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DCF | GALATI, ROMANIA
DANUBE COOPERATION FORUM
GALATI, 11-12 APRIL 2019



National University of Political Studies and Public Administration



About DCF

The Danube Region Cooperation Forum was a two days' annual event, which was held in Galati and during which government representatives, together with European officials, representatives of the administrations of regions and cities, as well as experts and academics, had the opportunity to share good practice and knowledge in regional and urban development.

The forum was also intended to be a platform for dialogue on political and economic issues regarding the development of the Danube region in order to raise decision-makers' awareness of the importance of local and regional partners in the process of EU policy making. It was also characterized by a high density of activities, being structured in thematic sessions, workshops and panels. At the same time, the event turned to be a platform for networking and direct contacts between participants. The Cooperation Forum in the Danube Region aimed at creating a work and dialogue format for the analysis of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) in order to seek, together with representatives from the academic, economic, social and political environment, the best European solutions for the challenges faced by the states in the region.

The event gave the participants the opportunity to share their own expertise and good practices, as well as to familiarise themselves with best practices on a range of regional themes (local and regional development, youth, resilience, energy security, environmental security, citizenship, European policies, neighbourhood policy etc.). It also encouraged the dialogue with stakeholders and engagement in new partnerships and joint projects that can provide solutions to regional challenges.

Prof. dr. Florin TUDOR
The director of the Danube Cooperation Forum

**The Danube Cooperation Forum
was granted by the
Ministry of Foreign
Affairs, the patronage of the
Romanian Presidency of the
Council of the
European Union.**

OBJECTIVES

- to answer to specific challenges and needs of the region in an original way. The structured dialogue may bring not only valuable experience for countries outside the EU, but also to provide a unique opportunity for the Member States or the candidate countries to cooperate with countries from outside the EU, at a macro-regional level;
- to create a platform that links people, ideas and needs, a place where nine Member States and five non-Member States would work together for common objectives arising from research and innovation, for welfare and infrastructure, for culture and heritage - necessary stage of knowledge and support at local, regional and national levels through future projects that will defy borders and restrictions and will offer citizens better prospects of their region;
- to set the priorities and the action lines for Romania in the process of EUSDR implementation at European, macro-regional and national level;
- to identify the capacity of the macro-regional strategy to mobilize new projects and initiatives, creating a sense of shared responsibility for the main four objectives of the EUSDR: connecting the Danube region; protecting the environment in the Danube region; building prosperity and strengthening the Danube region.

SYNERGIES

- the Forum focused on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), this being a priority of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union;
- the Forum aimed at promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion (principles explicitly mentioned in the motto of the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Romanian Presidency of EUSDR);
- the Forum discussed the EUSDR Action Plan providing a platform for presenting Romania's vision of EUSDR;
- the Forum ensured continuity with Three Seas Initiative Forum, especially on the connectivity dimension;
- the Forum promoted the synergy between EUSDR and the Black Sea, another priority for Romania and the European Union as a global actor.

ORGANISERS

"Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati

Center for International Studies and Human Rights

"Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati

The National University of Political Studies and Public Administration

Department of International Relations and European Integration

FRAMING OF THE EVENT



The plenary opening ceremony was performed by Prof Dr. Florin TUDOR, Dean of the Faculty of Legal, Social and Political Sciences, coordinator of the Danube Cooperation Forum. Welcoming speeches outlined the importance of the EUSDR mechanism and the future of the Danube cooperation formats in the context of the Romanian Presidency of the EU Council, the reform of the EUSDR agenda and the design of the next multiannual financial framework.

OPENING REMARKS

Prof. dr. Florin TUDOR
Dean of the Faculty of Legal, Social and Political Sciences
The director of the Danube Cooperation Forum

“The Cooperation Forum in the Danube Region is a means of communication and collaboration between renowned officials, leaders and experts in the region with the purpose of developing a European European interdisciplinary network based on cooperation and collaboration which will debate and propose efficient and sustainable initiatives and public policies shaped on the specific of the Danube Region. The projects from the EUSDR agenda, under the presidency of Romania, which aim at regional connectivity on three important and future areas – infrastructure, energy and digital – can change the map of the EU's economic preferences.”

