

## Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the PA 7 Working Group for DRRIF and Coordination of National Funds within the Danube Region

### Agenda point "Welcome by the organizers"

Short welcome by Heribert Buchbauer for the members of the Working Group.

### Agenda point "Tour the table"

Participants from eight countries attended the meeting. For a list of participants see Annex 2.

The expectations expressed for the meeting were ranging from better information, networking and exchange to boosting science, reducing fragmentation and giving researchers who are ready first real opportunities for cooperation already before the final set-up of a DRRIF. Also the topic of using Structural and investment Funds in the new planning period is perceived as central for funding joint R&D activities.

### Agenda point "Aim, scope and context of the DRRIF Working Group"

For this agenda point two presentations have been provided (see Annex 3).

Heribert Buchbauer focused in his presentation on the background of the EUSDR, the goals of Priority Area 7 "Knowledge Society" and the reason for setting up the DRRIF Working Group. It is important to notice in this respect that the DRRIF Working Group is not limited to the issue of the set-up of a Danube Research and Innovation Fund but more generally aims at "better coordinating national, regional and EU funds to stimulate excellence in research and development, in research areas specific for the Danube Region". It is therefore important to be aware of this context and the various initiatives ongoing (e.g. R&I and smart specialization strategies, running research programmes, implemented ERA-Net activities, active Working Groups etc...).

Creating a common understanding of the aims and scope of the Working Group and the envisaged joint activities has been the focus of the second presentation (Martina Hartl) and the active subsequent discussion.

With specific view to the identified milestones of the PA7 Roadmap the following role for the Working Group has been identified:

- Milestone: Feasibility study for establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund – Deadline: March 2015  
Role of the WG: Monitoring the process and participation in the consulting process of contractor
- Milestone: Establishment of the Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF) -  
Deadline: September 2015  
Role of the WG: Central role in the decision process and in supporting first implementation steps  
The way towards an Article 185 in the long run could be an option for the DRRIF but not the only way co-operation may be organized. There are a number of steps to be taken before that.
- Milestone: DRRIF – First call for proposals and design of R&I projects -  
Deadline: December 2015  
Role of the WG: Central role in supporting first implementation steps and in monitoring the process, participation in the consulting process for the set-up and finding ways to overcome problems in the implementation;

In addition there has been broad agreement that the Working Group should fulfill the following general roles:

- Task: Follow-up the results of the DRRIF tender and developments and results attained in other projects and studies (e.g. Danube-INCO.-Net; flagship projects...)  
Role of the WG: “Clearing house” combining and assessing available project results
- Task: Linking the EUSDR activities to national/regional R&I strategies, programmes and activities  
Role of the WG: WG Members have to keep themselves and the group informed about developments in their countries/regions potentially affecting the DRRIF; where possible contact with the Horizon 2020 NCPs to “lobby” for Danube related activities (e.g. an ERA-Net) within the different Work Programmes.
- Identifying potential areas of cooperation  
Role of the WG: Central role in identifying programmes suitable for opening-up as well as areas / topics for cooperation (taking into account the JRC Nexus activities and their topics)

The subsequent discussion on the potential benefits of a DRRIF, the current obstacles of cooperation, out of scope activities for the DRRIF and the working Group at the moment as well as potential core joint activities brought the following results:

