

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

**MINUTES
of the 9th STEERING GROUP meeting
Wednesday 10 September 2014 and Thursday 11 September 2014
Belgrade / Serbia**

Participants: AT, BG, CRO, HU, RO, SRB, SI, DG REGIO, SEETO, EIB

Non-participating / Absent: BiH, CZ, DE, MD, MN, SK, UA

Chairman: Mr Miodrag Poledica, PAC 1b (Serbia)

Co-chairman: Mr Franc Žepič, PAC 1b (Slovenia)

1. Welcome and introductory remarks

The Chairman, Mr. Miodrag Poledica, State secretary welcomed the participants to the 9th meeting of the EUSDR Priority Area 1b Steering Group (PA1b SG).

2. Approval of the agenda

The Chairman said that main focus of the agenda is on work done so far (overall strategy implementation) and on projects.

Conclusion: The Agenda for the 9th SG PA1b meeting is unanimously approved.

3. Approval of the minutes of the 9th SG meeting

The Co-Chairman made an overview of 8th SG meeting conclusions. No comments were introduced.

Conclusion: The Minutes of the eight meeting held in Ljubljana on 1 and 2 April 2014 are unanimously approved.

4. Overview on three years of the implementation of the Strategy - "Changes in governance and operational work"

Ms Irina Cuceru (DG REGIO) explained changes in governance and operational work by reporting Council conclusions concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies and new initiatives as follows:

1. Macro-regional strategies showed to be successful approach for comprehensive development of a larger region by addressing common challenges and potential in regions of Baltic Sea, Danube and Adriatic-Ionian Region.
2. Even though good practice examples of successful macro-regional actions already exist in the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region there are still implementation obstacles that should be

addressed through changes and improvement of governance. The improvements are especially required at the level of coordination and implementation.

3. The National Co-ordinators (former National Contact Points) and PACs (Priority Area Coordinators) will have new tasks creating link between the political level and the Priority Areas in order to improve coordination and implementation processes.
4. Non EU countries and regions are officially fully involved. However, their active participation is often limited, due to capacity and resources. It is proposed to provide support by organising SG (Steering Group) meetings every time in different country and via all instruments possible, including the Danube transnational programme.
5. In order to enhance co-operation and strengthen synergies between the Strategy and programme structures Secretariat for the Danube Strategy - Danube Strategy Point (DSP) is to be established based in Brussels. Start of the DSP may be expected in January 2015. The main tasks will include:
 - a. Support to implementation through activities of horizontal coordination between PA,
 - b. Organising joint meetings of PA Coordinators and National Coordinators.
 - c. Communication responsibility – making more visible results of implementation
 - d. Support PA in evaluating processes by providing evaluation tools like on-line reporting tool. On-line reporting tool will contain the reports of all PA, PA Coordinators and National Coordinators and it will be suitable for extracting information for Annual reports.
 - e. Provide information on DR programme, organising joint meetings for selection of project proposals, coordination of communication.

In first two years the DSP will be financed by EC, and after that by the Danube Regional Programme.

6. Danube Operational Programme will be adopted by the end of January and First Call will be launched in May 2015. Funds will be allocated for PA Coordinators, Administration capacity building etc.

Conclusion: Information was given on Council conclusions concerning the governance of macro-regional strategies and new initiatives, establishment of Danube Region Strategy Point, recommendation to increase involvement of non-member countries and 1st call for Danube Operational Programme that is expected to happen in May 2015. SG should be prepared for this call with selected project proposals to seek funding.

5. State of play: Projects, New project ideas and initiatives

Mr Jochen Schneider (The EIB) gave an insight on development of Macro regional transport study:

- The purpose of such a study is to get so called “snapshot” on the regional transport system, future development of transport flows, and impact of infrastructure and transport flows on development. Some of the task of the study are:
 - Data gap analysis,
 - Description of transport flows,
 - Analysis of existing weakness and bottlenecks with regard to both infrastructure and administrative,
 - Estimation of future traffic development and impact of bottlenecks removal.
- ToR is under preparation – SG members will receive it to give their comments,
- After the finalization of ToR next step will be development of criteria for selection of the projects.
- EIB will coordinate these actions with SG members. SG member will have role of contact points on national level.
- Important dates:
 - Tender will be launched in November 2014
 - Start of implementation is planned in first half of 2015

Conclusion: the SG members should expect communication from the EIB to develop ToR and selection criteria for the projects, and later for evaluation of project proposals. SEETO already developed databases, so it is suggested to EIB to cooperate with SEETO in order to avoid unnecessary actions and get quality data.