Prof. Dr. Iulian-Gabriel BÎRSAN,
Rector of “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati

“The feeling of shared responsibility for the region's problems is essential. We have potential but also experiences that can inspire us. The establishment of a university, the construction of a bridge and that of road and rail networks were three solutions that saved the city of Malmo from insolvency. Could this also be the answer to the question “What should we do for the Danube Region?”

Dr. Victor Negrescu
former Minister delegate for European Affairs-Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Vice-Rector of the National University of Political Studies and Public
Administration

“In 2018, Romania took over, for the second time, of the EUSDR Presidency and presented the concept of revitalization. This concept implied involvement, acceleration of enthusiasm from the participants, in order to put in the foreground of the local, national and European debates the priorities and opportunities offered by EUSDR. It started from the belief that in the Danube Region there is a potential that can be harnessed using the EUSDR instruments, as well as the opportunity given by holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.”

Ionut Florin PUCHEANU
Mayor of Galati

In the Danube Region there are foundations for “a proper future”. Vision is needed. The city of Galati, the city between the waters or the largest river basin in the region is a suitable area for investments in maritime transport and in areas related to water.

Dorin OTROCOL
Prefect of the Galati County

The presence at the forum of central and local authorities, European experts, academia, business community and civil society confirms the importance given to the Danube Basin. The debates, from these two days, would be constituted in future business projects that aim at investments in strategic fields such as transport infrastructure, environment, energy, improvement of inland waterways. The common wishes related to the river must materialize for the benefit of the whole European space.

Costel FOTEA
President of the
Galati County Council

The Danube is one of the most powerful economic engines for Galati. Galati is the capital of the Danube. It is one of the 12 riverside counties that has managed to present to use 80 million euros out of 150 for connectivity networks: roads within Galati county which means economic development. An expressway for Galați-Slobozia, the construction of a regional hospital and an airport are the county's priority projects we wish to carry out.

Dan NICA
S&D Coordinator for the Industry, Research and Innovation Committee and European Parliament Rapporteur for Horizon Europe Framework Program for Research and Innovation, Rules for Participation and Dissemination

Research and innovation are key areas in ensuring competitiveness. The European Union offers sufficient support for activities in this area. In order to benefit from this support two aspects are important: 1) assertiveness and persistence; 2) access to information. Those who have these qualities and can harness the access to information, the benefits are enormous. The Horizon 2020 program has been improved, providing simplified access for all businesses, universities, institutions from all EU member countries and third countries. Simplification is especially beneficial for SMEs, a specific tool has been created for SMEs with a high potential for innovation, which have set out to develop their growth potential.

Panel 1: Economic Opportunities in the Danube region (I)

Panel moderated by
Radu G.MAGDIN,
Vice President Strategikon, Bucharest

Speakers discussed on the potential of the Danube region for the business environment and the development of the industrial capabilities existing in the region. The interventions focused on the mechanisms that have to be put in place to foster business cooperation in the region.

Remarks and conclusion of the panel

Valentin LAZEA
National Bank of Romania
Chief economist

“What kind of growth do we want in Romania?” was Mr. Valentin Lazea's question. The information regarding the national plan to adopt the euro was just a pretext to answer this question. Romania has recovered quite a lot compared to other Eastern European countries the GDP gap that separates us from the European average, but in an unsustainable way. Economic growth is not determined by fiscal easing policies, monetary easing policies. To be sustainable, economic growth requires three factors: capital, labour and productivity. Added, these three factors mean direct investments, better functioning of the stock exchange, education, health, stimulating birth rate, restoring the Romanian diaspora, allowing work after the retirement age, infrastructure, a less bureaucratic administration, irrigations in agriculture, energy efficiency, research and development. The budget for these types of activities should be discussed in Romania, not about fiscal easing. From these activities can be gained both economically and politically.

