

**EUSDR Priority area 1b:
To improve mobility and multimodality: rail, road and air transport**

**MINUTES
of the 11th STEERING GROUP meeting
held on Tuesday, 19 January 2016
Belgrade / Serbia**

Participants: AT, BG, DE, HU, RO, SK, SRB, SI, DG REGIO, DG MOVE, PA10, DSP, DTP, EIB, SEETO, CEI, Uni. of BG, Airport Belgrade, Carpathian Convention,
Non-participating / absent: B&H, CRO, CZ, ME, MD, UA
Chairman: Mr. Miodrag Poledica, PAC, Serbia
Co-chairman, Mr. Franc Žepič, PAC, Slovenia

Item 1: Welcome and introductory remarks

The chairman Mr. Miodrag Poledica and the co-chairman Mr. Franc Žepič welcomed the participants to the 11th Steering Group meeting of the PA1b of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). They expressed satisfaction with large number of participants. Since the previous SG meeting that was held on 1-2 July 2015 in Ljubljana a lot of things happened - both in the macro-region and regarding other transport issues within the EU. Expectations that this SG meeting will provide exchange of relevant information, open constructive discussions and bring to the conclusion several issues were raised.

Item 2-3: Approval of the agenda of the 11th SG meeting and the Minutes of the 10th SG meeting

The Chairman gave general review of the Agenda which had its focus on taking stock of the transport activities and progress of the implementation of the Danube Region Strategy since 2011 provided by the European Commission (EC) representatives and PACs, information on EUSDR new governance body and programme, revision of targets, cooperation with other regional organizations, projects update and financial support for projects. Information on main events held in 2015 and planned ones in 2016 is to be given.

There was no discussion on the minutes of the 10th SG meeting.

Conclusion: The Agenda for the 11th SG PA1b meeting is unanimously approved. The Minutes of the tenth SG meeting held in Ljubljana on 1st and 2nd July 2015 is unanimously adopted.

Item 4-6: Taking Stock of the transport activities in the Danube region

Mr. Marco Onida, the Team Leader (DG REGIO) reported on the progress of the implementation of the Danube Region Strategy since its start in 2011. He pointed out that the Priority Area dealing with transport represents the backbone of the Strategy. He stated that the Year 2015 was very important and productive for the Danube Strategy with a lot of positive changes. Mr. Onida informed that a new implementing body the Danube Strategy Point (DSP) was set up by the Commission and the 14 member states commissioned to support the Danube Strategy implementation, to ensure its

continuation, enhance coordination, contacts, communication and visibility. The second important achievement in 2015 was the EC adoption of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) which completely matches with the territory of the Danube Strategy. The DTP includes specific objective that is planned to provide support to EUSDR governance, both in terms of implementation of projects and particularly by financially supporting Priority areas/PACs and the DSP. He also stressed success of the EUSDR Annual Forum in Ulm organized by passed presidency of Baden Wurttemberg with 31 workshops and seminars organized in 2015. It was the occasion to make an assessment of the progress of the Danube Strategy.

Two very important priorities which have been worked within DG REGIO were pointed out:

- The process of embedding meaning that all national operational programs and mainstream of county specific programs within the new programming phase 2014-2020 are referring to the Macro-Regional Strategies. Now the DG REGIO together with the Danube Strategy Point is cooperating with Managing authorities of the country specific programs in order that those programs take into account projects coming from the Danube Strategy;
- Direct involvement of the line DGs into the actions of the Danube Strategy, whereas the DG REGIO acts as the coordinator and the line DGs take over the lead in the work of the respective Priority Areas. In the PA 1 it has already been performed, and DG MOVE is welcomed for its active participation.

Mr. Onida also assessed the last Progress Report of the PA1b and expressed his satisfaction with the honest and self-critical way that it has been drafted, as well as with the fact that the PA 1b was very active. The critical point in the Report is related to the projects, particularly the financing of the project, which could be the focus of the 12th SG meeting.

Answering the question posed by the representative of the EIB regarding the status of the PA1a and timeline for the embedding process, Mr. Onida reported that within the PA1a the Master Plan on Navigability on the Danube has been adopted in Brussels on 3 December 2014, a document containing a mile-by-mile description of the action needed to ensure the navigability of the Danube river. Now, a part of the Master Plan has been implemented through the project financed out of the Connecting Europe Facility.

