The EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Conference on Trans-Tisa Hydroecological Scientific Cooperation Network

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Government Commissioner
EU Strategy for the Danube Region
Debrecen, 22 March 2012
Why macro-regional strategies?

• **Macro-regional strategies**: new form of regional cooperation

• **Objectives:**
  
  • *more efficient use of existing EU and national financial resources* for regional development
  
  • *reducing regional disparities* on macro-regional level

• **Renewed EU partnership with neighbouring regions**, strengthening the relationship with the Western Balkans

• **First example**: EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
Why macro-regional strategies?

A sustainable framework for policy integration:

• Commonly agreed priority actions
• Aligned funding
• Reinforcing major EU policy initiatives
• Reinforcing the implementation of Community acquis:
  • Process guided by the European Commission
  • All strategic and policy decisions by Member States
  • Attracting and involvement of non-EU partners
Geographical coverage
Timeline

June 2009: European Council Conclusions
2010: preparatory conferences and public consultation
Dec 2010: Commission proposes Action Plan and Communication
1st half 2011: Hungarian Presidency of the EU Council
February 2011: Designation of 11 priority areas to PACs

13 April 2011: Adoption of the EUSDR by the General Affairs Council: definition of the main pillars and priority areas, identification of actions and project examples
May-June 2011: Convening Steering Groups on 11 PAs, target setting launched
14 June 2011: Endorsement by the Heads of State at the European Council – implementation phase launched

2nd half 2011: Steering Group meetings, elaborating feasible targets, start of project identification
1st half 2012: Adoption action roadmaps PAC reporting to Commission
2nd half 2012: HLG on first progress report mid-2013: COM report on EUSDR perspectives
4 Pillars, 11 Priority Areas, Actions and Projects

- A Connecting the Danube Region
- B Protecting the environment in the Danube Region
- C Building Prosperity in the Danube Region
- D Strengthening the Danube Region
# EUSDR Priority Areas and examples for targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(A) Connecting the Danube Region</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. To improve mobility and multimodality:</td>
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<td>(1a) Inland waterways</td>
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<td>(1b) Road, rail and air links</td>
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<td>2. To encourage more sustainable energy</td>
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<td>3. To promote culture and tourism</td>
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<td>“Improved travel times between major cities”</td>
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<td>“Multimodal Danube river port terminals”</td>
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<td>“EU2020 climate and energy targets”</td>
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<td>„Develop green tourist products along the region”</td>
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<th>(B) Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region</th>
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<td>4. To restore and maintain the quality of waters</td>
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<td>5. To manage environmental risks</td>
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<td>6. To preserve biodiversity, landscape, air, soils</td>
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<td>„Elaborate sub-basin management plans”</td>
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<td>„Implement flood risk management plans”</td>
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<td>„Secure viable populations indigenous fish species”</td>
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<th>(C) Building Prosperity in the Danube Region</th>
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<td>7. To develop knowledge society</td>
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<td>8. To support competitiveness</td>
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<td>9. To invest in people and skills</td>
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<td>„Full broadband access in the Region by 2013 “</td>
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<td>„Patents +50%“</td>
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<td>„Tertiary education +40% for aged 30-34“</td>
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<th>(D) Strengthening the Danube Region</th>
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<td>10. To step up institutional capacity &amp; cooperation</td>
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<td>11. To work together to promote security</td>
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<td>“Benchmarks for reducing bureaucracy ”</td>
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<td>„Cooperation between law enforcement actors“</td>
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Governance and implementation (initial stage)

- European Council
- High Level Group
- National Contact Points
- European Commission DG REGIO
- Priority Area Coordinators network
- EU and national programmes
- Financing Institutions
- Projects
- National Agencies
- European Commission
- Strategy Action Plan
- Implementation Reporting
- Implementation support and guidance
EUSDR Governance at policy level

1. European Council
   Endorsement of the Strategy and decision on main policy orientations

2. High level group for the Danube Region
   Assist the Commission in facilitating the implementation of the Strategy

3. European Commission
   Coordinates and facilitate the process
   Reports on achievements and progress of the Strategy

4. National Contact Points
   Coordinate or consult national administrations
   Provide advice and information to partners

5. Priority Area Coordinators
   Leadership on thematic Priority Areas
   Responsibility in implementing the actions
Implementation of PAs – Steering Groups

Priority Area Coordinator and the Steering Group

- strategic forum of cooperation
- composed of EUSDR partner states’ delegates

- Roadmaps
- Revision of targets
- Revision of Actions

- Issuing the „Letter of Recommendation (LoR)”
- Project evaluation
- Project labelling
Strategy composition