Bruno LOPANDIĆ
Deputy Director,
Croatian Chamber of Economy,
Representative Office in Brussels

Regional cooperation was the key word. The magic of the Danube initiative is that it gathers countries that are not only and solemnly members of the European Union, but also non-EU members, which brings more incentive on how to bring up standards and how to cooperate. . In the Western Balkans, the Danube Region is very important for carrying on with the EU developments to the the western Balkan countries, in terms of standards, policy, mobility, traffic communication, connectivity and energy efficiency. These are the areas where forced cooperation is needed with science and academic institutions. Economic risks need to be eliminated and education and transfer of knowledge to be promoted.

Dr. Silviu NATE
Director,
The Center for Global Studies
“Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu

After creating a profile of the Danube in an equation larger than the regional one, Silviu Nate intercepted three important things about the Danube: 1) The Danube ensures continental interdependence, being a source of geoeconomic power; 2) it has a regional integrating role, by bringing The Western Balkans closer to the functional core of Europe; 3) it also has a global dimension from the perspective of much wider geo-economic projects than the regional ones, including the energy connection to Central Asia, the North Caucasus and the exit to the World Ocean through the Black Sea. EUSDR needs to be rethought so as to provide the elements of a leadership test. Analyzes regarding the economic and institutional capacity of the participants in the implementation of the Strategy are needed, identifying the aspects and efforts through which the message and objectives of the strategy can be put into action.

Petrus Siebrandus ter SCHURE
General Manager,
Dutch Marine Equipment SA Galati

In order to do business you need infrastructure. To do business, you need sufficient resources for the people around you, people with knowledge. Another thing is that you need to have knowledge shared with the universities around you. We have a lot of money available from the EU, but this part of Romania is forgotten. Faster decisions need to be taken, in order to help the infrastructure to be stronger, in order to compete in this region with the rest of the neighbouring countries. Connections between companies and universities are needed and they must be strong.

Panel 2: Economic Opportunities in the Danube region (II)

Panel moderated by
Radu GORINCIOI,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
EUSDR Romanian National
Coordinator at that moment

Speakers discussed on the role that the transport and energy sectors can play in the development of regional cooperation around the Danube. The interventions focussed on the possible projects that can be initiated in the field while using best practices.

Remarks and conclusion of the panel

Dr. Lazar COMANESCU
Ambassador,
former Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Senior Adviser (Foreign Relations) to
the President –
The Chamber of Commerce and
Industry of Romania

Dimitris DIMITRIADIS
Quaestor, European Economic
and Social Committee,
Employer's Group

To have results it requires more effort and a more appropriate selection of projects. A process of reflection and then of action in the European countries bordering the Danube must coincide with the approval of a project relevant to the Danube Region. Croatia and Germany are two countries that should be involved in this process, given that both will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2020. "Danube – the 2nd Rhine" should be a priority project in the future financial framework, a project that could also benefit from the famous Juncker investment plan.

Speaking of macro-regional strategies, the most important one is the Baltic Sea macro-regional strategy and the second one is the Danube macro-regional strategy. By organizing new debates of macro-regional strategies, the Romanian Presidency puts this as top priority to discuss it in Brussels and what the European Commission can do for the next period regarding macro-regional strategies. There are 3 basic values: no more legislation, no any other budget, except the money that we have in the European budget and no other European institutions and these values are important and we can use them. There is the need for better infrastructure, better communication, better connectivity, between the regional authorities, the local authorities, with civil society organizations and employers, in order to work together in important projects for the Danube macro-

Herfried LEITNER
Deputy Cairman of Board Pro
Danube International, Vienna

What we do, in practical terms, is to promote the Danube as a transporting way, as one way to transport the goods comparing it to the Rhein. Our aim is to enhance business transport of good along the Danube. We are creating therefore the necessary framework for it which is hardly not existing today as for example the LNG, when LNG came into the sense of, ok, how do agree now, what are we going to do in the future, LNG came into mind because with hydrogen we are too far

away with the knowledge so there was no framework for the LNG so the masterplan of LNG across the Rhein-Main-Danube was initially brought up by Pro Danube International so in that way we are paving the way into the future for shipping industry and industry in general to use the Danube and we are trying to improve the conditions along the Danube, because we have some issues with the fareway in some areas along the Danube, so we try to speak with one voice towards the EU Commission.