Mr. Cesare Bernabei (DG MOVE) complemented the answer given by Mr. Onida, stressing out the coordinated work among the line DGs as well as among the countries participating in the Danube Strategy. He also underlined the importance of the synergy effects produced from the results made on different levels of cooperation regardless disparity in the number of projects implemented so far through the PA 1a and PA1b. He also addressed the importance of cooperation of EU member and non-member states and introduced the WB6 program. With regard to TEN-T and CEF mR. Bernabei stated that 10 years ago priorities were different, since today's World is running fast. In his opinion today transport is really very multi-modal. He also pointed out core corridors priorities. These are: cross-border links, major rail connections, inland waterways and ports, urban nodes and intelligent transport solutions (e.g. ERTMS, RIS, VTMS and other ITS).

The PACs, Mr. Žepič and Mr. Poledica appreciated DG MOVE recognizing the efforts made within the PA1b and their support. Reporting on the State of play of the Priority Area 1b they pointed out the good cooperation during the reported period and gave an overview of the activities done during the 4 years period. The presentation started with the events organized by PA1b among which there were 10 SG meetings, 6 workshops and seminars and 8 stakeholder conferences. It was stated that all of the events were successful and seeking for continuation. The need to connect better with other PAs in the future, particularly with PA1a was pointed out. The conferences organized were very well attended showing clearly the gaps, real needs and potentials in transport sector in the

region. The topics were chosen based on the stakeholders proposals marked as one of the key issues. A brief overview was given on the conferences organized by the Commission or other organizations and participated by the PA1b too. The participation in conference and TEN-T Core Corridor Forums was given as an example: "Modernization of Railway Infrastructure", Vienna, organized by regional initiative Transport Community of Austria, and the invitation made by the EU Coordinators for Baltic-Adriatic (Mr. Bodewig) and Mediterranean Corridor (Mr. Brinkhorst) to follow up their activities in the Danube Region.

The fact of established cooperation with different stakeholders and a number of other regional organizations and initiatives such as CEI, SEETO, the Carpathian Convention, and other important institutions which are also promoters of the Danube Strategy projects, as well as the commenced implementation of some of those projects were stressed as a very important achievement of the work within PA1b. The cooperation with the PA10 within TAF-DRP and START programs was given as an example of good cooperation among PA-s and other stakeholders in developing project ideas and ToRs for relevant projects. The importance of presence of the EIB as well as of the Transnational programme of the Danube Region (DTP) was underlined as crucial for the implementation of the PA1b projects.

The attention was drawn to the list of 150 projects made at the beginning of the activities of the PA1b and the scale of the project varying from several millions to the few billions of euros, which clearly shows the complexity of this PA. That was the reason for the decision made to start with soft projects and to support and, when possible, facilitate infrastructure projects.

The distinguish representatives of the DG REGIO and DG MOVE stressed the importance of the cooperation with other EU Strategies such as EUSAIR, connection with other relevant PAs taking into account the economic criteria, and motivation of all stakeholders in the Region for action.

Conclusion: The work of the PAb1 in the reported period was assessed as successful. The achievements confirmed the Danube Strategy as the point of gathering the different initiatives and stakeholders aiming to address the most important transport issues in the Region. Therefore it is recommended to continue with networking particularly among the other EU macro-regional strategies and relevant PAs in order to ensure the synergy of actions.

Item 7-8: New EUSDR Governance Body and Programme

The DSP: The representatives of the Danube Strategy Point (DSP), Mr. Matija Vilfan, Head and Mrs. Janeta Toma, senior officer explained their organization and the role of the new governance body. Mr. Vilfan stressed out that the role of DSP it is not to act as a "super PAC", but to support and connect the different PA-s and projects. He presented DSPs website as the relevant source of information about overall activities and supporting documents within the Danube Strategy, and marked it as the main communication tool. Mr. Vilfan also gave the information about the four work packages of the DSP which are the following: 1) Linking different PA-s together and support them in project implementation; 2) Monitoring and evaluation of the Danube Strategy results and its presentation; 3) Communication support; and 4) Support in target revision process.

The DTP: Mrs. Ana Leganel, the Project Officer of the Danube Transnational Programme gave an insight into this programme whereby she informed the participants about the mission, structure and key principals of the Programme, intervention logic of the projects, challenges to be addressed in transport specific area and link between EUSDR

and the Danube Transnational Programme. Mrs. Leganel shared also the information about the 1st call for project proposals. The call has two steps. The First step call (Expression of Interest) was opened from 23 September to 3 November 2015, while the second step is planned in spring 2016.

