



ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT
DONAULÄNDER
PRACOVNÍ SPOLEČENSTVÍ
PODUNAJSKÝCH ZEMÍ
PRACOVNÉ SPOLOČENSTVO
PODUNAJSKÝCH KRAJÍN
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COMUNITATEA DE LUCRU
A STATELOR DUNĂRENE
РАБОТНА ОБШНОСТ
ДУНАВСКИ СТРАНИ
РОБОЧА СПІВДРУЖНІСТЬ
ПРИДУНАЙСЬКИХ КРАІН

WORKING PARTNERSHIP OF THE DANUBE COUNTRIES

26th Meeting of the Working Group of Senior Officials

1. December 2016

Modra, Self-Governing Region of Bratislava, Republic of Slovakia

DECISION MINUTES

Decisions are framed in the text below.

26th Meeting of the Working Group of Senior Officials

1 December 2016

Modra, Self-Governing Region of Bratislava, Republic of Slovakia

D E C I S I O N M I N U T E S

Item 1 of the Agenda

Opening and welcome by representatives of the presidency, the self-governing regions of Bratislava and Trnava, and by Mr Werner Seif, permanent chair of the working group of senior officials and Director of the Lower Austrian State Office
(Landesamt)

(Attachments 1 and 1.1.)

Mr Martin Berta, Vice-President of the self-governing region of Bratislava, welcomes the participants to the 26th meeting of the Working Group of Senior Officials and reports on the events organised in the course of the year of the Slovakian presidency.

The self-governing region of Bratislava considers cooperating with the Danube regions and engaging in a direct dialogue with them particularly important. The working partnership of the Danube regions (ARGE Donauländer) constitutes an ideal platform for discussing shared challenges and priorities. In addition to the presidency of the working partnership of the Danube regions, the Republic of Slovakia also chaired the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and, for the first time, held the EU presidency in the second half of 2016. On 8/9 July 2016, the self-governing region of Bratislava, the capital Bratislava and the European Committee of the Regions jointly organised the 7th European Summit of Regions and Cities. This Summit counts among the major events during the Slovakian presidency.

Under the general heading "Invest and Connect", representatives from regions and cities from all over the EU met at this Summit to discuss priorities for increasing investments in Europe and simplifying the EU's cohesion policy . Discussions focussed on the need for higher investments in the regions and cohesion policy's future with a view to those applying for allocations. Side events were also organised as part of the Summit. These events mainly focussed on innovation for and tourism in water areas and featured an exhibition with participants from 14 countries.

Mr Werner Seifl, permanent chair of the working group of senior officials and Director of the Lower Austrian State Office, also extends a welcome to the participants (*Attachment 1*), at the same time regretting the small number of participants (*Attachment 1.1.*).

Attachments:

1. *List of participants*
- 1.1. *Summary report*

Decision on Item 1 of the Agenda

“Opening and welcome by representatives of the presidency,
the self-governing regions of Bratislava and Trnava, and by Mr Werner Seifl,
permanent chair of the working group of senior officials and
Director of the Lower Austrian State Office”
(*Attachments 1 and 1.1.*)

The reports are acknowledged.

Item 2 of the Agenda

Adoption of the Agenda

(*Attachment 2*)

The agenda was distributed to the members in time and was received by the participants. As there are no additions, the agenda is adopted as it stands (*Attachment 2*).

Attachment:

2. *Agenda*

Decision on Item 2 of the Agenda

“Adoption of the Agenda”

(Attachment 2)

The Agenda found in Attachment 2 is adopted.

Item 3 of the Agenda

Report on the activities of the presidency of the self-governing region of

Bratislava

(Attachments 3 and 3.1.)

Mr Tomas Teleky from the self-governing region of Bratislava offers an overview of the events and activities organised by the self-governing region of Bratislava during its presidency in the year 2016. He reports on the 7th European Summit of Regions and Cities held on 8/9 July 2016 in Bratislava *(Attachments 3 and 3.1.)*.

Attachments:

3. *Video 7th European Summit of Regions and Cities*
- 3.1. *Presentation on the 7th European Summit of Regions and Cities*

Decision on Item 3 of the Agenda

“Report on the activities of the presidency of the self-governing region of Bratislava”

(Attachments 3 and 3.1.)

The report is acknowledged and the Danube countries thank the chairing self-governing region of Bratislava for having organised so many activities.

Item 4 of the Agenda

Reports from the working groups and specialized working groups

Item 4.1 of the Agenda

Working group on business, tourism and transport

(Attachments 4 to 4.8.)

Mr Vincent Neumayer, coordinator of the working group on business, tourism and transport from the State of Vienna reports on the working group's meeting on 2 November in Bratislava and its activities and projects.

(Attachments 4 to 4.8.)

Mr Hans-Peter Herdlitschka (Baden-Wuerttemberg) has resigned from his posts as chair of the working group of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions and as chair of the PA 8 just before the working group's meeting at the beginning of November 2016. A qualified successor is to be appointed.

Mr Friedrich Bernhofer, co-chair from the State of Upper Austria, is reported to be very active in the areas of tourism strategy and tourism planning in the Danube region and is responsible for numerous contributions concerning the field of tourism within the working group. At the working group's last meeting, he presented a study commissioned by the State of Upper Austria, dealing with a tourism concept for the Austrian Danube region for the period from 2016 to 2026. *(Attachment 4.2.)*

A specific project which was intensely discussed during the working group's last meeting concerned passenger navigation on the Danube and how an increased added value could be created for individual regions, benefitting from visits of the passengers of these vessels. The State of Upper Austria has acquired long-standing experience in cooperating with shipping companies to create specific offers suiting their passengers. The mechanisms of this cooperation and the lessons learned throughout the years are to be made available to other regions.

