

#### 4<sup>th</sup> International Stakeholder Conference

### *Investing in People and Skills in the Danube Region Towards a New Dynamic for Socio-Economic Development*

5<sup>th</sup> October 2016,

Seminar- und Veranstaltungszentrum Catamaran (Johann-Böhm-Platz 1, 1020 Vienna)

The conference was hosted by the Federal Ministry of Education, Austria, and the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austria.

## *Report*

The 4<sup>th</sup> International Stakeholder Conference in a series of such events taking place in Vienna had intended to provide participants with opportunities to discuss current European growth and development policies, how effective approaches to skills and competences impact their success and what challenges they face with regard to education and training, labour market and civil society participation.

### **Participants**

Stakeholders from thirteen of fourteen Danube Region countries followed the invitation, 122 had registered and about 110 were actually present at the event.

**The following countries** were represented (by number of registrations):

**EU Member States:** Austria (54), Bulgaria (4), Croatia (4), Czech Republic (3), Germany (5), Hungary (6), Romania (8), Slovak Republic (6) and Slovenia (2),

**Accession Countries:** Bosnia and Herzegovina (2), Montenegro (4) and Serbia (14),

**Neighbourhood Countries:** Moldova (5) and Ukraine (0),

**International Organisations:** European Commission and Danube Strategy Point (3), European Training Foundation (1), Baltic Sea Strategy/Sweden (1).

Participants' working background is in ministries or other government bodies, educational institutions, NGOs, social partners or transnational bodies.

## Format

This year the Stakeholder conference followed a design with plenary sessions, keynote-speaker, a panel discussion as input and moderated workshops with relevant issues and invited speakers.

## Objectives

of the presentations, discussions and working group sessions were:

- To share good practice examples and to exchange experience concerning educational outcomes, the quality of educational systems and labour market as well as skills policies,
- to address common challenges for the future,
- to gain valuable inputs for project ideas and efficient cooperation networks in the fields of education systems and labour market, equal opportunities and social inclusion and
- to provide networking opportunities.

## Opening

After the introduction by the conference moderator, **Gabriele Stöger**, the meeting started with greeting words by **Bernhard Achitz** (Secretary General, Austrian Trade Union Federation) as host of Catamaran, the venue of this conference.

His speech was followed by opening statements of the representatives of the hosting ministries as well as the European Commission:

**Alois Stöger**, Austrian Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection emphasised the importance of communication and cooperation in an area incorporating 14 countries and 120 million residents. He is grateful for 5 years of fruitful cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Education and the Moldavian Ministries, Partners and all other stakeholders. In spite of the recent crisis in Europe, it will be necessary to regain trust in politics, to strengthen solidarity and the social dimension to prevent Europe from the influence of right wing populists. The EU should not be regarded merely as *economic* union, but as *social* union.

**Hanspeter Huber**, Federal Ministry of Education, Austria, Director General for International Affairs, speaking on behalf of the Austrian Federal Minister of Education, Sonja Hammerschmid, looked back at the results of a successful process of project development, networking, cooperation and exchange in the course of five years in the EUSDR and thanked the Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and all other partners for the successful cooperation. Especially in the area of vocational education and training (VET) Austria's dual system serves as model in the field of Work based Learning. Education is a key driver to provide better chances on the labour market. Additionally education is very much relevant for living a fulfilled life in the society, for social cohesion as well as for active participation and integration of disadvantaged groups.

**Marco Onida**, European Commission, Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy, Coordinator of EUSDR, stated that initiatives like EUSDR can have an essential impact in regard to social cohesion. In order to connect DR countries intensified cooperation is required. The active participation in the stakeholder conference should ensure the good cooperation and aim at exchanging good practices between the participants.

## Keynote

The keynote-speech on ***Welfare. Wealth. Work.*** was delivered by **Peter Huber**, senior researcher at the Austrian Institute of Economic Research.

