

Division GII2

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Summary minutes

Topic:	European Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) – PA 11 5th Meeting of the Steering Group		
Venue: BMI (Berlin)	Date: 06 June 2013	Start: 10.00	End: 16.30
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Participants: see list enclosed (annex 1)			
Agenda: see annex 2			

Essential results:

1. Keynote by the EU Commission (see also annex 3 – powerpoint)

EUSDR is taking on concrete shape. The strategy has created new impulses and led to transnational projects. Better coordination between the MS has brought about more coherence. This strengthens the sustainability of projects. Now our task is to create the financial basis for projects. The Member States are responsible themselves for this. The Danube Programme (DP) offers funding options for all PAs – including PA 11 – even though it will not be possible to fund all projects directly. The content of the DP is currently being drawn up. Those responsible for projects will have to set the targets, not the Commission. The Commission will presumably decide on it in early 2014. The better the projects are prepared, the likelier it is that they will be funded. Note that the EFRE Fund does not permit – given its four thematic aims – direct funding of security projects. But under the heading of Capacity Building this area can also be supported. The funding of horizontal aims continues to be possible. INTERACT helps outline the project.

Meetings planned: 21 June 2013 2. Joint Meeting (NAC/PAC) in Stuttgart; in September 2014 next PAC meeting in Bucarest; Annual Forum in Bucarest on 28/29 October 2014 (The focus will be on the topic “funding”).

2. Review

a) Round Table II on Danube Information Centres (see also annex 4 and no 3a)

Essential results

- Participating states declare their willingness to contribute to this project in line with their abilities and needs;
- Kick-off Conference planned from 17 to 19 November 2013;
- Stronger involvement of national experts in the future;
- Review new projects if it is possible and adequate to link them with the Danube centre project.

b) Conference of Interior Ministers in Munich on 6./7 May 2013

The conference served to take stock of what has been achieved in PA 11 so far and to define new challenges. The topic “cyber crime” was included in security cooperation of PA 11. The final communiqué of the project will be posted on the website www.danube-region.eu (<http://groupspaces.com/Security/>)

3. Reports about the progress of projects

a) Danube Information Centres (see also annex 5)

A coordination centre will be set up in Mohács/Hungary. Individual contact points along the river Danube will be connected with Mohács and among themselves. Thus interconnection of police, customs and civil protection authorities. A 24/7 operation is intended. The intention is to pool (border) police tasks and to prevent duplication of work. The Black Sea Cooperation Centre

serves as a role model. This project was declared a "Strategic Project" at the Conference of Interior Ministers on 6/7 May 2013. Thus the necessary political support has also been ensured. ISEC granted funds. The kick-off conference from 17 to 19 September 2013 will start the project itself. The intention is to adopt a "Joint Declaration" as one of the results. It will be agreed prior to the conference. The first "Technical Workshop" will be held in December 2013.

b) Danube Assessment Center

Initially, ROU wants to bring about a new dimensioning and restructuring of the project. Assistance could perhaps be possible through the Technical Assistance Facility (see also no 4b). The intention is to ensure funding by September 2013. Support by other MS is welcome. Note to ROU that information and data collections are already available (e.g. DOCTA by EUROPOL) and should be taken into consideration in the project.

c) Working Group Southeast (Cooperation Southeast Europe for Fighting Drug Trafficking)

An application for funding the project was lodged with ISEC in March 2013. A decision by ISEC is expected by September 2013. The kick-off is planned for January 2014. Two other conferences are planned. One focus will be on a joint exercise from which best practices will be concluded. The duration of the project will be two years.

d) Rule of Law (see also annex 6)

Corruptions puts whole states at risk. The project takes into account that a holistic approach is necessary for the fight against corruption. Three seminars have been held on this issue so far: in Sofia in June 2012 on the "prevention of colliding interests", in Fischbachau (Bavaria) in October 2012 on the "confiscation of property assets" and in Blagoevgrad (Bulgaria) in February/March 2013 on the "links between organised crime and corruption". A study is being drawn up on this issue by the Max Planck Institute for Foreign Public Law and International Law. Member States are requested to submit contributions soon. The study will be presented at the final conference in the autumn of 2013. Amongst others, it will contain best practices.

e) European Anti-Corruption Training (EACT) – (Presentation by PAC on the basis of the report made available by Austria)

Project carried out by Austria: 11 countries of the EUSDR participate. A holistic approach is being pursued. Experts in state issues draw up solutions for aims in the areas prevention, investigation and international cooperation. The main objective is to create a network for the exchange of information with the highest quality. Since 2011, 15 meetings have been held. The final conference is planned for the autumn in 2013. Participants come from the EU as well as Schengen-associated states, from states of the Western Balkans and from potential EU candidate countries. Anti-corruption units, police authorities and public prosecutors are involved. Austria organised 5 working groups under the title "Investigation and Law Enforcement", SVN 5 meetings on "prevention" and SVK 5 meetings on "International prevention". In October 2013 the final meeting will be held in SVN. As a result, best practices will be published in the form of a handbook.