Mr Otto Schwetz, chair of the working group on business, tourism and transport, from the State of Vienna, provides information on the initiative "The new Silk Road", *(Attachment 4.8.)* referring to a network of transport routes between Asia and European

silk production sites. In 2013, the President of the People's Republic of China had initiated the project "One Belt - One Road". The countries of the Danube region also felt that they should become involved in the "Silk Road" project.

The Bavarian State Chancellery asked the working group to reactivate the Silk Road, both the land route in the North and the maritime route in the South. China has already taken some steps in connection with this project. Vienna lies at the intersection of three corridors and takes great interest in the Danube route's integration into the Silk Road system. Everyone is invited to participating in this project, which is currently the world's largest infrastructure project. The working group will dedicate a great deal of its work to this project.

Attachments:

4. *Report from the working group on business, tourism and transport*
- 4.1. *Work programme for the field of business 2016 - 2020*
- 4.2. *Tourism concept for the Austrian Danube region 2016 - 2026*
- 4.3. *Minutes of the working group's meeting on 28 October 2015 in Ulm*
- 4.4. *Archipelago Danube*
- 4.5. *Agenda of the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 4.6. *Danube Inland-Delta*
- 4.7. *Minutes of the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 4.8. *The new Silk Road*

Decision on Item 4.1 of the Agenda

"Working group on business, tourism and transport"

(Attachments 4 to 4.8.)

1.

Wirtschaft

Economy

- Annahme des Arbeitsprogrammes Wirtschaft 2016 - 2020 (Beilage 4.1.)

Adoption of the work programme economy 2016 - 2020 (attachment 4.1.)

- **Schaffung von Bewusstsein für die wirtschaftlichen Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten im Donauraum und durch die Donauraumstrategie. Aktive Bewerbung des Donauraums als potentielle Boom-Region innerhalb der Europäischen Union.**

Building awareness for economic development opportunities in the Danube region and through the Danube region strategy. Active promotion of the Danube region as potential boom region within the European Union.

- **Lobbying für den privaten Sektor als wichtiger Treiber der wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung in den Städten, Regionen und Staaten flussabwärts Bratislavas. Adressierung von Clusterverwaltungen und Gewerbegebieten als Keimzellen des wirtschaftlichen Erfolgs.**

Lobbying for the private sector as important driver of economic development in the cities, regions and states from Bratislava downstream. Addressing cluster administrations and commercial areas as germ cells of economic success.

- * **Angebot der Präsentation der Leistungen ausgewählter Cluster auf Veranstaltungen der ARGE DL und des RDSR.**

Opportunity for selected clusters to present services at events of the Danube countries (ARGE DL) or of the RDSR.

- **Bekanntnis, den öffentlichen Sektor zu einem proaktiven, dienstleistungsorientierten Akteur der Wirtschaftsförderung zu entwickeln.**

Pledging to develop the public sector to be a proactive, service-oriented player for economic stimulation.

- * **Entwicklung und Abschluss eines Memorandum of Understanding zwischen Regionen der ARGE Donauländer zur Umstrukturierung der Verwaltung als moderne Dienstleistungsstruktur mit strategischer Planungsverantwortung.**

Development and completion of a memorandum of understanding between regions of the Danube countries to restructure administration into a modern service structure with strategic planning responsibilities.

- **Herstellung der Verbindung zwischen regionalen Initiativen im Donaauraum und Europäischen Initiativen, Fördermitteln & –programmen und Entscheidungsträgern. Aktive Kommunikation der Wirtschaftsförderungsbedürfnisse der Donaauraumregion bei relevanten Stellen in Brüssel.**
Building connections between regional initiatives in the Danube region and European initiatives, funding, support programmes and decision makers. Actively communicate economic assistance needs of the Danube region at relevant institutions in Brussel.

- * **Die ARGE DL und der RDSR stehen ihren Mitgliedern für Rückfragen und zur Unterstützung zu obigen Belangen zur Verfügung. Auf Anfrage verfolgen die Organisationen Lobbying bei Gremien der EUSDR und der Europäischen Kommission im Sinne der Mitgliedsregionen.**
The Working Community Danube Region (ARGE DL) and the RDSR are available for its members for queries and support concerning aforementioned matters. Upon request the organisations will engage in lobbying at the EU bodies of the EUSDR and the European Commission for the purpose of the member regions.

- **Bekenntnis zur Industrie als leitender Wirtschaftssektor der Donaauraumregion. Anstoß einer grünen Industriestrategie für den Donaauraum, aufgeteilt in „entwickelte“ Regionen und Regionen mit Entwicklungspotenzial.**
Acknowledgement of industry as a leading economic sector in the Danube region. Impulse for a green industry strategy for the Danube region, partitioned into “developed” regions and regions with development potential.

- **Strategien und langfristigen Entwicklungslinien für eine koordinierte Wirtschaftsentwicklung auf regionaler, nationaler und transnationaler Ebene wird zu wenig Wert beigemessen, wodurch deren Effektivität stark gemindert wird. Die ARGE DL und der RDSR unterstreichen die Relevanz langfristig gefestigter, breiter Strategien, zu denen sich bekannt werden soll, unabhängig von Regierungsbeteiligungen und handelnden Akteuren.**
Strategies and long-term development for a coordinated economic development

ona regional, national and transnational level is not valued high enough, which strongly limits effectivity. The ARGE DL and RDSR emphasize the relevance of long-term and broadly designed strategies, which should be acknowledged independent and long-lasting regardless of governmental compositions and acting persons.

*** Organisation von Wissensaustauschformaten zur Weitergabe von Know-how, wie man gesamtgesellschaftlich getragene, strategische Entwicklungen auf nationaler und transnationaler Ebene designen kann.**
Organisation of new formats for exchanging knowledge and know-how with regards to designing strategic development for the sake of society on a national and transnational basis.