According to Huber's view, the European Union in all its complexity still has to be regarded as a *success story*. His outline of an optimistic but feasible development strategy puts the focus on the well-being of its citizens instead of growth, on social investment, green innovation and sustainability instead of blind exploitation of limited resources as drivers towards higher levels of employment. In order to achieve these aims, a rethink of political strategies with a view on the potential of local actors and civil society is needed. (See slides)

## Panel Discussion

The panel discussion, introducing main actors and representatives of the EUSDR and of the EUSBR emphasised the following topic: ***Leveraging our skills investments: Impact, activities, achievements and future perspectives of EUSDR cooperation.***

**Roland Hanak:** Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austria; Priority Area 9 Coordinator - People and Skills, EUSDR

Taking stock in retrospect after 5 years EUSDR the résumé is positive: Since the 2011 opening in Vienna stakeholders had come together in meetings, seminars, conferences to develop ideas, promote projects and to initiate cooperation with other stakeholders and experts in different countries of the Danube Region. It turned out that regional cross-border cooperation becomes easier even between neighbours, through joint projects in the course of EUSDR.

Main achievements related to labour market:

- Support and monitoring of VET reforms in South Eastern Europe
- Intensified cooperation between relevant actors
- Extension of existing regional cooperation networks and initiatives.

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection has as well acted as financing body.

One important issue for future cooperation in the Danube Region is to identify relevant projects and measures and thus increase interest in transnational cooperation.

**Klaus Körner:** Policy Officer at the European Commission in the Directorate for Education and Culture

In his statement, he related the question of the added value of EUSDR as a macro-regional process for European cooperation in Education and Training to the five Europe 2020 targets (increase employment rate, invest in research and development, turn to green energy, raise education, reduce drop-out rates and decrease number at risk of poverty and social exclusion).

While there is no doubt about the value of the numerous projects that have been carried out incorporated in the EUSDR, the challenge on how to get from projects to sustainability and to generate new and significant results remains. He encouraged

stakeholders to give feedback to the EC about their needs and to bring their ideas to the fore. He mentioned peer learning activities in different fields, launched to provide space for exchange of good practice and experience.

Körner concluded, that regarding the main challenges on the skills agenda as well as the migration agenda it will perhaps be necessary to review the definition of “key competences” (from 2006) and to put more emphasis on civic competences rather than on technical skills.

**Anna Gherganova**, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Moldova;  
Priority Area 9 Coordinator - People and skills, EUSDR

Being a neighbouring country, the Republic of Moldova has been responsible as PAC from the beginning. Still, not being an EU member state, participating actively in this process has been difficult.

Experiences as a partner in projects like the Education Reform Initiative, ERI SEE and the cluster Modernizing VET system – Improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET, bilateral cooperation with Austria on the establishment of a vocational centre for the Moldavian construction and building industry (how to implement the dual system of VET) and others, prove that cooperation is important and rewarding. Although the Republic of Moldova has been involved as partner in recent projects, the work will have to be intensified. It is important to strengthen capacities of Republic of Moldova to collaborate within macro regional strategies, use financial tools provided by EU and implement project at macro regional level.

**Anders Bergström**, Policy Area Coordinator PA Education/Horizontal Action  
Coordinator HA Capacity (both within the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region,  
EUSBSR)

The Baltic Sea Strategy was launched in 2009 as the first macro-regional strategy in Europe. It primarily affects eight Member States of the EU in the region (Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Denmark, counting 85 million inhabitants), but also non-EU countries are involved in Baltic Sea Region Cooperation, mostly Norway and Russia, as well as Iceland and Belarus.

Apart from existing longer and being smaller, the EUSBSR shares some of the challenges and targets with the EUSDR. At present, refugees are a priority in

primarily Finland, Germany and Sweden e. g., migration having been an issue for long, now the focus is on asylum seekers, their education and employability. Other priorities are the ageing population and lifelong learning, VET and work-based learning, excellence and entrepreneurship are key issues to be addressed in different education systems. Alignment of funding is a further key issue and at present networks exist for Managing Authorities in ESF, ERDF and EAFRD in the region. The tendency in the EUSBSR is less focus on projects but more on development processes gathering stakeholders in so called flagships. The flagships focus on societal challenges with thematic working groups where stakeholders in multilevel governance are working together, across borders. Projects are parts of the flagships concentrating resources for development and testing of new methods. Work on a local and regional levels are important as well as the integrated and coordinated governance of the Baltic Sea region. Success of the strategy also depends on the commitment by regional and local authorities and political actors in the respective countries.

**Jürgen Schick:** Federal Ministry of Education, Austria; Area Coordinator 9 – People and Skills, EUSDR

The biggest challenges to face right now are unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Education serves as a key driver on several different dimensions in this regard. The quality and relevance of learning outcomes are key for the development of skills and competences. PA9 follows a holistic view with a focus on broad skills sets to fulfil potentials and to actively participate in society. The current emphasis is

- on strengthening cooperation in the fields of VET and work-based learning,
- on green competences and sustainable development
- on social inclusion and empowerment
- on fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.