Potential Benefits	Current Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased research cooperation (for the benefit of the EUSDR priorities)</li> <li>• Better communication within and visibility for the EUSDR research community</li> <li>• Use of the full potential of talented human resources in research and innovation</li> <li>• Preventing “desertification” and brain drain</li> <li>• Focusing resources on excellence</li> <li>• Pooling resources in highly relevant areas</li> <li>• Increase competitiveness – Reduce divergence – Building a stairway to excellence</li> <li>• Benefits related to regional/national needs</li> <li>• Harmonised funding</li> <li>• Decreasing administrative burdens, common framework conditions, reduced fragmentation</li> <li>• Combining the research and innovation perspective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal issues / implementation rules</li> <li>• Lack of a clear vision for the DRRIF</li> <li>• Lack of financing available</li> <li>• Lack of awareness/commitment/interest (by policy and decision makers)</li> <li>• Lack of administrative capacities</li> <li>• Closing windows of opportunity (Operational Programmes etc.); mismatch in the timing of planning/funding cycles</li> <li>• Uneven spread of researchers – absorption capacities, partly lack of critical mass</li> <li>• Fragmented cooperation and dialogue within and between the communities involved (research / policy etc..)</li> </ul>
“Out of scope” and potential risks	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive mapping of national/regional research programmes</li> <li>• Analysing the full landscape of national and regional actors in R&amp;I</li> <li>• Concrete preparation of a DRRIF pilot call</li> <li>• New large research infrastructures</li> <li>• Too much concentration on joint calls only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networking, mobility, access to research infrastructures and other “soft measures”</li> <li>• Networking of funding agencies and support agencies</li> <li>• Opening up of national programmes and bilateral co-operation schemes</li> <li>• Teaming / Twinning/ Capacity building</li> <li>• Launching various calls under the DRRIF umbrella (networking first, then research projects, innovation projects later on)</li> <li>• Focus on thematic fields defined already (EUSDR PA, JRC nexus activities)</li> <li>• Improve policy progress e.g. in the field of common implementation rules , support for regional authorities</li> </ul>

It has further been acknowledged by the participants that a variable geometry approach will be best suited for implementing activities as it cannot be expected that all countries involved will be interested in and capable of committing to all activities. In addition the EUSDR should not be seen as a “closed club” but should be kept open to participation of additional countries/regions interested in the Danube perspective.

#### Agenda point “Update and news from the Danube-INCO.Net project”

Elke Dall, the coordinator of the Danube-INCO.Net project presented the main issues, work packages and partners of the projects and described the tasks that are closest connected to the DRRIF Working Group Agenda. They are related to Work Package 6 “Scaling up Danube Funding Mechanisms” and it is expected that the tasks within that Work Package (T 6.1 Funding Parties Platform, T 6.2 Scaling up joint funding mechanisms, T 6.3 DRRIF Info Centres / Secretariat) can support and feed into the DRRIF Working Group of PA7.

In addition the presentation of Elke Dall, Ms Pitlova from the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic introduced the DRRIF Tender which is now officially published on the following website: <http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:385528-2013:TEXT:SK:HTML>

#### Agenda point “Potential lines of actions and first activities”

As part of this agenda point has already been covered under the discussion on the aims and scope of the Working Group exchange here identified 3 points for action:

1. Consulting role of the Working Group for the DRRIF tender study  
It has been agreed that the chair of the Working Group together with the organizers of the DRRIF tender study will develop a modus and timetable for integrating the DRRIF WG in the consulting process of the tender study.  
(Time Frame: February 2014 once the tenderer has been selected)
2. Ulm-Follow-up Group  
The German Federal Ministry of Education and Science (BMBF) had a pilot activity in 2013 for networking and mobility activities (see attached slides in Annex 3 / Point 4): The BMBF call for the Danube region entitled “Ideas competition for the establishment and development of innovative R&D networks with partners in the Danube States”. It is envisaged to broaden this activity with more countries participating in 2014/2015. In addition further ways of opening up national activities for multilateral cooperation shall be examined. The BMBF offered to further work on these issues within the Ulm-Follow-up Group complementing the activities of the DRRIF Working Group and agreed to invite the nominated experts of the DRRIF Working Group to their further meetings. (Time Frame: March 2014)
3. Information exchange platform  
To facilitate information exchange between the WG members an online platform could be created. The chair of the WG will consult with PA7 coordinators if this can be done on the PA7 Website, otherwise the INCO-Net website might be an option  
(Time Frame: clarification and access to the respective website until the end of 2013)

#### Agenda point “Timing of next meetings”

It is envisaged that a next meeting of the Ulm Follow-up Group could take place in March 2014 and the members of the DRRIF Working Group will be invited to that meeting.