- **Unternehmerschaft ist etwas grundsätzlich Positives und von gesellschaftlichem Mehrwert. Die ARGE DL und der RDSR unterstreichen den Wert von privaten Initiativen zur Gründung und den Ausbau von Unternehmen. Die Organisationen stehen dafür ein, bürokratische Hürden für Unternehmensgründungen möglichst gering zu halten.**

Entrepreneurship is essentially positive and societally adds value. The Danube countries (ARGE DL) and the RDSR emphasize the value of private initiatives and of business expansions. The organisations advocate to keep bureaucratic barriers for business formations as low as possible.

- **Unterstreichung des Wertes lokaler und regionaler Wertschöpfungsketten. Sowohl die öffentliche Hand als auch private Unternehmen sollen bewusst lokale und regionale Produkte wählen, wenn der Qualitätsanspruch erfüllt wird.**

Emphasising the value of local and regional supply chains. Both the public sector as well as private enterprises should consciously choose local and regional products if their standard of quality is met.

*** Erarbeitung eines Leitfadens für Beschaffungsprozesse zur Förderung von lokalen und regionalen Produkten.**

Development of a guideline for procurement processes to support local and regional products.

- **Die junge Generation an Menschen im Donauraum denkt bereits grenz- und disziplinenübergreifend. Fehlendes sektorenüberschreitendes Denken zwischen gewerblichem Sektor und öffentlichem Sektor wird oftmals als Grund für mangelndes gegenseitiges Verständnis aufgeführt.**

The young generation of people in the Danube region already adopted a way of thinking across borders and disciplines. A lack of cross-sector thinking between the commercial and the public sector is often seen to be the cause for a lack of mutual understanding.

- * **Anstoß eines Proto-Austauschprogramms zwischen öffentlicher Hand und privaten Unternehmen in einer Region der ARGE DL und des RDSR.**
Impulse for a proto-exchange programme between the public and the private sector in a region of the ARGE DL and the RDSR.

- **Städtepartnerschaften zwischen Wirtschaftsförderungsagenturen ermöglichen gegenseitiges Lernen und den Erfahrungsaustausch. Erfolgreiche und transparente Maßnahmen seitens der öffentlichen Hand zur Unterstützung von Gewerbe erhöhen das Vertrauen in die Wirksamkeit der öffentlichen Verwaltung und das Ansehen politischer Entscheidungsträger und deren Wille zur Korruptionsprävention.**

City partnerships between economic development agencies facilitate mutual learning and the exchange of experiences. Successful and transparent measures by the public sector to support trade increase trust in the effectiveness of public administration and the reputation of political decision-makers and their willingness to prevent corruption.

- * **Anstoß eines Austauschformats zwischen Wirtschaftsförderungsagenturen aus Regionen stromaufwärts und -abwärts Bratislavas.**
Impulse to establish exchange programmes between economic development agencies from regions downstream and upstream of Bratislava.

- **Begleitung von (Jung)Unternehmen in der Gründungsphase aber auch in signifikanten Unternehmensentwicklungsphasen durch andere Unternehmen (Mentoring) ermöglicht die gemeinsame Umsetzung wichtiger unternehmensstrategischer Projekte. Die Wichtigkeit von peer-to-peer mentoring-Programmen wird unterstrichen.**

Support for (start-up) companies during the founding stage as well as during significant business development stages through other businesses (mentoring), which enables joint execution of important projects for the business-strategy. The importance of peer-to-peer mentoring programmes is highlighted.

- **Eine Absicht der länderübergreifenden Initiative Donauraumstrategie ist die Heranführung von potentiellen Beitrittsländern an die Europäische Union. Die EU-Strategie für den Donauraum gibt die Möglichkeit, potentiellen Interessenten (Serbien, Moldawien etc.) verstärkt mit Verfahrensdesign und Prozessen der Europäischen Union in Kontakt zu treten. Die ARGE DL unterstützt Regionen aus Beitrittsländern in deren Bemühen um weitere wirtschaftliche Annäherung an die EU.**

One intention of the cross-border initiative Danube region strategy is the approach of potential EU accession countries. The EU strategy for the Danube region enables potential prospects (Serbia, Moldavia etc.) to increasingly make contact with EU procedures and processes. The Danube region (ARGE DL) supports regions from accession countries in their effort to economically approach the EU.

- * **Die ARGE DL und der RDSR bieten proaktiv Regionen aus besagten Ländern Unterstützung in der Akquisition gemeinsamer transnationaler Projekte zur wirtschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit an.**

The Danube region and the RDSR proactively offer regions from aforementioned countries to receive support in the acquisition of joint transnational projects for economic cooperation.

- **Der Arbeitskreis greift die Anregung auf, sich des Themas der „Wirtschaftsförderung“ in Donauländern an der unteren Donau anzunehmen. Wissen über Mechanismen wie Wirtschaftsförderung funktioniert, was diese leisten kann und welche Rolle die öffentliche Hand darin einnehmen soll, ist nur unzureichend vorhanden. Wirtschaftsförderung kann auch als Mittel dazu dienen, das Misstrauen gegenüber der öffentlichen Hand abzubauen.**

The working group is to address the topic business development by business development agencies in the lower Danube countries. Knowledge about mechanisms how “business development by public incentives” works, the potential what it can achieve and the role of the public sector in this process is insufficiently available. Business development can also be a means of diminishing distrust towards the public sector.

2.

Tourismus

Tourism

Basierend auf Erkenntnissen des österreichischen Tourismuskonzepts für den österreichischen Donaauraum 2016 – 2026 und anknüpfend an das Arbeitsprogramm Tourismus, greift die Arbeitskreisleitung die Thematik von Verhandlungen zwischen Städten und Donauschiffahrtsreedereien zur Steuerung von Landprogrammen und Entlastung von Anlegestellen auf. Im Fokus steht die regionale Wertschätzung vor Ort. Der Arbeitskreis wird das Thema verstärkt in die Koordination mit der PA 3 der EUSDR einbringen.