PA9 is addressing those challenges by supporting the development of innovative policies, projects and networks in the fields of education and across different sectors. Important examples are the EUSDR Youth Platform, Annual Erasmus+ conferences on school cooperation, the KulturKontakt Austria project on cooperation between the education sector and the VET providers and the initiative of Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship.

For the future, where sustainable development is to be initiated it will be necessary to undertake efforts to go beyond individual projects, independent of funding with project budgets of limited duration and the associated project partnerships. Also, continually reinventing the wheel in projects and initiatives should be avoided. Regarding governance, it has to be acknowledged that the EUSDR is a cooperation framework and process, not a project.

## **Finding the right funding – An overview of financing instruments**

A set of presentations provided information of different funding sources.

### **Erasmus+**

**Ursula Panuschka**, OeAD, deputy head of the National Agency for Erasmus+ and Head of Area for School Education.

Erasmus+ is the EU's exchange programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train gain experience, and volunteers abroad. The programme provides opportunities for individuals as well as for organisations and aims at contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy for growth, jobs, social equity and inclusion, as well as the aims of ET2020, the EU's strategic framework for education and training.

The 2017 on-line application forms and related documents are currently being prepared and will be available on the websites of either the National Agencies or the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, depending on the actions concerned.

Read more on: [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/node_en)

### **Danube Transnational Programme**

**Johannes Gabriel**, project officer in the INTERREG Danube Programme, responsible for Programme Priority Axis 4 “Well Governed Danube Region”

The Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) promotes economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Danube Region through policy integration in selected fields.

The total programme budget is about 263 million €, including the EU support and the national co-financing, but about 50% are already committed for projects of the 1<sup>st</sup> call. It finances projects for the development and practical implementation of policy frameworks, tools and services and concrete small-scale pilot investments. EUSDR is one of the strategic frameworks of the DTP. The following priorities are linked to PA9:

- SO 1.2: Increase competences for business and social innovation
- SO 4.1: Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges

The next call will be launched in 2017, but SO 4.1 is closed in this call.

Read more: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/>

## **EuroAccess**

**Julie Dalmoro**, Project Manager at EuroVienna, is in charge of EuroAccess amongst others.

*EuroAccess Danube Region* is an online information and search tool on EU-funding available in the Danube Region that supports the implementation of the Action Plan of the EUSDR in the period 2014-2020. The Austrian Coordinator of Priority Area 10 (PAC10) "To step up institutional capacity and cooperation" has been entrusted by the European Commission to implement the project EuroAccess Danube Region, within the Danube Implementation Facility in order to provide easier access to appropriate funds and to ensure better coordination of funding".

See website: <https://danube-euroaccess.eu/>

## **Working groups**

Each workshop started with presentations of good practise examples to the group in order to give input and ideas. Moderators led the discussion, summarized the thoughts and ideas. Two moderators and two participants gave an overview of the main outputs of the working group in the closing plenary session.



## **Workshop 1**

### ***Increasing Quality and Efficiency of Education and Training: Better Skills in Better Jobs***

The aim of this workshop was to share and debate about key policy priorities, challenges as well as applicable approaches and projects within the context of the EUSDR agenda of investing in people and skills. High-quality (vocational) education and training systems contribute to improving the framework for investments and economic growth by increasing the availability of qualified human resources. Attractive and inclusive VET systems, which integrate well-functioning elements of work-based learning, also help to reduce youth unemployment. Building partnerships between education, economy and labour market is essential in matching better skills in better jobs.

**Participants** were from Serbia, Croatia, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Republic of Moldova and Romania.

#### **Inputs:**

**Tina Saric** provided inputs on ***the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE)***, a regional institutionalized platform for dialogue and cooperation in the field of education and training. Through its activities (in the form of capacity building activities, transfer of know-how and implementing and coordinating projects on themes of joint interest) it supports sustainable education reforms taking into account both regional and country-specific needs and demands in education reforms, as well as European trends and developments. The role of ERI SEE as the regional organisation facilitating and boosting communication and cooperation in SEE was recognized in the framework of South East Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020), developed by the Regional Cooperation Council.