Catalin Eduard TIGANUS

General Manager, The NAVROM SA
River Navigation Company, Galati

NAVROM S.A. is one of the largest shipping companies on the Danube, a company that has taken important steps to align with customer preferences and compliance with international standards. However, Romanian vessels cannot yet access navigation sectors such as Rhine-Main, as they do not meet the technical and navigation requirements for this sector. Delayed dredging works and compliance with European norms are two aspects that put pressure on the activity of shipping companies. The European Commission imposes strict rules regarding emissions. Navrom is part of a project that involves changing propulsion engines and exhaust systems, but at the moment there is no engine manufacturer that meets these technical demands.

Felix CAPRARIU

President of the Territorial
Association for Energy
and Energy Efficiency (ATE3)

According to the Paris Agreement, Romania has committed to reduce carbon emissions. In EUSDR there is an important pillar - energy efficiency and renewable sources, through which financing is provided for these areas. However, potential applicants fail to obtain this funding for two reasons: the national legislation is very rigid and the lack of communication between the sponsor and the potential applicant. The financing mechanism of the ITI Danube Delta is much more efficient and can serve as an example of good practices in the case of EUSDR.

Dr. Romeo V. IONESCU

"Dunarea de Jos" University of Galați, Senior Vice President of the Romanian Regional Sciences Association; Member of the European Regional Science Association; Member of the Regional Science Association International; Member of the Romanian Consulting Committee for Territorial Cohesion 2014-2020

The success of EUSDR depends on a practical approach. The solutions for developing the Romanian communities under the EUSDR umbrella are to correlate the EUSDR cooperation projects with the objectives of the Strategy for territorial development in Romania: polycentric Romania; the transformation of the big Danube cities (Braila, Galați) into poles of growth and regional well-being; increasing the role of the specialists from the Danube universities in supporting the public-private cooperation and in providing technical assistance in the field of regional development under the EUSDR aegis;

creating a database with proposals for partnerships within EUSDR and potential collaborators (companies, institutions, NGOs, universities, etc.); a "return" of the EUSDR to the Danube and focusing the projects on the socio-economic underdevelopment areas as described in the 2035 Territorial Development Strategy; the return to the saying "Unity in diversity" from the current reality "Unity vs. Disparity".

Panel 3: Education and academic cooperation in the Danube region

Panel moderated by

Stefan BALTA,
Vice-Rector of „Dunarea de Jos”
University of Galati

A panel discussion on the role education and academic cooperation could play in developing regional cooperation around the Danube. Panellists presented the cooperation programs already in place and issued recommendations for future regional projects.

Remarks and conclusion of the panel

Dr. Sergiu CORNEA
Vice Rector of „B.P. Hasdeu”
University, Cahul, R. Moldova

Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu State University of Cahul is a regional university. A faculty with a pedagogical profile, a law and public administration faculty and an economic faculty have the objective to prepare specialists for this region. One of the problems facing the university was the demographic decline of the population. Another problem could be the inflexibility of the educational system in the Republic of Moldova, a conservative system that reacted slowly to changes in the labour market, especially through the bureaucracy of the process of approving the study programs. An opportunity to support university education in the region would be to relaunch the activity of the Association of Universities in the “Dunărea de Jos” Euroregion, created in 2000.

Prof. dr. Iulian-Gabriel BÎRSAN
Rector of “Dunarea de Jos”
University of Galati

The university system should focus more on teaching than on education, which is achieved in a good family upbringing and in the first years of school. Setting up new specializations depends on the activity of a central body – the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - which imposes norms that are not found in Europe. There are enough models, for example the Saxon one in the field of engineering, which can be adapted to make education more adaptable to market requirements.

Dr. Cezar BICHESCU
Vice-Rector of „Dunarea de Jos”
University of Galati

The extension in Italy of the “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galati, inspired by the model of the extensions already existing in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine is proof of promoting the internationalization of the university education. In Italy, the studies are taught in Romanian. In the project phase is the opening of two more extensions. These innovative projects can be considered as examples of good internationalization practices for other universities in the country.

