

EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Priority Area 1a – To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways

NEWSLETTER

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viadonau



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT,
INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Latest developments within PA1a

EUSDR Action Plan 2020+

The revision process of the EUSDR Action Plan was concluded with the publication of the revised Action Plan as Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) on 06 of April 2020. The document can be found under: <https://danube-region.eu/about/key-documents/>. In total, the 12 Priority Areas (PA) have defined 85 new actions.

The revision of the Action Plan was a process that took more than a year in which all the stakeholders were involved and worked together on PA level. The revised Action Plan is an important document for the future work, as it defines the next steps to bring the EUSDR forward and provides the framework for the embedding of EUSDR objectives in the post-2020 programmes of the Structural and Cohesion Funds.

The new PA1a actions and the structure of the thematic Working Groups have been aligned in the course of this revision process.

The **PA 1a Waterway - Mobility** actions are:

ACTION 1: Contribute to improve waterway and port infrastructure & management.

ACTION 2: Foster business development.

ACTION 3: Facilitate fleet modernization.

ACTION 4: Support the further roll-out and enhancement of River Information Services.

ACTION 5: Contribute to the enhanced quality of education and jobs.

ACTION 6: Contribute to the simplification, harmonisation and digitalisation of administrative processes.

Signing of the Danube Ministerial Conclusions 2020 - Ministers of Transport reconfirm their support for the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan implementation

The Danube Ministers of Transport (with the exception of Hungary) signed the Danube Ministerial Conclusions on effective waterway rehabilitation and maintenance in June 2020 in a written procedure. The Ministers acknowledged the need for further national and transnational actions as well as cross-border coordination procedures and agreed to step up fairway rehabilitation and maintenance efforts in the coming years by allocating the necessary national budgets as outlined in the National Action Plans and making full use of EU co-financing opportunities for the implementation of required measures. This renewed political commitment at the verge of the new financing period post 2020 will be of great value for the preparation of related activities in the coming years.



Working Group 1 – Waterway and Port Infrastructure & Management

The focus of the technical Working Group session on 5 March 2020 was to kick-off the updating process for the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan for the Danube and its navigable tributaries (FRMMP), as adopted in 2014. Waterway managers and experts of the operational services in the waterway administrations of all Danube riparian states discussed key issues and trends in waterway management that need to be considered in the upcoming EU financing period 2021-2027 and the updated FRMMP. The FRMMP will be updated in the course of 2020.



Working Group 6 - Administrative Processes

In the last years the joint Working Group of Priority Areas 1a (Inland Waterways) and 11 (Security) of the EU's Danube Region Strategy developed a set of so-called Danube Navigation Standard Forms (DAVID). Using the expertise of stakeholders from

the shipping sector and control authorities, the data fields of three often used forms (arrival and departure forms, crew lists and passenger lists) were harmonised in an international effort. In the first phase Hungary, Croatia and Serbia introduced the DAVID forms in control procedures in February and March 2020, thereby replacing the previously used national forms. Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Moldova – the four other Danube riparian states – intend to follow suit until the end of 2021 latest.

Surveys on border control procedures continues and all waterway users can still provide information by filling out the feedback form on <https://indivsurvey.de/pollonadministrativeprocesses/15077/2LfxZA>.

The good working cooperation between PA 1a and PA 11 will continue in the coming years.

18th Meeting of the PA1a Steering Group

The 18th [Meeting of the Steering Group](#) was organized on 19 May 2020 (via online platform). The main topics of discussion were related to COVID-19 and its effects on inland navigation, particularly passenger shipping, the overall status of PA1a activities and the embedding process for the financing period post-2020.

Embedding process for the financing period post-2020

The embedding process is a crucial exercise to anchor the targets of the EUSDR in the future funding programmes of the Structural and Cohesion Funds for the period 2021-2027. As the national Operational Programmes as well as centrally managed programmes for the new financing period are to be elaborated in the course

of 2020, opportunities to embed the EUSDR priorities have to be exploited in time.

In November 2019, the EUSDR NCs agreed to form an Embedding Task Force (TF) to steer the embedding process. The TF concluded that not all actions of the revised EUSDR Action Plan can be taken up by the programmes. Therefore, PACs were asked to choose 2-3 of their PA's actions for a shortlist to be included in the embedding process. The PA1a Technical Secretariat proposed three topics to be included in this shortlist; the Steering Group took the final decision on this issue.