Based on the findings of the Austrian tourism concept for the Austrian Danube region 2016 - 2026 and following the work programme tourism, the management of the working group takes up the topic of negotiations between cities and Danube shipping companies in order to supervise landing programmes and to relieve pressure from piers. The focus is on the regional added value. The work group will increasingly address the topic in coordination with PA3 of the EUSDR.

- * **Anbei die Kurzversion des Tourismuskonzepts für den österreichischen Donaauraum 2016 – 2026 (Beilage 4.2.).**

Please find attached the short version of the tourism concept for the Austrian Danube region 2016 – 2026 (attachment 4.2.).

3.

Verkehr

Transport

- ***Der Arbeitskreis bekennt sich zur aktiven Erhaltung des Paneuropäischen Corridor 7 zwischen Regensburg und der Mündung der Donau, vertreten durch Otto Schwetz. Hierbei sollen besonders die Interessen der Donauanrainerstaaten berücksichtigt werden und in Korridorplanungen einfließen.***
The working group commits to actively maintain the pan European Corridor 7 between Regensburg and the outlet of the Danube, represented by Otto Schwetz. While doing so particularly the interests of Danube riparian states are to be considered and incorporated in corridor planning.

- ***Für die erfolgreiche Einreichung im Danube Transnational Programme für das Projekt DBS Gateway Region, zu dem der Arbeitskreis Wirtschaft, Tourismus und Verkehr die politische Initiierung übernahm und übernimmt, wird die Anregung mitgenommen, auch chinesische Interessenten als Projektumwelt einzubinden. Der Arbeitskreis wird seine politische Rolle ab Start des Projektes – avisiert für 02/2017 – wahrnehmen.***
For the successful filing of the Danube Transnational Programme for the project DBS Gateway Region, for which the working group economy, tourism and transport assumed and assumes political initiation, the suggestion of also including Chinese prospects in the project environment is taken into account. The working group is going to exercise its political role from the start of the project, envisaged for 02/2017.

- ***Der Arbeitskreis bekennt sich zur Fortsetzung seines Engagements hinsichtlich der eurasischen Planung zur „new silk road“ – dem chinesischen Projekt „one belt, one road“ (OBOR) und beobachtet und unterstützt für die ARGE DL die österreichischen Aktivitäten.***

The working group pledges itself to continue its dedication regarding the Eurasian “new silk road” – the Chinese project “one belt, one road” (OBOR) and observes and supports Austrian activities for the Danube regions (ARGE DL area).

- * ***Anbei eine Präsentation als Hintergrundinformation (Beilage 4.8).***
Please find attached a presentation with some background information (attachment 4.8).

Item 4.1.1. of the Agenda

Cooperation of Ports and Harbours of the Danube and the Black Sea

(Attachment 5)

Mr Vincent Neumayer, coordinator of the working group on business, tourism and transport from the State of Vienna, reports on the successful submission of the project application “Danube Black Sea Gateway Region”, which the working group on business, tourism and transport had helped to prepare and for which the Land of Lower Austria is responsible. This project was then selected by the Danube Transnational Programme in a two-step procedure. It was accepted in autumn of 2016 and will probably be launched in February 2017. The Danube regions will assume political leadership and control in this project.

Attachment:

5. *DBS Gateway Region*

Item 4.2 of the Agenda

Working group on culture, science and education

(Attachments 6 to 6.9.)

Mr Hermann Dikowitsch, chair of the working group on culture, science and education from the State of Lower Austria, provides a brief overview of the cooperation projects discussed at the working group’s last meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava.

(Attachment 6.3.)

Exhibitions:

Exhibition at the Klosterneuburg Monastery: "Glanz des Ostens" (The Splendour of the East), from 1 May to 31 July 2016, in cooperation with Bulgaria; an exhibition from Lower Austria will be on display in Sofia in one of the next years.

The travelling exhibition "Projektraum Donau" (Project Area Danube), in cooperation with the Land of Baden-Wuerttemberg, the Danube Office Ulm and the Danube-Swabian Central Museum, was also on display in Lower Austria and is currently touring through the Danube regions.

The Lilienfeld Monastery is another exhibition centre that has been dedicated to topics in connection with Central Europe and the Danube region for many years now. Its 2016 exhibition focussed on Slovakian arts.

Music:

Grafenegg - a project is currently being prepared for submission. The two main aspects of this project are:

- "European Music Campus" - concerts and training centre for musicians from all over Europe and
- "European Music Campus Orchestra" - musicians from Eastern and South-Eastern-Europe come together to participate in workshops, make music together and work with renowned artists, conductors and composers.

International Summer Academy:

Each year, master classes focussing on musicians from the Danube region are organised in a region south of Vienna between the end of July and the end of August.

ISA Music Festival:

A series of approximately 40 concerts per year.

Literature:

Each year, Literaturehouse Europe (ELit) organises the European Literature Days in the Wachau region (*Attachment 6.5.*).

The “Artist in Residence Programme” (AIR) in Krems is intended to foster an exchange of artists from the Danube region in the areas of fine arts, literature, architecture and music.

Ten scholarship holders from Austria, Hungary, Ukraine and Moldova were awarded scholarships from the (ARGE Donauländer).

Science:

ICAR-US, an international network for archive search, focussing on digitisation and common online platforms (*Attachment 6.6.*).

The Danube Rectors’ Association met on 10 November 2016 at the Danube University Krems. The Danube University Krems will now chair the Danube Rectors’ Association for two years.

