
EU Strategy for the Danube Region
Priority Area 1a – To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways

RULES OF PROCEDURE
of the
Steering Group

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Preamble

Representatives of the Countries of the Danube Region have established on the basis of the

- European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (COM(2010) 715 final) of 8 December 2010 and the accompanying Commission staff working document "Action Plan" (SEC(2010) 1489 final) and the
- Council Conclusions on the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region of the 3083rd General Affairs Council Meeting (8388/11) of 13 April 2011
- Conclusions of the European Council (EUCO 23/11) of 23/24 June 2011

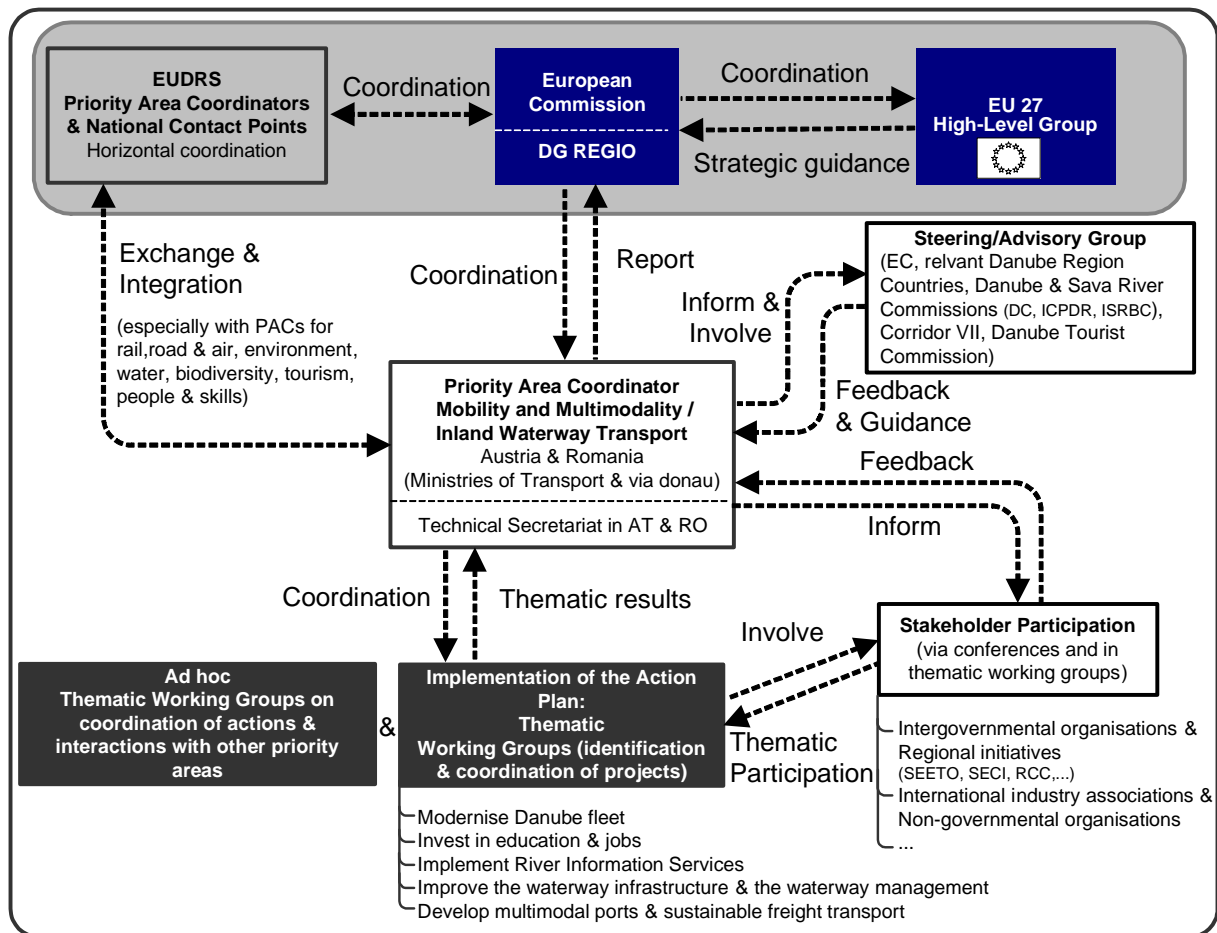
a Steering Group (hereinafter referred to as "SG") for the implementation of Priority Area 1a - "To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways" (hereinafter referred to as "PA 1a") of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (hereinafter referred to as "EUSDR")