Dorel PARASCHIV
Vice-Rector of the Bucharest
University of Economic Studies

Bucharest University of Economic Studies supported the development of cross-border and international studies through projects in collaboration with the business environment. Within the “Danubia 50” project, 50 students from Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic and Austria participate annually in summer schools and courses in management, leadership, organizational development organized in the four areas. An international logistics program is carried out in collaboration with companies in the field of transports, in particular companies from Austria. The concept of green supply chain is sustained and promoted within this program.

Aristică VĂDUVA
Counselor to the Minister of
National Education

To become strong, a country needs three things: education, education, education. The Ministry has the task to communicate with all the pre-university, university and economic institutions in order to obtain useful information for the training of a type of labour force, required on the market.

Panel 4: EU funding opportunities in the Danube region

Panel moderated by
Sabin CUTAȘ,
Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Office of the Romanian National
Coordinator EUSDR

A panel discussion on the funding opportunities in the Danube region. The interventions will focus on the presentation of the funding solutions available, the next EUSDR strategic agenda and the upcoming EU multiannual financial framework.

Remarks and conclusion of the panel

Prof. dr. Lucian Puiu GEORGESCU
State Secretary, Ministry of Research
and Innovation; President of the
Senate of "Dunarea de Jos"
University of Galati

It is known that EUSDR is a strategy without budget. EUSDR projects are financially supported from other projects' budgets. There are four distinct funding sources for the educational and research activity: 1) the national budgets, 2) structural funds, 3) European Union Framework Program "Horizon 2020" and 4) private sources. The easiest way to access are the financial sources from the structural funds. "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati had a success rate of 33% in accessing these funds, with funding obtained for 1 project out of 3 applications.

Elena Laura CRANGASU
Romania's Ministry of Regional
Development and Public
Administration, Counsellor, DG
Regional Operational Programs

The regional operational program is a national program, but with a regional approach. It has a very generous financial allocation. The implementation of the program is supported by the 8 Regional Development Agencies. In three and a half years in Romania there have been calls for 108 projects. More than 4000 contracts are signed. In the Regional Operational Program there are amounts dedicated to the calls for projects relevant to the EUSDR. Through the Regional Operational Program 8 calls for projects dedicated to EUSDR were launched. 201 projects were received for funding. So far, 23 contracts have been signed, which represents 22% of the allocation of calls for EUSDR.

Midhat DŽEMIĆ
Head of Section for Coordination of
Public Governance and the Rule of
Law Programmes, Directorate for
European Integration, Bosnia and
Herzegovina

Now, opportunity rose up. This is the new multi annual formation framework 2021-2027 and now we must reach in the governing board of adriatic-ionic strategy, we, in cooperation with DGNEAR i have to say, decided to try to solve this problem at this early stage of the development of multi annual financial framework. Now action plans. ESIF funds and IPA funds have their planning documents. SO if you want to have finance plans foreseen by the macroregional strategy then we have to somehow include the objectives set by these action plans in the operational

framework of ESIF and IPA funds and now this is the right moment and we have also prepared one document for our thematic steering groups, we ask them to detailate this sector specific thematic, you know some of them are similar to the Danube Strategy, tourism sector, transport, energy, environmental also, they have to decide about some regional large emblematic project and we have at the governing board decide the most important one and to ask all members of that EU strategy to include the projects in the financing period 2021-2027. And we have just started with this process, by the end of MAY the governing board shall decide on this short list of projects and we have included in this project DGNEAR since it is very important and relevant factor when we are speaking about IPA funds and we will see how it will go very soon.

Florin ZAHARIA

Expert within the Intermediate Body for Transport, Ministry of Transport

Transport is one of the fundamental sectors of the European integration process, being closely linked to the creation and completion of the single internal market. The Ministry of Transport has achieved the Transport Master Plan, one of the objectives being the development of sustainable transport. Ensuring optimal conditions to navigate on the Danube is a priority. In the context of developing export markets for agricultural products and other commodities, the Danube represents the connectivity of the European space with the port of Constanța.

