

**ARGE Donauländer / Arbeitskreis „Raumordnung und
Umweltschutz“**
**Relevant Priority Areas of the “EU-Strategy for the Danube
Region(EUSDR)” - Action Plan**
(14.6.2011)

The following pages should give a short overview about those „Priority Areas“(PAs) and included „Actions“ of the EUSDR-Action Plan, which might be interesting for further consideration by the members of the „Working Group Zoning and Environmental Protection“ of ARGE Donauländer.

This text describes only an excerpt of the „Actions“ and „Examples for Projects“ of the respective Priority Areas and should give some orientation and incentives for the discussion. The documents are available by the following link:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/danube/documents_en.htm

Priority Area 4) To restore and maintain the quality of water (S. 34-39)

This PA includes 14 “Actions” and 8 “Examples of Projects” dealing with the quality of water in a very comprehensive way. Many of this actions are tackled by the ICPDR together with the 14 countries, which are contracting parties of the Danube River Convention (DRPC).

The following „Actions“ might be especially interesting for the „Working Group“:

- *Action - “To continue boosting major investments in building and upgrading urban wastewater treatment facilities across the Danube Basin, including measures to build capacity at the regional and local level for the design of such infrastructure”.*
- *Action - “To establish buffer strips along the rivers to retain nutrients and to promote alternative collection and treatment of waste in small rural settlements”.*
- *Action - “To foster and develop an active process of dialogue and cooperation between authorities responsible for agriculture and environment to ensure that measures are taken to address agricultural pollution”.*
- *Action - “To treat hazardous substances and contaminated sludge with the newest and best available technology and to develop and promote remediation measures for hazardous producing or abandoned industrial sites and waste deposits”.*
- *Action - “To promote measures to limit water abstraction”.*
- *Action - “To strengthen general awareness and facilitate exchange of good practice in integrated water management issues in the Danube Basin among decision-makers at all levels and among the population of the Region”.*

- *Action - “To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply”.*

Priority Area 5) To manage environmental risks (S. 40-46)

This PA includes 8 “Actions” and 11 “Examples of Projects”. The following “Actions” might be especially interesting for the “Working Group”:

- *Action - “To develop and adopt one single overarching floods management plan at basin level or a set of flood risk management plans coordinated at the level of the international river basin“.*

Example of project - **“To promote transnational conservation of the remaining floodplains along the entire length of the Danube by completing existing initiatives and promoting new ones, including along tributaries”** (Lead: Bavaria and Bulgaria)

- *Action - “To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection, and more generally to analyse and identify the best response to flood risk (including “green infrastructure”)”.*
- *Action - “To extend the coverage of the European Floods Alert System (EFAS) system to the whole Danube river basin, to step up preparedness efforts at regional level (including better knowledge of each other's national systems) and to further promote joint responses to natural disasters and to flood events in particular, including early warning systems”.*
- *Action - “To strengthen operational cooperation among the emergency response authorities in the Danube countries and to improve the interoperability of the available assets“.*
- *Action - “Anticipate regional and local impacts of climate change through research”.*
- *Action - “To develop spatial planning and construction activities in the context of climate change and increased threats of floods”.*

Example of project - **“To evaluate impacts of climate change on the availability and safety of public drinking water supply through the existing CC-WaterS project currently underway (European Territorial Cooperation Programme South-East Europe)”** (Lead: Vienna City Waterworks; Deadline: April 2012)

Priority Area 6) To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and quality of air and soils (S. 47-53)

This PA includes 16 “Actions” and 13 “Examples of Projects”. The following “Actions” might be especially interesting for the “Working Group”:

- **Action - “To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively.”**

Example of project - **“To implement the Danube River Network of Protected Areas (DANUBEPARKS) (European Territorial Cooperation Programme South-East Europe)”** ; (Lead: National Park Donau-Auen; Austria; Deadline: 2012)

- **Action - “To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats”.**

Example of project - **“To develop the Alpine Carpathian Corridor”**
(Lead: Lower Austria)

- **Action - “To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)”.**

- **Action - “To ensure appropriate treatment of solid waste”.**

- **Action - “To create standardised and compatible information on land cover on transnational basis”.**

“Within the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) framework, one of the main services that will be available is a land monitoring service. However rather limited information on land resources is available for the Danube Region. Actions should thus focus on the possibilities to collect harmonised land cover information from national sources and to create standardized and compatible information on land cover on transnational basis.” (Remark: The City of Vienna was engaged in GMES/Vienna project in 2009/2010)

- **Action - “To raise awareness about soil protection”.**

This action could be achieved in cooperation with the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA), including more than 100 members from 7 Member States. Further partnerships in the Danube Region should be initiated on communal level and in the educational domains (The cooperation could be enhanced via the already existing working group “Ecology with a focus on soil protection” operating within the ARGE Donauländer).

- **Action - “To educate children and young people”.**

Example of project - **“To build a network of Danube ‘forest’ schools”**(Lead: Hungary)

Priority Area 10) To Step up institutional capacity and cooperation (S. 77-81)

The transnational coordinators of this “Priority Area”, appointed by the EC, are the City of Vienna (Kurt Puchinger, Director of Planning) and Slovenia (Jana Repansek, Center of Excellence in Finance).

ARGE Donauländer will be represented in the Steering Group of the PA 10, which will support the coordinators in their work. So there is a good opportunity for ARGE Donauländer to influence the implementation of the EUSDR by using the experiences and the know-how of their members for defining projects and concretising actions. The PA includes 9 “Actions” and 8 “Examples of Projects”.

In the following lines some of the “Actions” and “Examples of Projects”, which might be interesting for the “Working Group” are highlighted:

- **Action - “To combat institutional capacity and public service related problems in the Danube region”.**
“Networking activities should contribute to improve skills, competence and motivation of staff in the public sector. Innovative and sustainable regional and urban development and sustainable agriculture should be encouraged through common learning and good practice including e.g. green urban technologies.”
- **Action - “To ensure sufficient information flow and exchange at all levels”.**
“Improvement of the capacity of administration to share information and know how needs to be addressed (inc. new mechanisms for sharing scientific know how and knowledge).”
“Examples can also cover networks of cities, regions, urban and rural areas.”

Example of project - **“To establish a cooperation map”**

Example of project - **“To establish common guidelines for improving spatial planning” -**

“To advise the local authorities on best practices for the human settlements in the Danube Region and on the way to prioritise infrastructure and other investments.”

Example of project - **“To transfer knowledge and enhance urban technologies and strategies” -**

“Agglomerations of the Danube region need to exchange and transfer their know-how, and to develop and implement modern technologies and strategies.” (Project idea by the City of Vienna)

- **Action - “To facilitate the administrative cooperation of communities living in border regions”.**
“Eliminating and overcoming administrative and legal obstacles for cooperation and adjusting regional competences to local needs would strengthen cooperation between institutions and local municipalities both at local, regional and international levels. Direct regional and local cooperation across borders should be promoted.”

“A discussion on and an overview of possible multilateral reconciliation mechanisms could also contribute to improve political cooperation and good neighbourly relations”.

- **Action - “To build Metropolitan Regions in the Danube Region”.**
“A platform of existing and emerging metropolis regions should be initiated in order to establish a framework for learning and development of common ideas in all areas relevant to metropolitan development. City networks should promote cooperation and exchange of information and experience among e.g. administrative experts, municipal and regional parliaments. There is a scope for knowledge exchange of agglomeration development strategies. This will lead to faster dissemination of good practice and the detection of promising fields of concrete cooperation on public authority level and for business.” (suggested by the City of Vienna).

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