



ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT DONAULÄNDER

Working Community of the Danube Regions

Kick-off Workshop 2020+

13 March 2018, 10.00 - 16.00

Amt der NÖ Landesregierung
3109 St. Pölten, Landhausplatz 1
Haus 1A, Leopoldsaal

ARBEITSGEMEINSCHAFT
DONAULÄNDER
PRACOVNÍ SPOLEČENSTVÍ
PODUNAJSKÝCH ZEMÍ
PRACOVNE SPOLOČENSTVO
PODUNAJSKÝCH KRAJÍN
DUNAMENTI TARTOMÁNYOK
MUNKAKÖZÖSSÉGE
RADNA ZAJEDNICA
PODUNAVSKIH REGIJA
RADNA ZAJEDNICA
PODUNAVSKIH ZEMALJA
COMUNITATEA DE LUCRU
A STATELOR DUNÁRENE
РАБОТНА ОБШНОСТ
ДУНАВСКИ СТРАНИ
РОБОЧА СПІВДРУЖНІСТЬ
ПРИДУНАЙСЬКИХ КРАЇН

MINUTES

| TEILNEHMERLISTE | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Kick off-Workshop ARGE Donauländer 2020+ | | | |
| 13. März 2018, NÖ Landhaus St. Pölten | | | |
| NR. | NAME | TITEL | FUNKTION / ORGANISATION |
| DEUTSCHLAND | | | |
| LAND BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG | | | |
| 1 | DIEGELMANN Christina | | Stv. Leiterin Referat 54, Grenzüberschreitende und interregionale Zusammenarbeit, EU-Strategie für den Donaunraum / Alpenraum, Länderreferat Frankreich, Vier Motoren für Europa |
| ÖSTERREICH | | | |
| LAND OBERÖSTERREICH | | | |
| 2 | SCHARTNER Adolf | | Amt der OÖ Landesregierung, Direktion Präsidium, Abteilung Präsidium |
| LAND NIEDERÖSTERREICH | | | |
| 3 | ORTNER Simon | Mag. Dr. | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Leiter der Abteilung Internationale und Europäische Angelegenheiten, Generalsekretär der ARGE DL |
| 4 | STAMPFL-WALCH Daniela | MMag. | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Abteilung Internationale und Europäische Angelegenheiten, Generalsekretariat der ARGE DL |
| 5 | STIERSCHNEIDER Regina | | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Abteilung Internationale und Europäische Angelegenheiten, Generalsekretariat der ARGE DL |
| 6 | TRITEOS MEIDLİK Hajnalka | Mag. | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Abteilung Internationale und Europäische Angelegenheiten, EU-Regionalpolitik |
| 7 | KREJCOVA Katka | Mag. | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Abteilung Kunst und Kultur/Auslandskultur, Arbeitskreis Kultur, Wissenschaft und Bildung der ARGE DL |
| 8 | PENNERSTORFER Paul | Mag. | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Abteilung Wissenschaft und Forschung |
| 9 | AUER Alexander | Mag. | NÖ Forschungs- und Bildungsges.m.b.H. |
| 10 | OBRICHT Peter | Dipl.Ing. | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Leiter der Abteilung Umwelt- und Energiewirtschaft, Leiter des Arbeitskreises Nachhaltigkeit, Energie und Umwelt der ARGE DL |

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| 11 | STEINER Christian | Dipl.Ing. | NÖ Agrarbezirksbehörde, Fachabteilung Landentwicklung, Leiter des Arbeitskreises Nachhaltigkeit, Energie und Umwelt der ARGE DL |
| 12 | SZLEZAK Erwin | Dipl.Ing. Dr. | NÖ Agrarbezirksbehörde, Fachabteilung Landentwicklung, Leiter des Fachbereiches Bodenschutz & Landschaftsgestaltung, Arbeitskreis Nachhaltigkeit, Energie und Umwelt der ARGE DL |
| 13 | POPP Christian | Dipl.Ing. | Amt der NÖ Landesregierung, Abteilung Gesamtverkehrsangelegenheiten |
| 14 | HAGENAUER Simone | Mag. | ecoplus Niederösterreichs Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH, Projektmanagerin Internationale Projekte |
| 15 | WURM Angelika | Mag.(FH) | Leitung Incoming Donau Niederösterreich Tourismus GmbH |
| 16 | HUBER Edith | Dr. | Donau-Universität Krems, Leiterin der Stabsstelle für Forschungsservice und Internationales |