The chosen PA1a strategic topics are:

1. Contribute to improved waterway and port infrastructure & management. Improving the compliance of the Danube and its navigable tributaries with the minimum requirements for class IV waterways within the European TEN-T waterway network and establishing and preserving a Good Navigation Status (according to Art. 15 (3) a) and Art. 15 (3) b) of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013) are a priority for PA1a and for the Danube riparian countries. This shall also be done in line with the PA1a Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan and ensuring that operations are carried out compatibly with environmental law and are aimed at achieving climate resilience.

2. Facilitate fleet modernization. Facilitating the transition of the Danube inland fleet towards innovation and zero emission navigation is part of the Green Deal and it has been investigated for years within EUSDR projects. A non-coordinated approach between the Danube riparian countries on the modernisation of the Danube fleet could reinforce undesired trends like: patchwork of different modernisation and investment measures without exploiting synergies of the different national programmes; continued operation of old

and non-compliant Danube vessels in countries with less stringent emission targets.

3. Contribute to the enhanced quality of education and jobs. Under this topic projects and actions with the following focus can be promoted: the implementation of the provisions of Directive (EU) 2017/2397 and Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/12 in all Danube riparian states; increased availability of nautical personnel (e.g. through the improvement of working conditions) as well as personnel in ports; the increasing of the attractiveness of the inland waterway transport sector and promoting jobs and career opportunities, with a clear focus on access to quality employment of categories currently underrepresented in this labour market, that is, young, elderly, women and vulnerable groups from rural areas.

Upcoming Events

PA 3 Macro-Regional Workshop planned to take place in October in Bruxelles, will be on the topic of cooperation in tourism industry in the pandemic crisis era and will be held during the European Weeks of Regions and Cities 2020 in Brussels. The exact date is yet to be announced.

9th Edition of the EUSDR Annual Forum 2020 (TBC) is planned to take place in 22 – 23 of October in Zagreb.

Start of the Slovak EUSDR Presidency

Succeeding Croatia, Slovakia will take on the Presidency of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region on 1 November 2020 for one year.

Priority Area 1a – Targets & Governance

Priority Area 1a on Inland waterways is coordinated by Romania (Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communication) and Austria (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology and via donau).

ACTION 1: Contribute to improve waterway and port infrastructure & management.

TARGET: Achieve a notable improvement of the fairway conditions and shore side infrastructure along the Danube and its navigable tributaries, confirmed by the waterway users by means of an annual user survey.

ACTION 2: Foster business development.

TARGET: Contribute to transnational business-to-business (B2B) meetings on an annual basis

ACTION 3: Facilitate fleet modernization.

TARGET: Promote the use of EU funds for fleet modernisation and support the set-up of national funding schemes.

ACTION 4: Support the further roll-out and enhancement of River Information Services.

TARGET: Ensure the online provision, availability and interoperability of up-to-date Fairway Information Services in the Danube Region.

ACTION 5: Contribute to the enhanced quality of education and jobs.

TARGET: Facilitate the implementation of the provisions of Directive 2017/2397 in all Danube riparian states, putting specific emphasis on non-EU riparian states.

ACTION 6: Contribute to the simplification, harmonisation and digitalisation of administrative processes.

TARGET: Achieve a notable improvement of administrative procedures, especially border controls, in inland navigation on the Danube and its navigable tributaries by 2023, as confirmed by the waterway users by means of user surveys.

In order to achieve these targets, the governance structure for Priority Area 1a of the EU Danube Region Strategy has been set up by the Priority Area Coordinators in close cooperation with the European Commission.

As part of the Priority Area 1a structures, a [Steering Group](#) and several [Working Groups](#) have been established.

The Steering Group meetings are the framework that allows each involved country, as well as the European Commission, to provide feedback and to contribute in a practical manner to all decisions needed for achieving the Priority Area 1a targets, in order to ensure a successful implementation of the Danube Region Strategy.

Within the Working Groups project ideas, measures needed, means of cooperation etc. between all stakeholders are discussed. The results of the Working Groups are to be presented to the Steering Group members in order to decide the next steps on a specific topic.