Item 9-10: REVISION OF TARGETS

The reference was made to the issue arising from the implementation of the Danube programme and particularly selection of projects – the need to make closer look at the targets in relation to the Communication and the Action plan. During the presentation and discussion it was stressed that not all of the existing targets need to be redefined, but to be analysed and assessed regarding their relevance and updated according to the valid priorities of the Danube Strategy. The updating process should be undertaken in a manageable way and preserving the continuation between the existing and new targets. The DG MOVE representative pointed out the existence of the standard EU target related to the each mode of transport, and the need to adjust the targets with the EU transport policy and WB6 process.

Conclusion: The SG members were given time till 27 January 2016 to submit their suggestions and concrete proposals for targets revision; the submitted proposals will be summarized and send to the SG members on 2 February 2016. Thereafter the final comments are expected on 9 February 2016.

Item11-13: Cooperation with other regional organizations

The SEETO: The representative of SEETO, Mr. Nedim Begovic presented the latest and most important activities of SEETO. He informed the SG members in more detail about the WB6 initiative and establishment of the WB Core and Comprehensive transport network, as well as about the infrastructure projects and soft measures envisaged. He also reported on the available funding and co-financing rates and modalities. Mr. Begovic also reported on the SEETO ongoing work on Intermodal Strategy for Western Balkan aiming to explore the intermodal potential of the region and possibilities for its improvement. He said that the work on the Study was done in close cooperation with PA1b PACs. Concluding his presentation Mr. Begovic pointed out that SEETO goals for the next period are implementation of projects focused on the infrastructure by 2020 and further work on removing non-physical barriers in the region.

The CEI: In his presentation Mr. Alberto Cozzi, the representative of the Central European Initiative (CEI), presented the governance, objectives and the main activities of the CEI. He said that CEI covers all the macro-regional strategies and the same countries as EUSDR (Germany excepted). Initially set up with the aim of supporting Central and East European countries on their path to the EU integration, today this regional intergovernmental forum acts as a bridge between macro-regional strategies. Its activities are managed through the multilateral diplomacy and funds. The CEI has its own funds (CEI Cooperation fund, CEI Fund at the EBRD and KEP fund). In addition the CEI is also one of the recipients of EU funds through EU projects (TEN-T, CEF or/and Horizon 2020). The funds are used to implement actions based on the 3 years Action plan (2017-2020). Transport and energy are the most important priority areas for funding. In the period from 2010-2015 almost 2,8 million of EUR was invested mostly in the Western Balkan countries and for the infrastructure projects (market studies, feasibility studies, preliminary design). Mr. Cozzi informed also about EU transport projects participated or led by the CEI over the last 10 years. He mentioned Italy/Slovenian Cross border cooperation programme and Central and South East Europe programmes. Based on analysis of the EUSDR Action Plan Mr. Cozzi made match of the EUSDR priorities and two

projects participated or led by CEI: Multimodal links and improvement of access in connectivity implemented through CEI led project "Rail4See" and "ACROSSEE" (Accessibility improved at border CROSSings for the integration of South East Europe). Both are also connected with the EUSDR Action plan and the connectivity agenda (two main topics: TEN-T extension to the Western Balkan countries and cross border bottlenecks).

The Carpathian convention: The MoU between the EUSDR and the Carpathian convention was presented by Mr. Onida, DG REGIO and Ms Eleonora Musco, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. Based on the strong EU principal taking into account environmental concerns this cooperation is meant to be purely voluntarily with the aim to make synergy of the action of Carpathian Convention and EUSDR. Mrs. Musco explained the attention of the Carpathian Convention to support the implementation of EUSDR with its expertise and 10 years long experience of 6 countries which are also part of the EUSDR. The Conventions conducts similar activities to those of PAs, and with reference to transport had several transport projects in the past and some of them are still ongoing. Last year the 7 countries of the Convention adopted the Protocol on sustainable transport. (Note: <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/protocols-to-the-convention.html>)

Conclusion: The cooperation with regional organizations and initiatives is very important in order to avoid overlapping activities and duplicating actions. Moreover such cooperation should prevent us of doing the same thing in the different context and facilitate synergy of the joint efforts. Cooperation should continue and where there is mutual interest even strengthen.

Item11-13: PROJECTS UP-DATE

In his introductory word the chairmen, Mr. Poledica shared the information about commencement of the works on the new bridge over the Sava River. The bridge which will be the part of the Belgrade motorway bypass is financed by EIB.