Research:

- “DREAM” project: a water research project along the Danube with two waterways engineering laboratories in Austria and Romania. The project is already at the submission stage.
- netPOL project: a networking project in which training and research institutions work together and operate in a network.
- EConet project: supports the evolution of the state of research and is intended to make the region Lower Austria/Hungary a more attractive location for science

Museums:

Museumsmanagement Niederösterreich GmbH - “HERITAGE” project - cultural and creative revival of traditions (Interreg V-A SK-AT), lead partner: self-governing region of Bratislava; partner: Adult Education Centre in Modra, Kulturvernetzung NÖ (Lower Austrian association for cultural networking), municipality Jedenspeigen. There are plans to renovate the Adult Education Centre, making it an innovative digitisation centre for taking stock of and documenting the cultural heritage.

Marchegg Castle - “Treasures of Central Europe” project (Interreg V-A SK-AT) The Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art in Vienna and the National Museum in Bratislava are conceiving an exhibition of folk art from the entire area of the Danube monarchy.

Danube limes:

Initiative to make the “Danube limes” a World Cultural Heritage site. This project involves the States of Lower Austria, Upper Austria and Vienna. In 2018, Upper Austria will organise a provincial exhibition on the topic of the Danube limes. The application for World Cultural Heritage Status will be submitted in 2017 in coordination with Bavaria, Slovakia and Hungary.

Ms Tatiana Mikusova from the self-governing region of Bratislava has suggested two projects:

- “In the footsteps of the noble houses Pálffy and Esterházy” and
- a Cultural Route dedicated to the Saints Cyril and Methodius

Appropriate project partners were found at the Danube Culture Conference which took place in Ruse on 24/25 November 2016 (*Attachment 6.7.*).

Baden-Wuerttemberg has launched two initiatives:

- “Young Danube Bridges” project dedicated to young adults to introduce them to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and
- “Project Area Danube” project - an arts initiative (*Attachment 6.8.*).

Hungarian representatives reported on the activities of the “KultUnio” foundation within the Danube Culture Cluster.

The 4th Danube Culture Conference took place on 24/25 November in Ruse (BG) and was dedicated to an exchange on cultural policy issues in the Danube region (*Attachment 6.9.*). Two specific projects were discussed in detail:

- a Cultural Route dedicated to the Saints Cyril and Methodius and
- the organisation of the European Cultural Capital 2021 in Novisad.

In 2019, Novisad will be the European Youth Capital.

In 2017, the Danube Cultural Conference will take place in Pecs; in 2018, it will be held in Linz.

Attachments:

6. *Minutes of the working group’s meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*

- 6.1. *List of participants in the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 6.2. *Agenda of the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 6.3. *Report from Lower Austria*
- 6.4. *Report from Upper Austria*
- 6.5. *European Literature Youth Exchanges (eljub)*
- 6.6. *ICARUS Network*
- 6.7. *In the footsteps of noble houses*
- 6.8. *Youth and Arts Projects along the Danube*
- 6.9. *Report on the 4th Danube Culture Conference, 24/25 November 2016, Ruse*

Decision on Item 4.2 of the Agenda

"Working group on culture, science and education"

(Attachments 6 to 6.9.)

Der Arbeitskreis Kultur, Wissenschaft und Bildung

The Working Group Culture, Science and Education

1.

vertieft weiter die Zusammenarbeit mit der Donaurektorenkonferenz und ihrem permanenten Sekretariat in Wien - dem Institut für Donaauraum und Mitteleuropa und fördert wissenschaftliche Netzwerke wie insb. EDA und ICARUS im Donaauraum.

continues to improve the cooperation with the Danube Rectors`Conference and its Permanent Secretariat in Vienna - the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe and fosters scientific networks (in particular such as EDA and ICARUS) in the Danube Region.

2.

wird die kulturellen und wissenschaftlichen Veranstaltungen und Kooperationen im Donaauraum unter einer möglichst breiten Beteiligung der Mitgliedsregionen fortsetzen und vertiefen, wie dies beispielsweise im Rahmen der Projekte European Music Campus Orchestra, Europäisches Literaturhaus/Europäische

Jugendliteraturbegegnungen, Atelier an der Donau, Junge Donaubrücken und Wanderausstellungen (Projektraum Donau, Die Entstehung der Weltkultur entlang der Donau) erfolgt.

continues and intensifies the cultural and scientific venues and cooperations within the Danube Region with the widest possible participation of the member states.

This happened for example through the projects European Music Campus Orchestra, European House of Literature/European Youth Literature Meetings, Atelier on the Danube, Young Danube Bridges and touring exhibition (Projectspace Danube, The making of World Culture along the Danube).

3.

vergibt weiterhin die ARGE Donauländerstipendien für Auslandsaufenthalte zu Aus- und Weiterbildungszwecken im Donaauraum gemäß den Richtlinien.

continues to fund the scholarships for educational and training purposes in the Danube Region according to the guidelines.

4.

befürwortet die weitere Organisation und Austragung der Donau Kulturkonferenzen als eine wichtige Dialog- und Vernetzungsplattform für Kulturkooperationen im Donaauraum (Ruse 2016, Pecs/Budapest 2017).

supports the further organization of the Danube Cultural Conferences as an important dialogue and networking platform for cultural cooperations in the Danube Region (Ruse 2016, Pecs/Budapest 2017).

5.

bekannt sich zur weiteren Intensivierung der Zusammenarbeit auf der Basis konkreter gemeinsamer Projekte, wie etwa „Kulturweg der Hl. Kyrill und Method“ und „Auf den Spuren der Adelsgeschlechter Palffy und Esterhazy“, und befürwortet die Initiative der Erhebung des Donau Limes zum UNESCO Weltkulturerbe.

commits to intensify cooperation on the basis of concrete common projects such as „Cultural route of St. Cyril and Methodius“ and „In the footsteps of the nobilities

Palfy and Esterhazy“ and supports the initiative of the rising the Danube Limes to a UNESCO Cultural World Heritage.