LAND WIEN

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|----|-------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 17 | SIRKA-BRED Alena | Mag. | Magistratsdirektion der Stadt Wien, Magistratsdirektor, Gruppenleiterin der Gruppe Europa und Internationales |
| 18 | RESCH Thomas | Mag. | Magistratsdirektion der Stadt Wien, Magistratsdirektor, Gruppe Europa und Internationales |
| 19 | SKOFF Gerhard | Prof. | Präsident Danube Tourist Consulting |
| 20 | SCHICKER Rudolf | Dipl.Ing. | EUSDR, PA 10 Koordinator |
| 21 | SCHWETZ Otto | Senatsrat Mag. | ehem. Leiter des Arbeitskreises Wirtschaft, Tourismus und Verkehr der ARGE DL |

LAND BURGENLAND

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|----|---------------------------|----------|---|
| 22 | PICHLER Ulrike | Mag.(FH) | Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung, Stabsstelle Generalsekretariat-Recht, Büro für Europa und Internationales |
| 23 | SCHLAG Claudia, MA | Mag. | Amt der Burgenländischen Landesregierung, Stabsstelle Generalsekretariat-Recht, Büro für Europa und Internationales |

SLOWAKEI

SELBSTVERWALTUNGSKREIS BRATISLAVA

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|----|-------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|
| 24 | MIKUSOVÁ Tatiana | Ing. | Selbstverwaltungskreis Bratislava |
|----|-------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|

SELBSTVERWALTUNGSKREIS TRNAVA

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| 25 | TAŠKÝ Roman | Ing. | Kreisamt Trnava, Leiter der Abteilung Strategie, Programmierung und GIS |
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ITEM 1 – Welcome and presentation of the agenda

Simon Ortner welcomes the participants and reports that the Working Community of the Danube Regions (in the following: ARGE DL) is to be given a new lease on life. The kick-off workshop was organised on a broad basis in order to sharpen the profile of the ARGE DL and improve the way it is perceived.

Issues:

- What is the added value created by the ARGE DL?
- Why do we need the ARGE DL?
- How is the ARGE DL perceived?

What do the participants appreciate about the ARGE DL?

- The international, supra-regional networking; the cross-border cooperation between the Danube Regions
- the ARGE DL includes regions of both EU members and non-EU members – the common denominator and theme of the ARGE DL is the Danube
- A network of individuals and institutions who ensure a continuity of activities, even when there are fluctuations
- The resilience of the ARGE DL
- The continuity of co-operation between local and regional levels
- Regular political visibility
- Enjoying the benefits of the ARGE DL
- It is a forum with genuine co-operation
- The long-standing history of the organisation
- It demonstrates the willingness of regions along the Danube to engage in joint projects. The NÖ Agrarbezirksbehörde (Lower Austrian Agricultural District Authority) also constitutes an umbrella for projects. 6 EU projects in the field of sustainability have already been organised with neighbouring states.
- Involvement of the sub-national level – a responsibility and an opportunity to involve other regions and make progress
- An opportunity to further develop research co-operation
- An opportunity to play a role in the concert of European regions
- An opportunity to get to know people, especially young people, from other regions; learning about their concerns and needs, challenges and solutions
- An opportunity to make better use of contacts and channels for synergies
- An opportunity to engage in regional exchanges and learn from each other
- An opportunity to find synergies across national borders and avoid duplication
- An opportunity to sustainably strengthen Danube-related tourism in Lower Austria
- Cross-border cultural cooperation
- It is quite well known, also in structurally weak regions

The participants agree that the Danube Region offers great opportunities and that many people take a personal interest in it.

Objective: the ARGE DL is to be the voice of the regions and cities in the Danube Region. Why? Because the EUSDR, which was launched a few years ago as a strong, ambitious project, still needs some work to become more grounded and adapted to realities.

In this context, the ARGE DL can play an important role. It is an opportunity and an obligation for the countries and states with a strong federal structure to make a stronger point about the importance of regions and cities and bring such abstract issues closer to the citizens.

In a next step, the ARGE DL is to be established as the voice of cities and regions in the future.

ITEM 2 – The current situation

The ARGE DL is an association with a long tradition. The document that represents its bylaws, the “Joint Declaration”, was signed on 17 May 1990 in Lower Austria.