Andreea PENA

Capacity Building Officer, Danube Strategy Point, EU Strategy for the Danube Region

The four macro-strategies are seen as mini-laboratories for a New Europe. A study by the European Commission, that critically analyses the macro-strategies, shows that the 11 priority areas of EUSDR target real needs. EUSDR successfully implements multilevel governance. The main financial support in carrying out the EUSDR projects comes from the Transnational Danube Program.

Panel 5: Local authorities cooperation in the Danube region

Panel moderated by **Corneliu VISOIANU**, Vice President, Strategikon, Bucharest

The panel will consist in a presentation of the local initiatives regarding EUSDR and the Danube region. The discussion will elaborate on the cooperation opportunities available for local authorities.

Razvan POPESCU

Coordinator of the Europe Direct Centre and the Steering Committee of the Information and Documentation Centre for European Integration and Sustainable Development Braila

At European level there are approximately 500 Europe Direct centres. 25 centres operate in Romania. The mission and role of Europe Direct centres is to provide information, advice, assistance and answers regarding the European Union, in particular on citizens' rights, EU priorities, legislation, policies and programs, funding opportunities.

For the post-2020 period, strategic and thematic alignment of macro-strategies is recommended, including macro-strategies in the political agenda of governments. EUSDR will continue to face the three "no" - no new funds, no new institutions, no dedicated legislation, but they can be fought with three or even four "yes". Yes - participatory governance, yes - efficient use of resources, yes - transnational institutional cooperation, yes - new ideas.

Remarks and conclusion of the panel

Ionut Florin PUCHEANU
Mayor of Galati

In summary, projects with European funding in Galați represented 300 million euros. One of the most beautiful projects, beyond the bypass road, is the rehabilitation of the Tirighina site. Transforming three ports out of the 5 existing ones into a single multimodal port, as well as the bridge over the Danube, are two other ongoing projects. Within EUSDR there should be a financing axis for what the Danube means, not just buildings along the Danube.

Francisk CHIRIAC,
President of Braila County Council

In Brăila, small, but strong investments are made. Two main areas are essential for the continuous development of the region: infrastructure and health. Considering the agricultural potential of the county, an adequate infrastructure for processing agricultural production is also needed. Regarding the health infrastructure, it is necessary to operate a regional hospital, serving the cities of Galați and Brăila.

Marian DRAGOMIR
Mayor of Brăila

The Danube Cooperation Forum was an excellent host for the public authorities of Galați and Brăila to meet. This university mediation is always necessary, in order to overcome problems related to efficient cooperation. It is necessary to put into practice and on paper a real connection between neighbouring cities, in order to develop the Galați-Brăila area. This is possible by involving the academic environment, investors and public authorities from Galați and Brăila.

Nicolae DANDIS
Mayor of Cahul
Republic of Moldova

Despite the Danube strategy, things need to be looked at more globally. Cross-border cooperation is essential, because environmental issues, for example, do not stop at the border. Republic of Moldova is not a member of the EU, which is why access to European funds is much more limited and often enjoys the status of a partner. In order to access financing, it takes 4 years, as much as a mayor mandate. There is still a lot of bureaucracy at European level, as well as enough bureaucracy at the local level. The Members of the European Parliament should have a good knowledge of the realities of the region and economically, as well as from the security point of view, in order to give the right dimension to the

Florin JIANU
President of National Council of
Small and Medium Sized Private
Enterprises in Romania, former
Minister for SMEs, the Business
Environment and Tourism

People in public offices should think about how they will remain in history. Joining efforts from an administrative point of view means uniting to be stronger, it means a pragmatic vision for integrated territorial investments. People in the administration should be very careful about the changes that are taking place. A global competition is won by competitiveness. Euroscepticism settles because there is no vision for the EU. One aspect of the future is an entrepreneurial Europe. Education must be

Marian FLOREA

President of the Association of Public Managers from Romania

All starts with education and all ends with education. Speaking of education in public administration does not keep up with the private environment. In this regard, the Association of Public Managers has developed training modules for city managers, with the mission to ensure connectivity between cities. A city cannot develop harmoniously if the outskirts is not as strong and as developed.