Item 4.3 of the Agenda

Working group on sustainability, energy and the environment

(Attachments 7 to 7.2.)

Mr Peter Obricht, chair of the working group on sustainability, energy and the environment from the State of Lower Austria, provides an overview of the activities in the fields of energy and the environment (*Attachment 7.1.*).

He reports on

- the E-Mobility Day held on 21 May 2016 in Melk, Lower Austria (Wachau region),
- the working group's meeting on 3 November 2016 in Bratislava (*Attachment 7*) and
- the Energy Future Tour from 1 to 5 August 2016, which provided adolescents and young university students from Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania with the opportunity to participate in 5-day excursions to different companies and research institutions in the Austrian Danube regions (Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Vienna and Burgenland), focussing on the topics renewable energy and energy efficiency.

Another suggestion: organising a travelling exhibition of cartoons by local and regional artists on environment and energy topics.

The working group states with great regret that the group has not received any support from the co-chair of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions, Mr Strahil Karapchanski. So far, it has not been possible to contact Mr Karapchanski.

Mr Christian Steiner, chair of the working group on sustainability, energy and the environment from the State of Lower Austria, reports on the activities in the fields of soil protection and sustainable land use (*Attachment 7.2.*).

The working group meets twice a year. The big common working group meeting took place on 3 November 2016 as a side event of the Annual Forum (*Attachment 7*). Separate expert meetings are organised on the topics the individual working groups are dedicated to.

The working group will meet again on 26/27 April 2017 in Tulln, the Annual Meeting of the European Land and Soil Alliance will take place on 18/19 May 2017 in Linz.

Attachments:

7. *Minutes of the working group's meeting on 3 November 2016 in Bratislava*

7.1. *Presentation by Mr Obricht*

7.2. *Presentation by Mr Steiner*

Decision on Item 4.3 of the Agenda

"Working group on sustainability, energy and the environment"

(Attachments 7 to 7.2.)

A)

zum Bereich „Bodenschutz und nachhaltige Landnutzung“:

to item „Soil Protection and Sustainable Land Use“:

1.

Die ARGE Donauländer beschließt, die stärkere Zusammenarbeit mit bestehenden Netzwerken wie SONDAR Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region (Bodenschutznetzwerk im Donauraum) und ELSA European Land and Soil Alliance (Europäisches Bodenbündnis) zur Verbreitung von best practice-Beispielen und Erfahrungen im Donauraum mittels folgender Tagungen: Arbeitskreis „Nachhaltigkeit, Energie und Umwelt“ zum Schwerpunkt „Boden und nachhaltige Landnutzung“ am 26./27. April 2017 in Tulln und Jahrestagung Europäisches Bodenbündnis zum Thema „Urban Gardening“ am 18./19. Mai 2017 in Linz.
ARGE Donauländer decides to increase collaboration with existing networks, such as SONDAR Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region and ELSA European Land and Soil Alliance to disseminate best-practice examples and experiences in the Danube region with the following annual meetings: WG "Sustainability" focussing on

“Soil Protection and Sustainable Land Use” on April 26/27, 2017 in Tulln and Annual Conference of the European Land and Soil Alliance “Urban Gardening” on May 18/19, 2017 in Linz.

2.

Niederösterreich bietet an, die Ergebnisse der Leitprojekte „Humusmanagement und regionale Biodüngerproduktion“ und „Rohstoffproduktion für die weiterverarbeitende Industrie“ des Themenfelds „Nachhaltige Landwirtschaft und Produktionsoptimierung“ im NÖ FTI-Programm „Forschung Technologie Innovation“ sowie der Projekte „Soil map–Bodeninformation“, „Erosionsvermeidung durch Bodenschutzanlagen“, „BOKU-Masterlehrgang – Sustainability in Agriculture, Food Production and Food Technology in the Danube Region“, „HydroBod“ und „KlimaGrün“ den Regionen des Donauraums zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Lower Austria offers to provide to the Danube regions the results from the lead projects "Humus management and regional production of organic fertilizers" and "raw-materials production for the processing sector" of the field "Sustainable agriculture and production optimization" in the Lower Austrian FTI Programme "Science Technology Innovation" as well as the projects "Soil map–soil information“, “Erosion prevention with soil protection systems“, BOKU-Master Course “Sustainability in Agriculture, Food Production and Food Technology in the Danube Region“, “HydroBod” and “Climate Green”.

3.

Auf europäischer Ebene soll – z.B. auch im Sinne der Umsetzung des NÖ Klima- und Energieprogramms 2020 und des baden-württembergischen integrierten Energie- und Klimaschutzkonzeptes – die Einbettung und Verbreitung von laufenden und künftigen Projekten im Rahmen der EU Donauraumstrategie (das Bodenschutznetzwerk SONDAR ist seit April 2016 eine Task Force im Prioritätsbereich 6 „Biodiversität, Landschaft, Luft und Boden“ der EUSDR) und von Danube Transnational erfolgen. Besonderes Augenmerk ist auf die Umsetzung der im Jahr 2015 von den Vereinten Nationen beschlossenen 17 Nachhaltigkeitsziele (Sustainable Development Goals) zu legen.

At a European level, the idea is to also implement within the framework of the Lower-

Austrian energy programme 2020 and the integrated energy and climate-protection concept of Baden-Württemberg the integration and proliferation of current and future projects in the context of the EU strategy for the Danube region (the Soil Strategy Network SONDAR is an official Task Force of Priority Area 6 "Biodiversity, Landscapes, Air and Soil" of the EUSDR) and Danube Transnational. Special emphasis has to be put on the realisation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which have been adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

B)

zum Bereich „Energie und Umwelt“:

to item "Energy and Environment":

1.