Now, the time has come to take current situations and challenges into account. Some bold steps have to be taken in order to continue to cater to the original remit of the ARGE DL, which has not really changed in its essential aspects (Section 1 of the Joint Declaration) (*slide 8*).

Funding of the ARGE DL (*slide 9*): there are no membership fees, and there is no intention to change this.

The ARGE DL is administered by the General Secretariat. This is a service provided by the Province of Lower Austria which all members are invited to make use of

The member regions (*slide 10*):

It is a declared objective to encourage the non-German-speaking regions to participate more actively and to make the services of the ARGE DL available to their regions. The basis is provided by the active players. The more successfully this can be achieved, the greater the probability of having more active members in the ARGE DL. Some agreements (*slide 11*) were concluded in recent years, which are still in

force. They must be critically analysed to see whether changes and some streamlining are needed– Article 7 Joint Declaration.

At the most recent Conference of Heads of Governments in October 2017, decisions were taken on the future of the ARGE DL. At this conference, the ARGE DL sought the Heads of Governments' approval for introducing the related reform. The recommendations regarding resolutions are listed on *slides 12 – 15*.

ITEM 3 – Current projects within the INTERREG-Danube Transnational Programme

Hajnalka Triteos Meidlik presents an overview of current projects within the INTERREG-Danube Transnational Programme (*slides 16 – 32*).

Christian Popp reports on the project “DBS Gateway Region” (*attachment*).

Rudolf Schicker: all strategies have a pool for the supported projects (“keep.eu”). <https://euro-access.at/> is administered by the Vienna on a mandate from the Commission.

Simon Ortner presents a summary of the situation: the aim is to identify existing projects that do well. ARGE DL will take these projects on board or support them in their development. Memoranda are to be developed and political contacts established. Good ARGE DL projects are to be showcased at various political conferences. This gives the projects more visibility and can lead to a win-win situation.

The Danube Region programme is not the only one of its kind; there are many other programmes, run by the EU, by national funding bodies or within the context of other cooperation activities. It is important to take stock of what exists and bundle the existing efforts to the best of our abilities.

ITEM 4 – Analysing strengths and potential strengths for the future of the ARGE DL

What are the aspects that are working well within the ARGE DL?

- Enthusiasm of the Province of Lower Austria and the General Secretariat
- Cooperation with EUSDR, PA2, PA6, IDM or IAD
- Cooperation with Vienna, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, i.e. with the neighbouring countries
- The ARGE DL as a brand
- The activities of the Culture, Science and Education Working Group
- The same degree of emotional involvement and enthusiasm as in the past

Where do the members perceive potential?

- Bundle forces in and from the region through CENTROPE, the ARGE DL or the Council of Danube Cities and Regions. Such a bundling of forces is expected to encourage the participation of the countries of the lower Danube.
- The Danube Region is a common economic area which should be bundled as a target market for entrepreneurs in the regions.
- The accounts settlement of projects is a problem area. Ideally, uniform guidelines and accounting rules should be created.
- Believing in the idea of co-operation among Danube Region countries.
- Harnessing potential should be a joint effort. The other countries are to be brought back on board.
- It is important to be aware of existing assets. There is a great treasure of expertise, and there are many partners who can convey their expertise – working together and sharing experience.
- The General Secretariat (GS) in Lower Austria has a special role to play in the reform of the ARGE DL. The GS is called upon to introduce the reform, bundle and process ideas and ensure networking with other stakeholders and structures in the Danube Region. Active use needs to be made of these synergies.
- The entire Danube Region should be involved. Regions that currently do not attend meetings regularly should be brought back to the meeting room. Networking has an important role to play in this context.
- The ARGE DL brand is to be strengthened; it needs to convey what the ARGE DL stands for. The ARGE DL should not dissipate its energies by duplicating what others do already - it should not be a carbon copy.

- Highlighting concrete projects or tasks of the ARGE DL; things that can be decided upon or approved.
- Being more open in geographical terms should not be limited to member regions but also include cities.
- In the future, the ARGE DL could serve as a platform for tangible projects, a platform for strategic planning that also provides preparatory support.
- What is the added value for the project partners?
- Connections to policy-making
- Delineating the ARGE DL from other networks/programmes/projects.
- Internal communication and greater external visibility for the ARGE DL.