The objective of the project ***Fostering Cooperation between Schools and the Business Sector*** – presented by **Monika Mott, KulturKontakt Austria** - is to enhance the quality of vocational practical training for pupils by promoting better cooperation between partners from the tourism sector, schools of tourism and hotel management. The focus has been placed on the organisation of high-quality internships and the change of profile of the vocational practical training co-

ordinators to an interface between schools and the private sector. Project measures include guidelines for broadening the profiles and competences of the practical training co-ordinators and their adaption to the respective national contexts, support to the introduction of this new profile, training and quality assurance measures and, in the case of Montenegro, the creation of a national Web portal for an enhanced flow of information between schools and the business sector. The regional focus of the project enables the exchange of experience in this field between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Austria.

### **Context of discussion:**

High youth unemployment that requires education and training systems to adapt their offers; strive of countries for evidence-based approaches on future skills needs identification; the New EU Skills Agenda

(<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>) and the Riga

Conclusions for VET

([http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/2015-riga-conclusions\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/policy/vocational-policy/doc/2015-riga-conclusions_en.pdf)); the importance of cooperation and sharing and learning from each other.

### **Focus of discussion:**

How can Work-based Learning (WBL) and in particular, cooperation between education and private sector contribute to better skills in better jobs.

What are the success factors?

### **Main issues of discussion:**

- **Predict future skills needs** and to have right instruments that facilitate anticipation and skills matching;
- **Capacity building of education and business** to apply the skills anticipation and matching instruments and reflect results in the reform process;
- Definition of **clear roles and responsibilities** of all involved stakeholders and commitment throughout the process;
- **Attractiveness of WBL** for young people as a way forward to a quality job; benefit of WBL for young people to get a quality job;

- Schools and companies that are active for successful and high quality WBL; support with finding placements in companies;
- **Involving SMEs and local actors** and to build on local economies;
- Key competences and in particular English language in a global economy

**Examples of good practice** were shared in the workshop (see also booklet “Projects and Initiatives PA 9 Investing in People and Skills”)

#### **Future ideas:**

- Continue WBL in the countries as a follow-up to Riga Conclusions and country VET strategies (EU Member States, candidate countries with ETF support)
- Continue commitment under European Alliance for Apprenticeship (EU MS and candidate countries)
- At regional level, move forward with ERI SEE proposal on WBL and KulturKontakt Austria proposal
- Invitation from CZ colleague to join a proposal on WBL for special needs;
- Continue cross-country, regional, transnational cooperation to inform national agendas and vice versa.

**Moderator and report by Ulrike Damyanovic, European Training Foundation**

#### ***Workshop 2***

##### ***Improving Educational Outcomes and Inclusion***

The workshop participants presented and discussed relevant policy priorities and how educational outcomes can be improved through formal and non-formal learning pathways as well as by fostering social innovation and entrepreneurship. The development of skills and competences in areas of strategic importance for economic and social development is of highest priority for Danube Region countries. By promoting social innovation and entrepreneurial mind-sets, education and skills investments can help to positively reshape economies. Education is also a key driver to prevent social exclusion and to advance goals such as social and democratic participation.

**Participants** were from Bulgaria, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Croatia

**Inputs:**

*The EUSDR Youth Platform* under the name *Social Pathways to Social Cohesion*, presented by *Marco Frimberger from Interkulturelles Zentrum Wien*, serves as a meeting point between formal and non-formal learning institutions to share experiences and aims at sharing good practice projects of cross sectoral cooperation between formal and non-formal learning institutions. It fosters sharing of ideas and project development and explores possible funding opportunities within Erasmus+ or the Danube Region Programme or other funding instruments. The platform serves as a place to exchange, get ideas and motivation in the formal and non formal educational field in the Danube Region to address youth problems – overall topic that is covered thereby is social cohesion. By better connecting the actors of formal and non-formal education the platform aims at reducing the number of early school leavers and facilitating the access to formal as well as to non-formal education.

*Strengthening Social Innovation and Entrepreneurial Spirit of Secondary Schools' students in Danube macro-region using highly innovative Learning System (InnoSchool) by Judit Makkos-Káldi, Vienna Board of Education*, is about introducing systems based on serious game and social media engagement, which will be adapted as supportive education concept in relevant national/regional curricula. The project will develop InnoSchool learning systems using learning interactions, joint development approach and capitalize knowledge and experiences from highly innovative learning systems across EU and previous projects. The project also involves institutions responsible for curricula to ensure policy level sustainability and incorporation of the system to curricula. It aims to improve engagement of students in age of 16-17 years in social innovation and strengthen their social entrepreneurial spirit through the introduction of the newly developed learning system.