4. Finances

a) Technical Assistance - TA

PACs will obtain additional funding for Technical Assistance from the Commission in 2014.

b) Technical Assistance Facility TAF (see also annexes 7a – 7c)

The Commission promises funding with which the development of projects can be funded for a maximum duration of 6 months. TAF is not designed for concrete implementation of projects. The measure is initially limited to the years 2013 and 2014. Up to 25.000 Euro can be funded per project. It will be paid by PA 10. The project volume should not exceed 25 million Euro. Projects must be in line with the funding criteria for TAF and also with PA 11 (see annex 7a – transparencies 5 und 6).

c) Project support by GIZ

At the 4th meeting of the steering group in Sofia, PAC/BMI promised a review on whether the project could be financed from TA. The legal review showed that these payments would have to be put out for tender at least within Germany. This procedure would be lengthy and complicated.

This is why this option has been shelved for the time being. With the TAF, the PACs/PA are provided with a comparable instrument.

5. Decisions/votes

a) Key objectives that could be reported for the Technical Assistance Facility

The MS are requested to submit proposals for TAF for the first selection to the Coordination Office no later than 15 July. PACs will carry out the pre-assessment and submit it, by way of circulation, to the Members of the Steering Group for a decision. Proposals adopted will be handed over to PA 10, which will make a decision about final funding (see annex 7a – transparency 9).

b) Report to the Commission

The Commission has called for the progress report by late June. We kindly ask the MS to send the parts requested to the Coordination Office in Sofia no later than 15 June 2013.

c) Customs Controls on the river Danube (request by PA 1a – see also annex 8)

Representatives of PA 1a report about difficult coordination processes between the individual control authorities on the Danube. Uncoordinated samples of goods and personal transport between the security authorities of the neighbouring states affected show that necessary thorough controls are lacking. According to PA1a uncoordinated controls often lead to unnecessarily long idle times. Ship owners complain about huge bureaucratic efforts and the costs thus incurred.

A joint project could analyse the legal framework conditions and draw up proposals. The aim is to bring about more coordinated controls accompanied by better security. Administrative work for ship owners could be reduced and so could travelling times of the vessels. PA 1a will extend an invitation to a first meeting in Vienna on this issue in the third quarter of 2013. Like-minded should first draw up the problems that have been encountered so far. For this purpose a like-minded meeting will be agreed at the invitation of PA1a in the third quarter of 2013.

The representative of the Federal Ministry of Finance gives a brief explanation on how German customs controls are carried out. She supports the idea of more targeted, harmonised and thus more effective controls. She signals the BMF's general willingness to participate in the meeting planned by PA 1a and to continue to look after the topic of "customs" in PA 11.

d) Internet website/Public relations (see also annex 9)

The website of PA 11 was basically overhauled. It now shows all activities within PA 11. It thus is a useful tool for daily work and should therefore be used more intensively by all MS. We kindly request the MS to regularly send materials to the coordination office so that they can be posted on the website.

6. Outlook

a) Cyber symposium in Stuttgart on 17 October 2013 (see also annex 10)

Cyber crime is strongly gaining in importance. In order to fight it successfully, networks, the exchange of experience and best practices are necessary. The symposium in Stuttgart is intended to serve this aim. Invitations will soon be extended. All MS are kindly requested to participate and second experts. Information on experts who could be invited is welcome. The Commission offers assistance of a more general kind (nomination of experts etc.)

b) Area: "Documents" (see also annex 11)

A conference will be held in Budapest in December. It is intended to draw up the extent to which security is required for individual movements on the Internet, which solutions are already in place and which ones of them could, where appropriate, be expanded.

7. Any other business

a) Cooperation with other regions

ROU makes general comments on a potential exchange of experience between EUDSR and Vietnam. Similar problems might exist in the Mekong delta as in the Danube delta.



b) Fight against corruption in a larger context

The RCC representative explains the necessity of fighting corruption at all levels. He referred to the SouthEastEurope 2020 programme. This could be used in additional measures in this respect within PA 11.

c) Next meeting of the Steering Group

The next meeting of the Steering Group will presumably be held in Sofia in late 2013.

(Signed)

Christian Hofmann