Art. 1 – General provisions

- (1) The SG for the Implementation of PA 1a comprises representatives of all Danube Region Strategy Partner States (i.e., Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, Ukraine), the European Commission (DG REGIO, DG MOVE and DG ENV) and relevant international organisations (Danube Commission, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, International Sava River Basin Commission, Pan-European Transport Corridor VII, Danube Tourist Commission, Working Community of the Danube Regions, Council of Danube Cities and Regions).
- (2) PA 1a is coordinated jointly by the Federal Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Romania, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria and via donau - Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH.
- (3) The SG is chaired by the Priority Area Coordinators (hereinafter referred to as "PACs").
- (4) The SG is assisted by the Technical Secretariats of the PACs.
- (5) Working Groups may be established in order to investigate thematic issues and support the SG and the PACs.
- (6) The duration of the term of office for the SG will cover the whole period of implementation of the EUSDR.

Art. 2 – Role and tasks of the Steering Group

- (1) The SG is created in order to advise and assist Romania and Austria in their capacity as PACs, for the smooth implementation of PA 1a and to ensure that suitable actions are anchored all over the region and in all participating states. Furthermore, the SG should also make decisions regarding the future development of the area, its objectives, co-operations and guidelines. The following figure provides an overview on the organisational structure of PA 1a and the position of the SG:



- (2) The SG is responsible for the labelling of projects which are seen as being in line with the EUSDR, but not for the operational initiation, administration, organization or execution of such projects.
- (3) The SG members shall submit to the PACs a list of ongoing, planned projects and possible project ideas in line with the EUSDR's Action Plan. This list is to be continuously updated during the implementation phase of these projects. New project ideas shall be assessed according to whether or not the proposal is in line with the goals of PA 1a, its relevance to the macro-region and its added value compared to on-going projects.
- (4) The SG discusses the Action Plan adopted by the Commission and may propose adjustments of the following three types to the European Commission:
 - Clarification/correction of the details of a project
 - Addition of a new action or project
 - Deletion of an action or a project
- (5) The SG shall discuss and finally approve the annual implementation progress report for PA 1a to the Commission, which has to be drafted by the PACs.
- (6) Already existing and well-established platforms should be utilized in order to identify synergies with the EUSDR.
- (7) The SG facilitates the work of the PACs regarding the implementation and the development of PA 1a, in particular with regard to

- Establishing a network of national counterparts
 - Identifying possible relevant stakeholders, with particular emphasis on Project Leaders
 - Promoting public awareness
 - Promoting the cross-sectoral approach of the EUSDR
 - Ensuring policy discussion and policy development
 - Ensuring communication and visibility of results
- (8) The SG members entitled to vote have the following tasks:
- Participate in the SG meetings and involve in the decision-making process;
 - Inform the SG about the activities developed in the countries they represent and which are related to the implementation of PA 1a;
 - Contribute to implement the decisions of the SG, according to their responsibilities.

Art. 3 – Working language and communication

- (1) Aiming at an efficient and rapid communication among the Partners of the SG, English is adopted as working language.
- (2) Communication among the members of the SG and between the SG Secretariat and the members of the SG shall generally be done by e-mail. Any document which shall be sent to the members of the SG or the SG Secretariat shall be sent via e-mail or, if this is not possible, by fax.