**Man issues of discussion:**

- **Non-formal education** as a tool to bring young people back to learning;

- **Effect of non-formal learning** – 70% of drop-outs decreased; people that face obstacles have more benefit from non-formal learning; contributes to social cohesion;
- **LLL** is equally important – experiencing something is equal to learning;
- Re-evaluation of **key competences** – besides civic competences, nobody defines what this means to the teachers; social innovation competences must be interdisciplinary;
- **Main challenges** – social entrepreneurship; thinking in processes – learning by doing, curricula must be adapted;
- **Methods** – addressing schools and teachers; use young people’s interest in social media and gaming – to combine formal and non-formal education, use “gamification” to move from entertainment to edutainment

#### **Examples of good practice:**

- EUSDR Youth Platform
- Personalized approach – students mentors
- E-schools for sustainability
- Social skills validation – digital badges recognized on labour market

#### **Funding:**

Working Group on Creativity and Entrepreneurship mentioned.

New calls for proposals under H2020 mentioned that target education world.

#### **Conclusions:**

In order to increase outcomes and social inclusion, non-formal education must find a way to collaborate with formal education. This can be done through thinking in eco-systems:

- To involve entrepreneurs
- To involve decision makers
- To intensify cooperation among stakeholders
- To familiarise teachers with the non-formal methods – to use this as motivation and inspiration for them

**Moderator and report by Christina Kasparyan**, Business Support Center for SMEs – Ruse

### **Workshop 3**

#### **Active Labour Market Policies – Know How Exchange as a Key for Success**

The experiences of 5 years of cooperation within the EUSDR show that networking and learning from each other are relevant instruments to be successful in the development of new instruments in the field of active labour market policies. Therefore different types of projects – one with the focus on vocational training and one with the focus on higher education - were presented and discussed in the workshop. The aims were to define current common topics and to enhance networks on the topic of labour market policy to support the development of new projects in the Danube Region.

**Participants were from** Austria, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Slovakia and Serbia

#### **Examples of good practice:**

*Vocational Training Center for the Construction Industry in Moldova by **Viorica***

***Corlat-Tucan**, CALLIDUS-Instituție de învățământ pentru adulți în Republica*

*Moldova:* The Construction academie is a pilot project to show how dual vocational training works in practice with the following main objectives:

- better harmonisation of theoretical and practical elements in vocational training for building professions
- Support to the construction sector by qualifying needed skilled workers
- Support to the employees to upgrade their skills
- Basic qualification of the unemployed and the upgrading of employee skills
- Implementation of dual vocational training methods on a broader basis.

The main activities include the developing of the organisational structure and curricula, the implementation of train-the-trainer measures (22 participants) and trainings of mentors in the partner companies (12 participants) as well as the training of employees and unemployed persons (123 graduates and 30 national companies were involved).

*New Danubian Governance in Labour Market Relevance of Higher Education (EDU-LAB) by **Monika Burkard**, EFE - European Foundation for Education e.V.:* This project addresses major societal challenges in the Danube region, like the brain drain and aims at:

- Enhancing cooperation between business, higher education and public authorities
- Encouraging the development of Higher Education Law Amendments
- Encouraging creation of more professionally-oriented study programmes

#### **Further examples:**

In Finland and Sweden higher educational education is driven by the needs of the labour market (“deliver employability”). Curricula and Higher Vocational Education was developed by social partners together with businesses and industries (an alternative way towards the dual system) and is provided by the government.

*Another example is the Network “Work-based Learning and Apprenticeships” ([www.net-wbl.eu](http://www.net-wbl.eu)), which provides the first web platform on work-based learning issues ([www.wbl-toolkit.eu](http://www.wbl-toolkit.eu)).*

#### **Main issues discussed:**

- **Lack of practice** at all levels of education and training
- **Lack of dialogue** between relevant stakeholders
- **Image problem** of VET: how to make vocational education more attractive?