- Pillars
- Priority areas
- Actions and roadmaps
- Projects
Timeline

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Contribution of Hungary

- Major efforts in the endorsement phase (HU PRES 2011)
- Perspective: maintaining strong support for the realisation of the EUSDR
- Hungary’s approach:
  - Danube region – green region with great ecological complexity
  - Building prosperity in the Danube region
  - Preserving and utilising the rich cultural and scientific heritage
- Joint coordination of 3 PAs:
  - PA2: to promote sustainable energy (CZ)
  - PA4: quality of waters, sustainable water management (SK);
  - PA5: managing environmental risks (RO);
- Creation of the „Budapest Danube Contact Point”
Actions and targets of Priority Area 4.
To restore and maintain the quality of waters

**Target:** Reduce the nutrient levels in the Danube River to allow the recovery of the Black Sea ecosystems

• **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”
Actions and targets of Priority Area 4.
To restore and maintain the quality of waters

**Target:** Achieve the management objectives set out in the Danube River Basin Management Plan.

- **Action:** “To implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan”
- **Action:** “To continue to invest in and support the information collection systems already developed by ICPDR”
- **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 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, transferring tools, methods concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply”.
Actions and targets of Priority Area 4.
To restore and maintain the quality of waters

**Target:** Secure viable populations of Danube sturgeon species

*Action:* “To reduce existing water continuity interruption for fish migration in the Danube river basin”.

**Target:** Elaborate, adopt and implement the sub-basin management plans, such as Sava, Tisza and Prut sub-basins

*Action:* “To greatly strengthen cooperation at sub-basin level”.
Actions and targets of Priority Area 5.
To manage environmental risks

**Target highlighted for PA5:** To address the challenges of water scarcity and droughts based on the 2013 update of the Danube Basin Analysis and the ongoing work in the field of climate adaptation, in the Danube River Basin Management Plan to be adopted by 2015.

**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”.
Actions and targets of Priority Area 5.
To manage environmental risks

**Target:** Implement Danube wide flood risk management plans - due in 2015 under the Floods Directive – to include significant reduction of flood risk by 2021, also taking into account potential impacts of climate change.

*Action:* “To 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

*Action:* “To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection, and to identify the best response to flood risk”.

**Target:** Update of the accidental risk spots inventory at the Danube River Basin level by 2013.

*Action:* "To continuously update the existing database of accident risk spots and contaminated sites”

*Action:* “To develop rapid response procedures and plans in case of industrial accidental river pollution
Actions with Tisza relevance of Priority Area 2.
To promote sustainable energy

Action - “To extend the use of biomass (e.g. wood, waste), solar energy, geothermal, hydropower and wind power”

• especially by research and exchange of experiences
• dissemination of information on related activities undertaken at national level.
• networking between national authorities to promote awareness on renewable energy.

Action - “To develop a comprehensive action plan for the sustainable development of the hydropower generation potential of the Danube River and its tributaries (e.g. Sava, Tisza and Mura Rivers)”.

• paving the way for sustainable development of new power stations
• retrofitting the existing ones in the way of minimising the environmental impact
Actions with Tisza relevance of Priority Area 7.
To develop the knowledge society (research & education)

**Action - “To strengthen the capacities of research infrastructure”**.
- upgrade regional innovation systems throughout the Region,
- to reinforce the capacity of research infrastructure
- to link better existing science foundations in order to improve innovation conditions.

**Action - “To strengthen cooperation among universities and research facilities and to upgrade research outcomes by focusing on unique selling points”**.
- Stronger cooperation of universities and research institutes in fields, such as analysing existing education and research programmes
- mobility schemes for students and researchers,
- common research projects,
- or developing innovative education programmes for target groups new to universities
Actions with Tisza relevance of Priority Area 10. To step up institutional capacity and cooperation

**Action - “To combat institutional capacity and public service related problems in the Danube region”**

- Example of project - “To use European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in the Danube Region”
  - EGTCs in support of the implementation of the Danube Strategy
  - complementing existing intergovernmental cooperation initiatives
  - facilitating the cooperation of local players

**Action - “To ensure sufficient information flow and exchange at all levels”**

- improvement administration capacities to share information
- creating new mechanisms for sharing scientific know how
- strengthening interdisciplinary and inter-institutional consultation mechanisms
- addressing cross cutting issues and to take into account cross sectoral linkages.
Thank you for your attention!