility of VET are important measures. Moreover, the focus is also set on increasing the employment through quality workforce with skills and competences complying with the requirements of the labor market.

***Maravic (HR):*** Most important objectives in the Strategy for Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Croatia are as follows: comprehensive curricula reform (pre-school/primary and secondary education); extending general compulsory education from 8 to 9 years, improving the quality of management of educational institutions, consistent implementation of the Bologna reform and redefining competencies acquired by higher education programmes, reform of funding of public higher education institutions (introduction of performance-based funding, improving the student standard and social dimension of higher education, further internationalization of higher education, increasing the participation of adults in life-long learning, establishing a system of quality assurance in adult education).

***Clapan (RO):*** In Romania, the main priority is: reduction of early school leavers, providing equal opportunities for young and elderly people, reducing unemployment rate (in particular for young people), implementing dual education schemes and increasing VET training, as well as promoting programmes for teachers’ education.

***Auxtová (SK):***Adult education and promoting life-long learning programmes are important measures in Slovakia. Also, youth unemployment, introducing dual education systems, enhancing work-based learning and launching a new act for VET, promoting job creation schemes and providing new scholarships (in particular for STEM studies).

2 Countries are missing (Hungary, Germany)

**State of play and new perspective**

**Oxana Paierele,** Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, Republic of Moldova, presented Moldovan national structures for coordination and implementation of the EUSDR ”Danube connects” project.

**Mariana Puntea,** Office for Cross Border Cooperation, Republic of Moldova, spoke about cross-border cooperation: achievements and perspectives of the RM, ENI CBC opportunities.

***Discussion of PA9 relevant topics***

 **Matija Vilfan DSP-** mention about EUSDR strategic projects. DSP work in 2016 focuses on 4 strategic and support areas:

* Purpose of EUSDR strategic projects/scope and criteria
* EUSDR strategic projects – time schedule
* Process for developing and establishing for key solution
* New methodologies, new transnational cooperation.

**Marco Onida**, European Commission – noted about relevance and identification of EUSDR strategic projects, revision of targets, actions and new reporting template /system and Embedding Macro-Regional Strategies in the EU funding programmers.

**Matija Vilfan DSP-** mentioned about 5th Annual Forum in Bratislava on 3-4 November 2016.

**Jürgen Schick** informed aboutthe Strategic Stakeholder Conference of PA9 in Vienna and TA work plan of AT PACs

**Jorg Musterele** Kultur Kontakt Austria – communicate about activities, web site, leaflets about strategy.

* ***Working Area 1 ”Performance of Education Systems”***

**Loredana Maravic**, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Croatia – on overview of activities of the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe in 2015-2016. She also mentioned about priority areas of ERI SEE,removing obstacles to recognition of he qualifications ERI SEE seminar, Zagreb, 5-6 nov 2015, strenghtening the VET.

**Carmen Clapan**, Ministry of Education Romania - Fostering Green Competences in VET in the Danube Region; Proposal for a common action in tourism. She noted about developing a strategic partnership in order to identify green competences for tourism sector in the Danube Region.

* ***Working Area 2 ”Cooperation in Labour market”***

**Cristina Mereuță**, European Training Fundation - she pointed the activities performed by ETF on labor market.

* ***Working Area 3. Creativity and Entrepreneurship***

**Christina Kasparyan,** Business Support Centre for SMEs-Ruse - Head of Unit, spoke about Danube competence centre for creativity and entrepreneurship and BSC SME ruseworking group 3 meeting

**Nadja Vetters**, Educational coordinator, KulturKontakt Austria and **Irina Oriol**, Programme Manager, ADA – presented Austrian experience in support of developing a labour market relevant and high quality VET system in the Republic of Moldova.

* ***Working Area 4. Lifelong Learning and Mobility***

**Nederiță Liliana,** **PSA Moldova – present** Etwinning projects on School Cooperation**, eTwinning Plus.**

**Jürgen Schick –** Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, Austria - follow-up workshop on strategic partnerships School-to-School Cooperation and eTwinning on 9-10 June 2016.

* ***Working Area 5 ”Equity, Social Cohesion, active citezenship”***

**Jürgen Schick – Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, Austria – 2nd EUSDR Youth Platform will be held in Vienna on 17-19 May 2016 in cooperation with Interkulturelles Zentrum Vienna. The platform aims at bringing together educators from the non-formal and formal education field.**

* ***Working Area 6. Demography and Migration***

**Enache Andrei,** Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova – presented a project regarding the state of play on migration  **”**EU-Moldova Mobility Partnership.

**Update Work Plan:**

The updated Work Plan is unanimously adopted by the SG.

**Revision of targets**:

SG members discussed the current process of revision of targets and its implications for PA9. A first proposal for new targets was discussed, which will be sent by e-mail to the SG members for comments. Afterwards, PACs will initiate s written procedure among SG on revised targets. EC and DSP will be informed on the outcome of the decision until end of April 2016.

**Strategic projects:**

SG members were invited to propose projects to be considered for the new “strategic projects” label. PACs will collect proposals (DSP project fiches) and will initiate a written procedure among the SG. The approved list of “strategic” PA9 projects will be forwarded to DSP until 30 April 2016.

**Closing Remarks** underlined the importance of organizing the 10th SG Meeting of PA9 in Moldova. The participants gave thanks to the organizers of the meeting. PAC Moldova mentioned the importance of the platform of communication within the EUSDR and necessity of its development in the future by a common effort. The meeting was concluded on Thursday, 17 March 2015 at 12 o’clock.