How has the ARGE DL been perceived up to now? (*slide 34*) Its potential has been substantively confirmed. (*slide 35*). How the ARGE DL perceives itself (*Folie 36*) Objective: broadening activities, increased involvement of agencies, universities or research institutions which conduct projects that fit within the ARGE DL's scope. Setting thematic focus areas and developing strategic objectives. One example of the added value the ARGE DL could offer: confirming a common interest in the continued availability of EU funding in the programmes. There must be a justifiable benefit; activities must result in a clear policy statement that is politically acceptable.

ITEM 5 – Working Groups

Simon Ortner reports about the current situation in the working groups (*slide 37*). There is discussion of perhaps setting up a new working group on “Cities and Urban Issues” (*slide 38*).

- The possibility to conduct the working groups thematically within the context of the ARGE DL with the corresponding working group chairs/coordinators and to manage the urban perspective in a separate thematic area.
- The Economy, Tourism and Transport Working Group needs a coordinator.
- The Culture, Science and Education Working Group functions very well and the added value provided by the ARGE DL is clearly identifiable.
- The Sustainability, Energy and Environment Working Group is also very active and can essentially continue its activities in the same way.

- The Civil Society, Local Players and Social Matters Working Group was set up on an initiative by PA10/Vienna and also handled by them. Nothing much happened in that group – this begs the question whether it is still needed in its current form?
- Concerning the question of a new Cities and Urban Issues Working Group: the urban perspective is to be integrated into a working group in a targeted manner.

The question of the tasks/field of activities of the working group chairs. It is important to have a coordinator, but excessive formalism is to be avoided. Working groups need an individual who

- takes care of bringing together the right people and ensures that the composition is broad-based but does not only consist of people whose interests are mainly self-serving;
- has a good idea of what happens in the Danube Region with a view to experts, calls or funding options;
- is aware of synergy effects to be gained by interacting with other working groups;
- takes care of organisation and continued development;
- liaises with the General Secretariat;
- builds thematically on interesting projects.

Discussions of the questions raised (*slide 39*) in groups according to working-group membership (*slide 38*):

- Sustainability, Energy and Environment Working Group
- Economy, Tourism and Transport Working Group
- Culture, Science and Education Working Group

The comprehensive input received on the issue of working groups is collected and will be evaluated in the coming weeks. The results of the evaluation will inform the next steps to be taken.

ITEM 6 – Institutional issues of ARGE DL: (slide 40)

2 levels are uncontested:

The Conference of Heads of Government and the working groups.

Does the ARGE DL still require the other bodies?

Apart from the operational and political level, the ARGE DL needs a more flexible element that carries out the preparatory work for the policy-makers. Coordinating these activities is the task of the General Secretariat (GS). The GS is also the point of contact for all working group coordinators and establishes contacts with other players (slide 41).

Ensuring that the ARGE DL fulfils a meaningful role is the joint responsibility of all members.

ITEM 7 – Bylaws (slide 42)

The bylaws need to be critically reviewed and amended.

A sub-working group will be set up in order to synthesise the existing documents into one single document and streamline the text.

The GS is looking forward to receiving expressions of interest to participate in this task. Vienna and Baden-Württemberg expressed their interest during the meeting.

On the language issue (slide 43): the Kick-off Workshop started in German, but English was spoken later on. Interpretation is provided at the Conference of Heads of Government. The working languages of the working groups are German or English, as required.

ITEM 8 – Next steps: (slides 44 – 45)

Issues to be pursued as soon as possible:

- The GS obtained quotes for a new basic design and logo for ARGE DL. This is work in progress.
- Review and revise bylaws and working bodies
- Identify new networks and players
- Address regions in the east more actively

Next meeting dates (*Folie 48*) and a list of activities of the working groups (*Folien 49 – 50*): **Members are requested to check, update and complement dates and notify them to the GS.**

ITEM 9 – Concluding statements by participants

Simon Ortner thanks the participants for the many ideas and suggestions. They will be collected by the GS in the minutes and sent out to all participants in April. The GS will also prepare the next workshop.

On the subject of the website: the website of ARGE DL has been integrated into the department's website. The Province of Lower Austria currently pursues a digitalisation strategy, which involves, inter alia, the redesign of its homepage and social media activities. This includes the ARGE DL website.

Simon Ortner and Daniela Stampfl-Walch express their heartfelt thanks for the inspired work and participation!

On behalf of the General Secretariat and to confirm the accuracy of these minutes:

MMag. Daniela Stampfl-Walch

Regina Stierschneider
Minute-taker