A next meeting of the PA7 DRRIF Working Group itself – also depending on the advancements related to the DRRIF tender study and the Danube-INCO.Net project could be scheduled back to back with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual conference of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region taking place on 26/27 of June 2014 in Vienna.

Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting



**EUSDR – PA7**

**1st Meeting of the Working Group**

**„Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund- DRRIF“**

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013  
**Time:** 10:00 – 15:00  
**Location:** Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research  
Meeting Room Freyung 3, 1014 Wien (see attached map)

**Agenda:**

<b>10:00</b>	<b>Welcome by the organizers</b>
<b>10:15 – 10:30</b>	<b>Tour the table - “Who is who” and expectations</b>
<b>10:30 – 11:30</b>	<b>Aim, scope and context of the DRRIF Working Group</b>
<b>11:30 – 11:45</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>11:45 – 12:00</b>	<b>Update and news from the Danube-INCO.NET project</b>
<b>12:00 – 13:00</b>	<b>Potential lines of action and first activities</b>
<b>13:00 – 13:15</b>	<b>Wrap-up</b>
<b>13:15 – 13:30</b>	<b>Next steps and timing for next meetings</b>
<b>13:30 – 15:00</b>	<b>Lunch and informal exchange (including address of Director General Barbara Weitgruber)</b>

## Annex 2: List of participants

Hans-Joachim SCHOLZ	Head of Unit – EU Affairs and International Organisations Bavarian State Ministry for Education, Science and the Arts	Bavaria
Veaceslav V. NICHIK	Consultant in the Department for Postgraduate Studies Ministry of Education Republic of Moldova	Moldova
Ivan LAKOŠ	Project Manager, Programming Officer Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Directorate for Science and Technology	Croatia
Lubica PITLOVA	Chief State Counsellor Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic Department for National and European S&T Policy	Slovakia
Lora PAVLOVA	Director of the Science Directorate Ministry of Education and Science	Bulgaria
Matthias HACK	Federal Ministry of Education and Research Head of Unit Cooperation with European countries and Israel	Germany
Ulrike KUNZE	Senior Scientific Officer German Aerospace Center Project Management Agency European and International Cooperation	Germany
Fulvio ESPOSITO	Head, Technical Secretariat of the Minister Ministry for Education, University and Research	Italy
Arbjan MAZNIKU	Deputy Minister Ministry of Education and Sport	Albania
Elke DALL	Centre for Social Innovation Co-ordinator of the Danube-INCO.Net project	Austria
Martina HARTL	Head of Unit Multilateral and regional cooperation Federal Ministry of Science and Research Department for International Research Cooperation	Austria
Heribert BUCHBAUER	Head of Department International Research Cooperation Federal Ministry of Science and Research	Austria

### Annex 3: Presentations of the meeting

#### 1) Context of the Working Group



DRRIF Working Group  
context.pdf

#### 2) Aims and scope of the Working Group



DRRIF Working Group  
Aims\_Scope.pdf

#### 3) Presentation of the Danube-INCO-Net project



DANUBE-inco.NET\_ov  
erview\_2013-11-13.pc

#### 4) Ulm Follow-up Working Group



BMBF Ulm Follow Up  
WG.pdf

#### 5) Additional information

Publication of the DRRIF Tender:

<http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:385528-2013:TEXT:SK:HTML>

Western Balkans Regional Research and Development (R&D) Strategy for Innovation

<http://wbc-inco.net/object/news/13148>

South-East Europe 2020 Strategy

<http://www.rcc.int/pages/0/62/south-east-europe-2020-strategy>

Danube Rectors´ Conference:

<http://www.drc-danube.org/>

Joint Research Centre - Scientific Support to the Danube Region

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=1410&obj\\_id=16440&dt\\_code=NWS&lang=en&ori=HLN](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=1410&obj_id=16440&dt_code=NWS&lang=en&ori=HLN)

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=2470&obj\\_id=4480&dt\\_code=EVN&lang=en](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm?id=2470&obj_id=4480&dt_code=EVN&lang=en)

CEEPUS: <http://www.ceepus.info/>

Central European Initiative (CEI): <http://www.cei.int/>