#### **Messages:**

- Involve the business sector for all levels of education
- Change of mind-set in relation to VET is needed
- Frameworks to bring people together are needed
- Instead of brain drain, use “**brain circulation**”

**Moderator: Barbara Willsberger**, L&R Social Research, Austria

**Report by Monika Natter**, ÖSB

## **Workshop 4**

### ***Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion with a Focus on Roma***

The goal of the workshop was to put a specific focus on the empowering of groups in risk of poverty to raise their chances in the fields of education, training and employment. Therefore projects with a focus on vocational education for marginalized groups were presented and discussed. The aims of the workshop were to define current common topics and to enhance networks to support the development of new projects.

The session was attended by 15 **participants**, including most of the Danube region participating countries.

#### **Examples of good practice:**

*Inclusion of Roma children in education and better employment possibilities of young Roma in Danube region (EduEmpD) by **Nada Trunk Širca**, Institute for romological studies, education and culture, Slovenia:* Ms Trunk shared the lessons learnt from a regional START-project in 3 Danube Countries (Slovenia, Romania and Serbia). The project was implemented by 4 partner organizations. The main objective of the project was to equip teachers and Roma school mediators/assistants with the necessary knowledge to work with Roma children as well as to exchange good practices among teachers from Serbia, Slovenia and Romania. The grant of 20.000 Euro covered the costs for 3 regional workshops and a final conference, mainly targeting school teachers and Roma school mediators. In total around 120 people benefited from the project in know-how exchange and sharing experiences from the daily practices. Possible solutions for the future: support more trainings for teachers and Roma school assistants/mediators, also trainings on intercultural competencies (for all teachers); involve more mediators into schools –where needed; better dialogue between schools and local communities and parents of Roma children. It is necessary to **invest in good and sensitive teachers, including teachers with Roma origin.**

Centre for Education and Vocational Training Concordia was presented by **Ramona Gotteszman**, Romanian Center for vocational education – Concordia. In Romania every second child lives in poverty. The percentage of Roma beneficiaries in the



activities of the Centre is between 30-50 %. The centre provides 3 types of support for children aged between 14 to 20 years.

The first support measure is made up of **trainings on specific vocational qualifications** (1 to 2 years) where 75% are practical courses and the remaining time is devoted to theory. The most effective tool is the **job coaching** support during and after the course, which shows very good employment results – around 70% of the participants are employed. In the experience of Concordia, employers care more about the vocational training and professionalism of their employees than about their ethnicity.

The second type of support model is called **School of Life** where children get personal development training on finances, language, ICT. For the entire course they have one-on-one support by tutors and professors.

The third type of support is the **Case management model** in which beneficiaries are included in planning, execution and the evaluation process of a specific business case or problem.

### **Main issues of discussion:**

During the workshop the participants raised several aspects and challenges on the given topic. The key issue is to ensure **active participation, learning opportunities and at the same time fight discriminatory environments**. In this regard it was underlined that discrimination still exists (openly or hidden, e.g. in the teaching process).

It was suggested that **curricula for pedagogic studies of Roma students should be established at EU level** in order to guarantee high standards of training and education throughout Europe and thereby eventually change the discriminating school system across the continent.

### **Conclusions:**

The workshop participants concluded the session with several recommendations:

- There should be **more (financed) possibilities for an exchange of know-how and experiences** from project-managers, who work with Roma on a variety of topics. Grass-roots experience is invaluable to further develop good practices.

- Strengthen the regional exchange and cooperation, not only for learning purposes but also for **advocating change at the macro level**.
- Future projects on Roma education should include **emotional development** activities
- EU and other donor funds have to be used smartly, but the key precondition for that is to **improve the financial transparency and accountability** on Roma related policies and projects
- **Investing on intercultural trainings for teachers**, in particular to raise awareness among teachers about Roma history, culture and language

**Moderator: Lydia Anstiss**, Volkshilfe Österreich, Thara Romani Zor!

**Report by Nadir Redzepi**, Roma Education Fund, Budapest

## Conclusions and Outlook

**Jürgen Schick**, representing PA9, concluded the conference and thanked the audience for its participation, the speakers for their active engagements and the staff of PA9 for their efforts in organising the event. He reiterated the importance of exchange and cooperation in the Danube Region. In particular, as areas of social investments take time, it is important to make successful examples visible (e.g. projects in PA9 folder, conferences) and invited participants and all stakeholders to make active use of the EUSDR cooperation framework.