Corneliu VIȘOIANU

Vice President Strategikon, Bucharest

Collaborative projects will be encouraged in the next multiannual exercise. From this point of view, neighbourhood policies and cross-border cooperation will be the focus. It is necessary to create bridges to Brussels, in order to better understand the problems in the region. 230-300 million euros could transform the Galați-Brăila area into a development hub.

Marian FLOREA

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Panel 6: DANUBIUS-RI and the environmental agenda

Panel moderated by

Prof. dr. Lucian Puiu GEORGESCU,
State Secretary, Ministry of Research and Innovation
President of the Senate of "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati

The panel was designed to underline the importance of the environmental agenda for the Danube region. The discussion represented an excellent opportunity to underline the importance of research programs in the development of regional cooperation.

Remarks and conclusion of the panel

Acad. Nicolae PANIN

President of the Geo-economical Sciences Department of the Romanian Academy

Rivers are very important for the environment. After adopting the EUSDR, the Romanian Government took measures to create a project on river-sea systems. This is how the Danubius-RI idea appeared. The Danubius-RI is a pan-European infrastructure research project born in Romania, with Romanian coordination and with the central core in the Danube Delta. An integrated research system is already being developed - the same equipment, the same way of conducting research.

Prof. dr. habil. Elena ZUBCOV

Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova - Head of the Hydrobiology Laboratory - Institute of Zoology, Chisinau

The Institute of Zoology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova is a devoted partner of "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati. Through international projects, the Institute has received significant funding, through which, the necessary infrastructure for fulfilling research projects.

Prof. dr. Emilian M. DOBRESCU
Director of the Biodiversity Study
Center and Research Agrosilvica
"Acad. David Davidescu" within the
Romanian Academy

EUSDR envisaged 12 environmental protection measures that are seen as actions focused in the Romanian region of the Danube. The involvement of the Romanian decision-makers, the academic environment, and the business people is very strong.

C.S. I dr. eng. Simion NICOLAEV
General Director of INCD
"Grigore Antipa", Constanta

The Danube could not exist without the Black Sea, this being the universal receiver of all continental waters. Special things happen in the Danube-Mare Interface, which deserve special attention. The National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa" will participate in the Danubius-RI project in the marine part and is a supporter of the idea of identifying solutions for the Danube to better support the Black Sea.

Dr. Manuela Elisabeta SIDOROFF
General Director of the National
Institute for Research and
Development for Biological Sciences,
Bucharest

DANS is a project financed by the Ministry of Research and Innovation. The purpose of this project is to prepare the elements for building the infrastructure within the Danubius-RI project on the territory of Romania, namely: the Murighiol hub and the Galați Data Centre, which will store and model data from all over Europe. The EUSDR Romania research agenda targets the genesis and evolution of the Danube - Delta - Sea system, the impact of climate change, adaptive and sustainable management and regional development in intelligent innovation sectors.

C.S. I biologist Marian TUDOR
General Director of INCD
"Danube Delta", Tulcea

Danubius-RI is a reason for pride, but also a project with which it can enter beautifully in history. Danubius-RI means knowledge and Danubius-RI and knowledge are equal. The transition from an industrial society to a knowledge-based society requires the acceptance of the need for knowledge. Knowledge is essential for surviving.

FINAL JOINT STATEMENT

Taking into consideration the Report of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on implementing EU macro-regional strategies of 29th January 2019, Taking into consideration the RO / EU Action Plan, through which the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region supports the Interconnection, Environmental Protection, Prosperity and Consolidation of the Danube region, proving its added value for developing the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the participating countries, Acknowledging that the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union Acknowledging that the Romanian Presidency at the Council of the European Union aims to contribute to ensuring European convergence and cohesion in order to ensure sustainable and equitable development for all citizens and Member States by increasing competitiveness and reducing development gaps, promoting connectivity and digitization, stimulating entrepreneurship and strengthening the European industrial policy, Considering that Artificial Intelligence will become an area of strategic importance for Europe and a key instrument in the economic development process, offering solutions for many challenges in society, from treating diseases to intelligent solutions for urban development or minimizing the impact of agriculture on the environment, Supporting the position that the future Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 will be focused on collaborative projects, containing "European added value", and infrastructure, research or human resources projects will predominantly follow the intersectoral, interinstitutional, joint and complementary dimensions and international cooperation.

