



## WORKSHOP SUMMARY REPORT

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Workshop Title: The way forward in aligning transnational R&I funding and activities in the Danube Region

Date: 30.10.2015 / 14:00 -14:30

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- Panellists:
- 1) Matthias HACK, Federal Ministry of Research and Education, Germany
  - 2) Ulrike KUNZE, German Aerospace Center & FP7 project DANUBE-INCO.NET
  - 3) Jorge LIZ, EUREKA , Belgium
  - 4) Viktor NEDOVIC, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, Republic of Serbia
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### Summary of the session

It is a well-known fact that basically all economic, social and science-performance related analyses and indicators – including successful participation in Horizon 2020 - show a strong disparity between the different countries of the Danube Region. And although not a new finding, it is unfortunately still true that there are serious deficits in administrative and project management capacities in a number of EUSDR countries. This negatively affects the targeted co-operation between the public administrations and research funding agencies etc. in the region and also makes it difficult to set up efficient implementation structures e.g. in the context of administrating complex programmes such as structural funds. In addition the Danube Region is confronted with the challenge of a fragmented funding landscape for research and innovation calling for a better co-ordination and harmonization of transnational funding mechanisms. This is not only true for individual projects but also concerns the strategic cooperation between regional, national and EU funding schemes. The Panel discussion has explored past experiences in the collaboration and suggested potential viable paths towards a better coordination of R&I funding resources for the future.

### Key messages / lessons learnt

So far a number of activities have already been launched that can improve co-ordination of R&I funding activities in the Danube Region. In addition the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission provides capacity building measures and Horizon 2020 supports dedicated activities towards spreading excellence and widening participation (see presentation). Many positive experiences have been made, but also obstacles for an effective co-operation were encountered.

The following table provides a summary of the expressed “DO’s” and “DON’Ts” in this respect:

| DO  | DO NOT  |
|---|---|
| Stimulate an open debate about the framework conditions for joint activities  | Expect that all countries can join all activities but live an “variable geometry” approach  |
| Look into the needs of the different partner countries and the instruments that suit them; open up national programmes  | Assume that synergies/added value come easily – they have to be elaborated and explained  |
| Make strategic connections from the EUSDR to other strategies at EU level (ERA, Innovation Union) and beyond (e.g. sustainable development goals)                                       |   |
| Invest time and efforts in discussing common thematic priorities and the potential alignment of topics as this can focus the efforts and address specific challenges                    | Limit your co-operation to strategic topics only but also allow for bottom-up topics coming from the research and innovation community  |
| Try to clear the available budgets of an activity up-front to avoid serious time lags in the implementation afterwards  |   |
| Make use of the capacity building activities and the measures for connecting pockets of excellence in the region  |   |
| Think of how excellent research can be connected to the local economy   | Ignore the Smart Specialisation Strategies developed in the countries/regions describing the fields of strengths; but be critical in the assessment of those strategies (overlaps, real capacities versus written statements) |
| Get as much knowledge as possible about the funding mechanisms in the region e.g. via the running Danube-INCO.NET project or the EUROACCESS platform, which will be launched early 2016 | Focus your activities on Horizon 2020 and the ESIF/IPA only – there is a wide set of actors and funding mechanisms available in the region  |

### Next steps

For 2016 the following activities of the different actors are envisaged:

- The German BMBF plans to launch “ERA Fellowships” for the EU 13 countries that may be extended to the Western Balkans; these are specific training measures geared towards capacity building in research management.
- Joint Research Centre: Stairway to excellence project will be further implemented – issue of providing a benefit for all EUSDR countries since the focus is the EU 13 countries; set-up of thematic smart specialisation platforms (Energy , ICT and maybe additional ones);
- Serbia will seek to further expand its activities in the field bi- and multilateral co-operation in the Danube Region; another regional focus will be the Black Sea region as Serbia holds the presidency in 2016. In addition a new R&I strategy 2016-2020 is currently being developed.
- Within the context of EUREKA, a second Danube Region related call is currently being discussed among the members with some slight adaptations compared to 2015; current priority is clearing the high quality 2015 proposals first. In addition EUREKA is developing a redesign and works on developing a standardized set of services that can be used for future joint calls.

- The Danube-INCO.Net project will throughout 2016 provide further support towards a better coordination of funding bodies and the development of joint activities e.g. in the areas of renewable energies, bio-economy and inclusive societies, but also in a more general manner.
- The BMWFW Austria plans to open up its bilateral agreements and activities with the partners in the Danube Region towards multilateral activities with a respective pilot call in 2016.
- DG Research and Innovation will continue its efforts and calls related to “spreading excellence and widening participation”.
- Within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region the PA7 / WG DRRIF will explore possibilities towards the launching of joint activities in the Horizon 2020 context (COST, ERA-Net activities, Widening measures, etc.).

Useful links / other relevant information:

[www.bmwf.at](http://www.bmwf.at)

[www.bmbf.de](http://www.bmbf.de)

<http://www.ats.rs/en/link/ministry-education-science-and-technological-development>

[www.cost.eu/](http://www.cost.eu/)

<http://danube-inco.net/>

<http://groupspaces.com/KnowledgeSociety/>

[www.eurekanetwork.org/](http://www.eurekanetwork.org/)

<http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/spreading-excellence-and-widening-participation>

<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/home>

<http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/stairway-to-excellence>