

1st meeting of the Steering Group for Priority Area 1a of the EUSDR

Vienna, Austria – 21 June 2011

MINUTES

1. Opening, welcome and round of introductions

The Coordinators for Priority Area 1a (henceforth: PA 1a) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Austria and Romania (represented by Mr. Vorderwinkler and Mr. Cucu), welcomed the members of the Steering Group to the meeting (the attendance list is attached at the end of these minutes).

This was followed by a round of introductions in which each attending Steering Group member introduced himself/herself and the organisation he/she is representing.

2. Organisational structure and role/responsibilities of Steering Group

The PA 1a Coordinators introduced a proposed organisational structure for the implementation of Priority Area 1a of the EUSDR (please cf. slide no. 3 of the enclosed Presentation by the Coordinators).

The Coordinators described the main aim of the PA 1a Steering Group as being an open group for discussions. The PA 1a Coordinators will inform and involve the Steering Group in bi-annual meetings (spring and autumn) regarding, e.g., progress made in Working Groups and stakeholder participation. In its turn, the Steering Group will provide feedback and guidance to the Coordinators.

3. Expectations by DG REGIO for Priority Area 1a

Ms. Cruceru (DG REGIO) communicated the Commission's expectations on how to implement PA 1a of the EUSDR together with a timeline and milestones for implementation:

- Concerning the Steering Group, a structured method of work and a structured way to communicate with Steering Group members should be assured. This should be done by developing Terms of References for Steering Group matters, based on ToRs for Steering Groups of other Priority Areas of the EUSDR.
- A first progress report by PA Coordinators has to be sent to the Commission in July 2012. The report should contain short-, medium- and long-term milestones and deadlines for actions in PA 1a as well as clear responsibilities for the countries involved. The progress report will be presented to the European High Level Group in December 2012.
- An amended Communication and Action Plan for the EUSDR is set to be finalised at the beginning of 2013 based on all progress reports by Priority Area Coordinators.
- Progress is expected for the projects listed in the EUSDR's Action Plan. "Short-term" priorities as well as three new projects should be identified by the Steering Group. Steering Group members should also recommend projects on the basis of an identification of cross-border/international projects in their countries.
- Communication issues are important for implementing the EUSDR. Hence, a website is to be set up on the short term for PA 1a by the Coordinators featuring information on the work being done and on the results achieved (the websites of DG REGIO and INTERACT will feature a link to this Priority Area website). In addition, an "image" should be created for PA 1a.



- The EU will hold a financing meeting in October 2011 to identify the financial resources still available for the EUSDR in the current financing period. The INTERACT programme (“Lab Group”) will provide assistance on a horizontal level by identifying funding sources and developing a coherent information database. Financial technical assistance will be provided for Priority Area Coordinators by the Commission.
- Upcoming meetings relevant for all Priority Areas are planned as follows by DG REGIO:
 - December 2011: Common meeting of Priority Area Coordinators, National Contact Points, Steering Groups and European Commission (based on Gödöllő blueprint)
 - March 2012: Annual Stakeholder Forum for all Priority Areas; countries are invited to host this event
 - November 2012: Second common meeting of Priority Area Coordinators, National Contact Points, Steering Groups and European Commission
 - March 2013: Second Annual Stakeholder Forum

4. Revision of exemplary targets

The European Commission's Communication COM(2010) 715 final (“European Union Strategy for Danube Region”) includes the following three exemplary targets for PA 1a of the EUSDR:

- (1) Increase the cargo transport on the river by 20% by 2020 compared to 2010.
- (2) Remove existing navigability bottlenecks on the river so as to accommodate type VIb vessels all year round by 2015. (Footnote: The international classification of European Inland Waterways (UNECE/TRANS/120/Rev.4, p. 28/29) in the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN) classifies the parameters for motor vessels and pushed convoys. In the present text, category VIb uniquely refers to pushed convoys and inland waterways vessels with a draught of up to 2.5m).
- (3) Development of efficient multimodal terminals at Danube river ports to connect inland waterways with rail and road transport by 2020.

A proposal for a reformulation of target (2) on waterway infrastructure as well as two additional targets were submitted by the Priority Area Coordinators for discussion in the Steering Group. After extended discussion, the following wording for the five targets for PA 1a of the EUSDR was proposed:

- (1) Increase the cargo transport on the river by 20% by 2020 compared to 2010.
- (2) Solve obstacles to navigability, taking into account the specific characteristics of each section of the Danube and its navigable tributaries and establish effective waterway infrastructure management by 2015.
- (3) Development of efficient multimodal terminals at Danube river ports to connect inland waterways with rail and road transport by 2020.
- (4) Implement harmonised River Information Services (RIS) on the Danube and its navigable tributaries and ensure the international exchange of RIS data by 2015.
- (5) Solve the shortage of qualified personnel and harmonize education standards in inland navigation in the Danube region by 2020, taking duly into account the social dimension of the respective measures.

All targets as formulated above were endorsed by most members of the Steering Group, with the following exceptions:

- The representatives of Germany, Ms. Schumann, and Hungary, Mr. Berencsi, will have to collect the mandate from their Ministries to endorse the targets as proposed in the meeting.
- Mr. Bernabei, representing the European Commission's DG MOVE, also endorses these targets, but will have the proposal for target (2) discussed by the EC's Services for approval. For



documentation purposes, the following proposal for a reformulation of target (2) was submitted by DG MOVE as an alternative version during the review process before the meeting: "Remove existing navigability bottlenecks on the river so as to comply with the classification of all Danube river sections according to the "European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance" 1996 (AGN)", accompanied by the following footnote: "In the case of the Bavarian sector between Straubing-Vilshofen, a Study for the evaluation of navigability conditions and their impact on the environment is undergoing and it will be completed by the end of 2012."

5. Project fiche template

Ms. Cuc, representing the Technical Secretariat for PA 1a in the Romanian Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, suggests on behalf of the Coordinators to collect information on ongoing and planned projects also project ideas by means of a project fiche template. This template will be created by the Priority Area Coordinators and fine-tuned with the European Commission. It will then be sent out to the country members of the Steering Group with a two months horizon for collecting the respective project information so as to furnish a sound basis for discussion of projects in Working Groups and Steering Group meetings.

6. Closing, date and venue of next meeting

Due to the extensive discussion on the revision of the exemplary targets for PA 1a, a discussion on the planned number and scope of the Working Groups and Ad hoc Working Groups for PA 1a proposed by the PA Coordinators was not possible. Hence, the respective proposal by the PA Coordinators can be found in the presentation which is sent out to the Steering Group members together with these minutes.

The 2nd meeting of the Steering Group for Priority Area 1a of the EUSDR will be held in autumn 2011, presumably in mid-October. The exact date and venue will be communicated by the Priority Area Coordinators in due time.

Enclosures

- (1) Presentation given by the PA 1a Coordinators at the Steering Group meeting.
- (2) List of attendants as circulated during the meeting.
- (3) List of contact details for members of the Steering Group.