We, the participants of the Danube Cooperation Forum, gathered in Galați, declare and support:

I. in relation to the synergies between the Forum and the existing initiatives of Romania:

- promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion, competitiveness and connectivity; promoting research and innovation and, first and foremost, digitization and connectivity, as key factors in increasing the competitiveness of the industry; supporting the revision process of the EUSDR Action Plan through active involvement in national consultations;

- developing at EUSDR level a new platform for dialogue in the field of new technologies and artificial intelligence by connecting and developing existing programs, as well as by designing new ones; enlarging EUSDR visibility by promoting successful projects, exchanging best practices and connecting responsible persons with the purpose of demonstrating the added value of the regional cooperation framework in order to eliminate development gaps;

- connection and continuity with the Three Seas Forum Initiative, especially on the connectivity dimension; promoting the synergy between the Danube and the Black Sea;

- the integration in the future Strategic Vision of the European Commission of a systematic and well-defined approach regarding the Danube - Black Sea area, as a key area from a strategic point of view, with a great economic and competitive potential for the entire Single Market

- stimulating cross-border and euroregional cooperation, at the external border of the European Union, especially with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, having an important role in implementing reforms, ensuring security and supporting the process of European integration of these states in the Danube region.

- defining a Mission for the Danube region, able to support the integration of macro-regional and cross-border policies with cohesion policies.

II. in the field of cooperation:

- creating a platform that links people, ideas and needs, where they can cooperate for common goals that come from research and innovation, well-being and infrastructure, for culture and heritage; identifying the ability of the macro-regional strategy to mobilize new projects and initiatives, creating a sense of shared responsibility for: interconnecting the Danube region, protecting the environment, increasing prosperity, reducing gaps, strengthening the Danube region; joint action to achieve the objectives proposed to relaunch the EUSDR macro-regional strategy in the 14 participating states, by taking over the present declaration at the next annual EUSDR meeting in June, thus supporting a priority and common agenda for the sustainable development of the Danube region.

Approved in Galați, in 2019, at the first edition of the Danube Cooperation Forum.

DANUBE COOPERATION FORUM
4th of October 2020
On-line

- AGENDA -

Venue: Due to the current situation generated by the SARS Covid-19 pandemic and bearing in mind both travelling restrictions and the health of our speakers and participants, this event is to be held online.

Participants: EU officials, ministers, high-level political representatives of EUSDR members, National Coordinators, Priority Areas Coordinators, representatives of national, regional and local level administration, Employers and Trade Unions, representatives of SMEs, business support structures, industry, NGOs, academic institutions and other stakeholders from the Danube Region countries

Short description and format: The event will be organized with the support of the General Secretariat of the Government and technical support of the EUSDR National Coordinator Office from Romania with the support of the Expert project of the Dunărea de Jos University of Galati. The 2020 Danube Cooperation Forum agenda will focus on the main measures suggested within the European Ecological Pact, a new strategy which will cover a number of policy areas, including climate, environment, energy, transport, industry, agriculture, and sustainable finance which are strongly interconnected.

The forum also proposes a number of topics related to connectivity and regional mobility, smart cities and communities, quality management & good governance, security in the riverside regions of the Danube, environmental challenges as well as on links between smart specialization strategies were introduced in the European Union's Cohesion Policy as the basis for research and innovation investment and also on the possibilities of creating synergies that can result in a better embedment of EUSDR into future EU programs and policies.

**This brochure was published with the support of the Expert project - code 14PFE / 17.10.2018
"Excellence, performance and competitiveness in RDI activities at the "Dunărea de Jos" University of
Galați, EXPERT"**



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