Art. 4 – Membership

- (1) There are three types of membership in the SG:
 - Members nominated by the Partner States with a right to vote
 - Other regular members with an observer status
 - Invited members with an advisory capacity
- (2) All Danube Region Strategy Partner States named in Art 1. (1) have full membership and shall delegate at maximum two representatives to the SG. The participation in the SG shall be voluntary. The members shall act under the mandate and on behalf of their respective countries. Full membership of a Partner State provides equal rights and possibilities for participating in the coordination of PA 1a.
- (3) In addition to the Partner States the European Commission and the relevant international organisations named in Art 1. (1) are regular members of the SG on the basis of an observer status. These SG members shall have the same tasks as the members entitled to vote of the SG, with the exception of the participation to the decision-making process (i.e. no right to vote).
- (4) The meetings of the SG are open, ex officio, to the participation of staff members of the PACs and the EUSDR's National Contact Points. Upon invitation of the PACs, other countries, international organizations, existing cooperation mechanisms, regional initiatives, experts and other partners may participate as guests with an advisory capacity.
- (5) SG members are allowed to send substitutes to the meetings upon prior notification of the PACs in writing and in due time.

Art. 5 - Meeting organization

- (1) The SG meets at least twice a year. PACs are in charge of convening the meetings of the SG and shall inform the members of the SG about the venue and date of the next SG meeting at least one month in advance.
- (2) Electronic exchange and web-based co-ordination shall play a crucial role within the PACs and the SG's communication.
- (3) At each of the meetings, the PACs provide a draft agenda, write meeting minutes and distribute all the relevant documents among the SG members.
- (4) At the beginning of each meeting, the agenda of the respective meeting will be adopted together with the minutes of the previous SG meeting.

Art. 6 – Decision-making

(1) Decision-making during SG meetings:

- a. Decisions that the SG is entitled by the European Council to make will be taken by consensus, which, in principle, is understood as absence of objection. Decisions can be made when at least 50% of the Partner States plus one more – i.e. eight Partner States – are present. If there is no quorum of 50% of the Partner States plus one more at the meeting, the meeting will be held and the decisions will be taken according to procedure under section (2) a.
- b. Each Partner State shall have one vote.
- c. In the case that consensus cannot be reached, the Chairperson sets down a 30 minutes recess for consultations in order for the present members to reconsider their position. The impossibility to reach consensus appears if, after two rounds of discussions on one certain issue, a consensual decision cannot be reached.
- d. In case of opposition by several members entitled to vote, the Chairperson decides whether the decision is postponed or defeated. However, if consensus cannot be reached due to one single opposing Partner State, the SG may decide, at the initiative of the Chairperson, by "unanimity minus one", meaning, all members but one shall support the decision.
- e. Decisions which directly affect one of the Partner States cannot be taken without the approval of that particular Partner State.

(2) Decision-making by written procedure:

- a. In addition to the decision-making at the SG's meetings, the PACs – also on request of SG members – can initiate a written decision-making process via e-mail. In this case, the SG Secretariat on behalf of the Chairman shall send the draft decision to the members entitled to vote and shall fix a deadline, giving the addressees at least 10 working days time for reply. In all cases the exact date and time of reaction shall be put in the e-mail. If no objection was received by the deadline, the proposal is considered approved in the sent format (silence is considered as agreement).
- b. In case objections are received, the SG Secretariat sends all received objections to the PACs. The PACs formulate their joint position regarding the received objections, which is consequently transmitted by the SG Secretariat to the SG members entitled to vote. The lack of reaction on proposals/objections is equivalent with agreement with the joint position of the PACs. In case new objections are formulated, the matter shall be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the SG.
- c. SG members not entitled to vote will be informed about the decision-making process via e-mail.

- d. In any case, after the time limit has expired, the SG Secretariat shall immediately inform all members on whether the decision is deemed to be taken or the matter is placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the SG.

Art. 7 – Adoption of the Rules of Procedure

- (1) The Steering Group shall adopt these Rules of Procedure by unanimous decision at its next SG meeting in autumn 2011. In case unanimous consensus cannot be reached the decision-making provisions of Art. 6 shall be applied in order to reach consensus.
- (2) After their adoption the rules of procedure may be amended by consensus.