Die Initiativen des Arbeitskreises mögen einen Beitrag zur Umsetzung des Paris Agreements und des EU Klima- und Energiepaketes leisten.

The initiatives of the working group shall contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the EU Energy and Climate package.

2.

Es soll dabei Wert auf eine enge Abstimmung mit den Aktivitäten der PA 2 der EUSDR gelegt werden.

Work should be done in close connection with the activities of Priority Area 2 of the EUSDR.

3.

Bewusstseinsbildung, Erfahrungstransfer und der Austausch von guten Beispielen (insbesondere von bewährten Städte- und Regionsnetzwerken wie Klimabündnis, Europäischer Energie-Preis) stehen im Zentrum der Arbeiten; Synergien zu anderen überregionalen Arbeitsgemeinschaften, wie beispielsweise der Europaregion Donau-Moldau, sollten weiter genutzt werden.

The focus should be on dissemination, know how transfer, exchange of best practice (particularly on successful networks of regions and cities, e.g. „Climate Alliance“ and

„European Energy Award“) as well as on using synergies with other transnational working partnerships and initiatives, such as the „European Region Danube-Vltava“.

4.

Bewährte Projekte aus den Vorjahren sollen erfolgreich in den nächsten Jahren weitergeführt werden bzw. neue Projekte sollen initiiert werden.

Successful projects of the past should be continued in the near future and new projects should be initiated.

Item 4.4 of the Agenda

Working group on civil society, local actors and social affairs

(Attachments 8 to 8.3.)

As representative of the working group's chair Daniela Urschitz, General Secretary Peter de Martin from the State of Lower Austria reports that, as there were not enough active participants (the member regions did not nominate any members for this working group), it was decided in 2015 to merge this working group with the Danube Local Actors Platform of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and to issue joint invitations, as the group of people who might be interested and the issues dealt with are similar and or even identical.

The meeting of the Danube Local Actors Platform on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava focussed on reports concerning the national "Participation Days" 2016, which had been successfully implemented in Austria, Moldova and Slovakia (*Attachment 8*).

Moreover, current projects and the planning/organisation/financing of the next Participation Day were discussed in Budapest (*Attachment 8.1.*).

With 140 participants, the 3rd Danube Participation Day of the EUSDR, which took place on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava, was very successful (*Attachment 8.2.*).

The first joint meeting of the local actors of the Danube region and the Conference of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions on 3 November 2016, which was co-organised by the *ARGE Donaulaender* and in which 80 participants and renowned speakers took part, also was a huge success (*Attachment 8.3.*).

In 2017, the General Secretariat of the *ARGE Donaulaender* will ask the member regions once again to nominate members for this working group and send them to the various meetings so that these interesting topics can be dealt with.

Attachments:

8. *National Participation Day in the EUSDR*
- 8.1. *Report on the meeting of the Danube Local Actors Platform*
- 8.2. *Facts and Figures of the 3rd Danube Participation Day on 2 November 2016 Bratislava*
- 8.3. *Agenda of the 9th European Conference of Danube Cities and Regions*

Decision on Item 4.4 of the Agenda

“Working group on civil society, local actors and social affairs”

(Attachments 8 to 8.3.)

The State of Vienna and PA10 are thanked for their commitment and the organisation of the Danube Participation Days. The members of the ARGE Donaulaender are asked to nominate members for the working group.

Item 5 of the Agenda

Further development of the cooperation with the Council of Danube Cities and Regions

(Attachment 9)

As representative of general coordinator Peter Langer, Mr Jürgen Eisele from the Council of Danube Cities and Regions reports on the good cooperation of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions and the ARGE Donauländer.

He shares information about planned future activities of the Council of Danube Cities and Regions.

He describes his ideas for the “6 + 12” project relating to crossings over the Danube in the area of the lower Danube.

The intention is to build twelve additional bridges over the Danube. The conference of the heads of government of the Danube regions decided in 2015 in Ulm to support this initiative. He underlines that Romania and Bulgaria are currently hardly interested in the construction of additional crossings over the Danube, although the local population suffers from the bad connections. He asks for the continued support of the working group and the ARGE Donauländer.

The Council of Danube Cities and Regions and the ARGE Donauländer are the only political institutions representing the interests of the people living along the Danube, which is why these two institutions are very important.

In the future, the Council of Danube Cities and Regions plans to tighten its organisation, to strengthen its structures and to involve more people.

Ms Tatiana Mikusova asks whether an “official statement” of the ARGE Donauländer would be helpful to support the Danube crossings project; Mr Jürgen Eisele answers that there will be new governments in Romania and Bulgaria at the beginning of 2017, so that such a statement could not even be delivered.

Generals Secretary Peter de Martin from the State of Lower Austria asks the Council of Danube Cities and Regions:

- to nominate a chair for the working group on business, tourism and transport,
- to contact the chair of the working group on sustainability, energy and the environment, Vice-Mayor Strahil Karapchanski, to ask him to join the working group,
- to send members to the working groups.

Attachment:

9. *Overview Council of Danube Cities and Regions*

Decision on Item 5 of the Agenda

“Further development of the cooperation with the Council of Danube Cities and Regions”
(Attachment 9)

The Council of Danube Cities and Regions is thanked for the report and asked to follow up on the requests concerning the working groups.

Item 6 of the Agenda

Report by the Presidency on the Annual Forum of the EUSDR and contribution of the ARGE Donauländer to the Annual Forum 2016 in Bratislava

General Secretary Peter de Martin from the State of Lower Austria reports that the Annual Forum took place at the beginning of November 2016 in Bratislava and was well-attended.