Mr Mladen Krstić (University of Belgrade) gave information on the project proposal “*Danube Region Intermodal Strategy*” (DRIS). It is highlighted that project has regional and transnational significance. Lead Partner is the University of Belgrade, with support of the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministries of other countries. Several research institutions, private companies and consulting firms from the Danube Region countries, also support it. Significance of the project comes from contribution to economic development of the countries and the region itself, closer cooperation between the countries of the region, integration of the region into the global goods and transport flows, etc. This significance will be achieved by creating an integrated intermodal transport strategy for the entire Danube region. Integrated intermodal transport system will be achieved through combination and improvement of different modes of transport. For Danube Region the focus is on combination of waterways (inland and sea), railways and roads transport.

Ms Olja Čokorilo (University of Belgrade) and Ms Ana Šimecki (SEETO) informed SG members about project proposal titled “*the Danube Region Air Transport Network Strategy*” (DAirNet). It addresses the challenge of underdeveloped airport connectivity in Danube Region. Objectives are to improve the air network connectivity in the Danube Region, identifying new air transport connections in the Region in order to improve mobility, accelerate economic integration and

cooperation as well as to develop a set of dedicated action plans. Large improvement potential is identified with multiple positive effects on improvement of economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Region.

Mr Žepič (PAC) informed SG members about key points on project Western Balkan Corridor (WBC). Mr Žepič stated that WBC is an important corridor linking EU and non-EU Member States. Project proposal for a study was part of TAF-DRP program. Further discussion is planned at the stakeholder conference "The Danube region Transport Days" on 22th October in Ljubljana, where dedicated workshop will take place.

Mr Valentin Berca (Romania) promoted new corridor initiative with working title «*TRAIANUS Railway Freight Corridor*». Mr Berca elaborated the potential benefits of integration of TRAINUS railway corridor into wider EU network. The underlying idea of integration of following sections: Trieste/Koper (Adriatic Sea) – Divaca – Ljubljana (5th corridor) – Zidani Most – Sevnica – Dobova – Zagreb – Belgrade (10th corridor) – Timisoara – Craiova – Bucuresti – Constantza (Black Sea) ("Imperator TRAIANUS" corridor). To support the project proposal idea the different strategic documents, initiatives and projects are discussed: Euro – Med Transport Projects, Regional transport action plan for the Mediterranean region (2014-2020), TRACECA - Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia and UN ECE – UNESCAP Euro-Asian Transport Links project (EATL), etc.

Mr Žepič (Slovenian delegation) informed SG members about project initiative: »*Cycling Mobility Management Strategy in the Danube Region*« (DrCycleNet). He stressed the importance of this project as contribution to efforts of sustainable transport initiatives in the Danube region. SG members will receive the project proposal with other SGs materials and the further and more in detail discussion is planned for conference in Ljubljana.

Mr Begović (SEETO) gave short overview of the SEETO Flagship Axes Initiative: objectives, pillars, phasing and outputs. Flagship Axes Initiative was initiated in 2012 and is supported by Ministries of Transport from the SEE region. The first phase consisted of assessment of transport modes characteristics, existing infrastructure and ongoing and future projects. Phase 2 is expected to deliver in depth analysis on the three remaining pillars: Market access assessment, Performance indicator analysis and Border-crossings analysis. The result of this phase will be List of measures and it will be finished by the end of December 2014. List of measures will give guidance how to cope with following topics:

- what could be achieved at "zero cost"?
- what could be achieved through a resource efficient programme of maintenance/upgrading/reconstruction?
- what should ideally be achieved and at what costs to reach TEN-T standards?
- what is needed to cut time travel from point A to point B by 10% (on road and rail), 25% on road and rail, 50% (on rail only)?

The start of implementation is planned in January 2015. Mr Begović concluded that the main objective is regional cooperation and standardisation.

6. Financing opportunities for small projects

Mr Žepič briefly presented key objectives and principles of the new START program initiative, basic eligibility criteria, START governance, management structure and calendar. It was noted that PACs and their Steering Groups are going to play a central role in selection and implementation of projects with regard to the project content.