TAD project: Mr. Jose Rino, the EIB and Mr. Ahmed Shaukat presented the project Transport Analysis for the Danube Macro-Region (TAD). It is expected to get the experts on board very soon and to complete the Study in eight (8) months period. Mr. Rino and Mr. Shaukat stressed the sense of the document was to identify the priorities in the Region and the importance of collecting inputs from all of the EUSDR members in order to deliver a quality document is needed. The SG members were invited to comment the ToR of the project.

Conclusion: As there is no document addressing transport within the Danube Macro-Region the work on the study "Transport Analysis for the Danube Macro-Region" was found very important as a kind of a basic document for activities within the PA1: "To improve mobility and Multimodality". The Study is supposed to give an overview of the transport infrastructure in the region and a clear picture of what is needed to be done in order to reduce the existing difference and contribute to the more balanced transport infrastructure development in the future.

Item11-13: FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS

Mr. Bernabei gave the overview of the EU funds available for the financial support of the project such as CEF, the only fund that has been increased (24 billion EUR) in the financial period 2014 – 2020, while all the other funds has been reduced. The reason for that is a clear need for the support provided through this fund for projects with clear EU added value and the goal to have TEN-T completed by 2030. Mr. Bernabei also

elaborated on the priorities of the innovative funding instruments (for IWW and rail), cohesion envelope (corridors, cross border missing links), and private investment possibilities and other financing sources at the EU level (CEF, EIB, European fund for strategic investments-EFSI). European investment Advisory hub was set up to provide technical and administrative assistance to those who are assigned to prepare projects. As the WB6 project concerns there are several supports: WBIF, support to SEETO, more coordinated cooperation with World Bank, IPA II (A Connectivity Technical Assistance Facility-CONNECTA).

Ms Mira Ebner, PA10-City of Vienna gave the presentation on the status of TAF-DRP and START seed money. Ms Ebner profoundly informed about the TAF-DRP and START initiatives launched by PA10 and the EC to fill in the gaps between project ideas holders/promoters and funds available. She also reported on launched calls and ongoing projects.

Conclusion: The common and coordinated effort is clearly visible behind all of the initiatives. Exchange of best practice is of utmost importance. PA1b should continue to prepare projects to tender for seed money.

Item18-19: MAIN EVENTS 2015 and PLANNED EVENTS 2016

Main events in 2015: Information was given by PACs and DG REGIO about the following events:

- a) 2nd Business Conference "Transport & Logistics of South East Europe and Danube Region – TIL 2015", 26 March 2015, Belgrade
- b) The First Expert and Scientific Conference "Road Safety in the Danube Region", 20-21 May 2015, Ljubljana,
- c) 2nd Conference "Transport & Research in the Danube region", 20-21 October 2015, Čatež ob Savi, Slovenia
- d) 4th EUSDR Annual Forum, Ulm (29 – 30 October) – WS sustainable mobility in the Danube region , Exhibitions,
- e) The First Conference "Development & Maintenance of Road surfaces in the Danube Region", 25 November 2015, Bled, Slovenia.

The conferences organised or co-organised by PA1b gathered over 100 participants each in Slovenia, while conference in Belgrade was attended by around 400 participants. At all above mentioned events distinguished speakers deliver valuable presentations to the participants, mostly experts.

Planned events: The Co-chairman stated that year 2016 is an important milestone for the EUSDR, including PA1b. Number of activities is taking place, such as: revision of targets and when needed actions, DTP programme first call will select first projects that are of particular relevance for the macro-region, decisions of strategic projects are to be taken, etc. For these reasons and in line with PA1b work programme 3 to 4 Steering Group meetings are foreseen.

In terms of better involvement of stakeholders, awareness rising, exchange of best practices and network two conferences are planned: 4th Stakeholder Conference "The Danube Region Transport Days 2016" and 3rd Conference "Transport & research in the Danube region". Last one being financially supported by the Slovenian ministry of Infrastructure.

With regard to preparation of 5th EUSDR Annual Forum to be held on 3-4 November 2016 in Bratislava the PA 1b SG believes that possibility to present their activities should be offered to all Priority Areas of the EUSDR.

Item 20: AOB and Closure of the meeting



No additional topic was discussed under AOB.

The Chairman and co-chairman thanked all participants for contributions and active participation. Next SG meeting is tentatively planned before the summer break in Slovenia.

The 11th SG meeting started at 8.30 and ended at 18.00 on 19th January 2016.

Place, Date

Belgrade, 19 January 2016

Chairman:

Miodrag Poledica, PAC 1b

Annex:

- List of participants