Insufficient communication within the EUSDR is responsible for some problems in some of its priority areas. Work in priority areas 1a and 10 is very well organised, while the other areas have different structures. The responsibility for each priority area is shared by two states, so that the quality of communication between the respective states determines the progress of projects and project ideas. The EU Strategy for the Danube Region does not dispose of any financial means, but has to be supported and financed within the frame of the Danube programme. Positive examples were highlighted at the EUSDR Annual Conference in Bratislava.

An Austrian Commissioner initiated the EUSDR. In the course of the years, the EUSDR has lost in importance. There are plans to restructure the Strategy for the Danube region in the years to come. The intention is to only deal with issues which are of interest to all the states participating in the EU Strategy for the Danube region.

Mr Otto Schwetz from the State of Vienna understands the differences in quality in the the different priority areas. 40 of 105 projects of PA1a have already ben completed, approximately 50 are currently in the works, the rest is in the pipeline. The company via donau - Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft m.b.H. deals with the

implementation of these projects in a professional way. Other PAs are not that professionally organised. The structure of the individual PAs will have to be reconsidered.

Mr Jürgen Eisele underlines that it has to be respected that participants from the Danube regions may not be able to easily follow conferences held in English. Organisers should make sure that interpretation is provided.

Decision on Item 6 of the Agenda

“Report by the Presidency on the Annual Forum
of the EUSDR and contribution of the ARGE Donauländer to the Annual Forum 2016 in
Bratislava”

***The ARGE Donauländer is thanked for its contribution to the Annual Forum 2016
in Bratislava.***

Item 7 of the Agenda

Preparation of the 2017 conference of the heads of government

Mr Roman Tasky from the self-governing region of Trnava reports that the conference of the heads of government will be organised in cooperation with the self-governing region of Bratislava and will take place in the middle of October 2017. The exact date still has to be coordinated with the protocol department. Regional elections will be held in November 2017.

Item 8 of the Agenda

Presidency of the working partnership of Danube regions and handing-over of the presidency for 2017

(Attachment 10)

Mr Roman Tasky from the self-governing region of Trnava shares information on the activities planned for the region's presidency in the year 2017 (*Attachment 10*).

Attachment:

10 *Priorities and activities of Slovakian presidency*

Decision on Item 8 of the Agenda

“Presidency of the working partnership of Danube regions and handing-over of the presidency for 2017”

(*Attachment 10*)

The ARGE Donauländer thanks the self-governing region of Bratislava for the activities organised in 2016 and is looking forward to the activities which will be organised by the self-governing region Trnava in 2017.

Item 9 of the Agenda

Discussion on the presidency 2018 - 2019

General Secretary Peter de Martin from the State of Lower Austria reports that, according to the “Joint Declaration”, Hungary will assume the presidency after Slovakia. The Hungarian county Győr-Moson-Sopron is asked whether it would be interested in assuming the presidency; Ferenc Ivanics, Vice-President of the self-government of the Győr-Moson-Sopron county, answers that the county considers itself an observer, as it did not take part in any events in previous years.

Item 10 of the Agenda

Miscellaneous

Concerning the request for English as a working language, Mr Otto Schwetz, chair of the working group on business, tourism and transport from the State of Vienna, explains that the bylaws of the ARGE Donauländer only provide for German as a working language. If English was to become another working language, the bylaws would have to be changed. A draft should be prepared in cooperation with the General Secretariat. The media strategy of the ARGE Donauländer should also become a central task of the General Secretariat.

Closing Statement from Mr Werner Seif, chair of the working group of senior officials and Director of the Lower Austrian State Office

Mr Werner Seif, chair of the working group of senior officials and Director of the Lower Austrian State Office, thanks the General Secretariat for having prepared the conference documents, the presiding self-governing region of Bratislava for having organised the conference and for their hospitality and the conference participants for their interesting contributions.

For the General Secretariat and
the accuracy of the minutes:
General Secretary Peter de Martin e.h.

Regina Stierschneider e.h.
Secretary

Seen!
Dr. Seif e.h.
Chair of the Working Group
of Senior Officials

Attachments:

1. *List of participants*
- 1.1. *Summary report*
2. *Agenda*
3. *Video 7th European Summit of Regions and Cities*
- 3.1. *Presentation on the 7th European Summit of Regions and Cities*
4. *Report from the working group on business, tourism and transport*
- 4.1. *Work programme for the field of business 2016 - 2020*
- 4.2. *Tourism concept for the Austrian Danube region 2016 - 2026*
- 4.3. *Minutes of the working group's meeting on 28 October 2015 in Ulm*
- 4.4. *Archipelago Danube*
- 4.5. *Agenda of the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 4.6. *Danube Inland-Delta*
- 4.7. *Minutes of the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 4.8. *The new Silk Road*
5. *DBS Gateway Region*
6. *Minutes of the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 6.1. *List of participants in the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 6.2. *Agenda of the working group's meeting on 2 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 6.3. *Report from Lower Austria*
- 6.4. *Report from Upper Austria*
- 6.5. *European Literature Youth Exchanges (eljub)*
- 6.6. *ICARUS Network*
- 6.7. *In the footsteps of noble houses*
- 6.8. *Youth and Arts Projects along the Danube*
- 6.9. *Report on the 4th Danube Culture Conference, 24/25 November 2016, Ruse*
7. *Minutes of the working group's meeting on 3 November 2016 in Bratislava*
- 7.1. *Presentation by Mr Obricht*
- 7.2. *Presentation by Mr Steiner*
8. *National Participation Day in the EUSDR*
- 8.1. *Report on the meeting of the Danube Local Actors Platform*
- 8.2. *Facts and Figures of the 3rd Danube Participation Day on 2 November 2016 Bratislava*
- 8.3. *Agenda of the 9th European Conference of Danube Cities and Regions*
9. *Overview Council of Danube Cities and Regions*
10. *Priorities and activities of Slovakian presidency*