7. List of PA1b projects

Exchange of views on finished projects, updates, new proposals and monitoring

Mr Žepič:

- Proposed organising a Workshop to overview the finished, ongoing and future projects. One of the main reasons for profound discussion about projects on the PA1b list is lack of information on projects that are ongoing or planned. Revision of present list and exchange of information about projects is much needed.
- Stressed the issue of eligibility criteria of EU funds for planned projects, particularly road projects in Operational Programme. Fact is that roads that are not planned on TEN-T maps could not receive support (co-financing) from EU programmes. Yet many roads in the Danube region that are crucial for linking core / main corridors are in need for modernization, upgrading or even building a missing link. It is proposed to try to find the solution for this problem.

Mr Poledica:

- Agreed with the proposal, reminding about Workshop held in 2012 that resulted with List of projects and proposed revision of database with ongoing, planned and completed projects.
- Proposed organising Workshop in two or three months period, to have enough time for preparation and in the meantime to exchange information on projects via e-mail.

Mrs Irina Cuceru:

- Regarding Mr Žepič remark on roads projects that are not eligible for EU funds: the role of SG should be to connect projects in beneficial way. Roads projects should be financed through National Programme and Transnational programme could serve only as planning tool.
- Regarding Workshop: Recommended to invite staff from Technical Secretariat or Managing Authority who directly work on Programmes to help SG members to understand the way projects are selected. Also to invite the experts for project management to consult on project planning and applying for Transnational Programme.
- Recommended for SG members to decide on priorities, first on national level and then to decide on common regional priorities.

- Suggested creation of two lists of projects, one with all projects and other the shorter list (5-10 projects) that are actively supported.

Mr Fedor Černe:

- Supported the idea to have Workshop on projects to discuss the whole issue. He drew attention that it is useful to have register of projects but it is just a tool. On the other hand there are projects designed to be beneficial for whole Danube Region and these should be supported by the whole group.
- Proposed to design the List of projects supported by all SG members and list of recommendations for funding opportunities based on feedback from the European Commission or the EIB.
- Concluded that list should be more then "just a list". It should mean that project has support from the whole region and once the priorities are agreed upon the projects should be pushed forward.

Ms Šimecki:

- Proposed after updating the list of projects to put all the projects on the Map to visualise it and to make it easier to see the possible ways of connecting projects into bigger projects.

Conclusions: An event (Workshop) should be organised to only discuss projects. The List of projects should be updated. It is proposed to create one list with all projects and second list with projects that are really transnational. SG should try to involve experts and stakeholders who could help to find financing opportunities. Planned workshop should result in selection of projects and recommendations for funding opportunities.

7. Action plans, actions and roadmaps

Mrs Mađar (RRA LUR, Slovenia) addressed the topic "*Sustainable metropolitan transport systems and mobility*" by presenting the strategy for achieving the objectives of the project "Sustainable mobility in Ljubljana urban region" and its positive developments. The key lessons learned from this process are:

- Develop a common strategy for all initiatives
- Coordinate actions with all related institutions
- Involve the key stakeholders through Board structure participation
- Apply for funds through different funding schemes: EIB, ERDF, etc.
- Cooperation on horizontal level (transnational, regional and local)
- Coordination of all initiatives
- Integration of soft projects and big infrastructure projects

Mr Berca briefly presented the *Standardisation platform for Smart Cities* by presenting:

- the EU politic perspective
- activities of European Standards Organizations (CENELEC - European regional standards organization, CEN - the European Committee for Standardization, and ETSI - the European Telecommunications Standards Institute)
- activities of International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- activities of ASRO - Romanian Standards Association and
- A possible Action Plan for Bucurest:
 - Introduction - the target to reduce co2 emissions
 - Emissions inventory of reference
 - Vision and action plan

12. AOB:

Information was given on the following events:

- Passed events
 - The first conference "Transport and Research in the Danube Region", 2-3 April 2014, Ljubljana
 - 3rd EUSDR Annual Forum (26-27 June), Vienna
 - Symposium on Sustainable Mobility and Green Economy in the Danube Region, 4-5 July, Ulm
- Planned events:
 - 4th Danube eRegion Conference (DeRC), 22 - 23 September 2014, Ljubljana
 - ITS Conference "Bridging Boundaries" and Second Workshop on ITS in the Danube Region, Vienna (25 and 26 September)
 - Preparation of 3rd Stakeholder Conference "The Danube Region Transport Days 2014", Ljubljana (21 - 22 October)

13. Closure of the meeting

The Chairman thanked participants for valuable contributions and active participation.

The 9th SG meeting started at 12.30 on 10st September 2014 and ended at 12.00 on 11nd September 2014.

Place, Date

Belgrade, 11 September 2014

Chairman:

Miodrag Poledica, PAC 1b

Annex:

- List of participants