

EU STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION

IMPLEMENTATION REPORT OF EUSDR PRIORITY AREA

PA 9 “Investing in People and Skills”

Reported period: from 07/2015 to 06/2016

Prepared by PACs 9 (AT, MD) in cooperation the PA9 Steering Group



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BMB	Bundesministerium für Bildung
CE	Central Europe
CECE	Central European Cooperation in Education and Training
CEEPUS	Central European Exchange Program for University Studies
CSR	Country Specific Recommendations
DG	Directorate General
DG EMPL	Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DG REGIO	Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
DR	Danube Region
DSP	Danube Strategy Point
DTP	Danube Transnational Programme
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERI SEE	Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe
ESF	European Social Funds
ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds
ET 2020	Education and Training 2020
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HCA	Host-Country Agreement
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IVET	Initial Education and Training
JS	Joint Secretariat
KKA	KulturKontakt Austria
LLL	Life-Long Learning
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRS	Macro regional Strategies
NC	National Coordinator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OeAD	Österreichischer Austauschdienst
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Priority Area
PA9	Priority Area 9
PAC	Priority Area Coordinator
QA	Quality Assurance
QN	Qualification Network
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
SEE 2020	South East Europe 2020 Regional Growth Strategy

SO	Specific Objective
SG	Steering Group
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
TA	Technical Assistance
TAF-DRP	Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WBL	Work-Based Learning

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Question 1: Summary of progress achieved during the reporting period.

Priority Area 9 "Investing in People and Skills" of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) has successfully continued its efforts in the fields of education and labour market policies as vital elements to the future development of the Danube Region.

Specifically PA9 put its focus on strengthening the cooperation in the fields of VET and work-based learning, on green competences, on social inclusion through education and training, fostering social cohesion and empowerment and reduction of the unemployment rate of the most vulnerable groups, especially on Roma and young people. In general and within the above mentioned fields PA9 has established and enlarged a network of different stakeholders guaranteeing efficient cooperation between relevant actors, i.a. through the involvement of existing regional cooperation networks and initiatives, thereby ensuring the continuous development of projects and initiatives in order to implement the priority areas into practise.

Furthermore PA9 in a strategic discourse of the SG revised its targets in order to better correspond to current challenges, to be more thematically focussed and additionally to facilitate monitoring progress, thus being in line with the goals of Europe 2020 and ET 2020 as well as with the latest Country-Specific Recommendations given in the European Semester.

In the reporting period, one Steering Group meeting took place, which for the first time was hosted by PAC MD in Chisinau, Moldova. The realisation of several thematic events has proven effective in order to boost co-operation and collaboration of relevant stakeholders from countries in the Danube Region.

The results of the events (e.g. reports, development of project ideas) and other important information was made available to the public via different channels (website, EUSDR PA9 project portfolio ...) which contributed to the sustainable development and to the progress of PA9 activities.

Beside communicational activities PACs and SG also regularly contribute to respective national coordination networks and platforms organised within respective EUSDR countries. These platforms have proven to be useful when it comes to coordinating the implementation process of the EUSDR and contribute significantly to a mutual exchange. The chosen work mode of the PACs, which has put the ownership of initiatives and common success strongly at its centre, provides a sound basis for sustainable cooperation during the reporting period.

The following outputs of PA9 coordination can be highlighted:

- Meeting of PA9 **Steering Group** Chisinau, March 2016
- PA9 Workshops "Enhancing skills and competences through educational cooperation", "Labour Market Know-How-Exchange" and "Roma and Sinti: Participation as a Key to Empowerment" in the framework of the **Annual Forum** of the EUSDR Ulm, October 2015
- 2nd EUSDR **Youth Platform**, May 2016
- Thematic Conference: learning, teaching, exchanging – school cooperations in the Danube Region, June 2016
- Identification of five **strategic projects**: "Cooperation between Schools and the Business Sector in the field of tourism", "EDU LAB", "Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship", "aces - Academy of Central European Schools – Act local!", "EUSDR Youth Platform"
- **Mapping and labelling** of further projects and initiatives
- Revision of PA9 **targets and activities**
- PAC **participation** in relevant events on EU and regional level (e.g. Annual Fora, NC-PAC meetings, ERI SEE, CECE), ongoing
- Running of **PA9 website**, ongoing (www.peopleandskills-danuberegion.eu)

2 PROGRESS OF THE PA

2.1 PROGRESS ON POLICY LEVEL

2.1.1 POLICY AREAS AT FOCUS

Question 2: What are the policy areas (important policy topics/thematic issues) that the PA selected as main focus (i.e. priority) for work during the reporting period?

In the current reporting period, Priority Area 9 has continued to address challenges in the region and to develop innovative policies, projects and networks in the working field of performance and quality of education and training systems; cooperation in the labour market; creativity and entrepreneurship and social cohesion and active citizenship.

Specifically PA9 put its focus on strengthening the cooperation in the fields of VET and work-based learning, on green competences, on social inclusion through education and training, fostering social cohesion and empowerment and reduction of the unemployment rate of the most vulnerable groups, especially on Roma and young people. Furthermore PA9 focused on improving institutional capacities for inclusion and on increasing the labour market relevance of education with a view to retain more young people studying and working in the region.

Question 3: What are the main arguments for selecting those policy areas as priority ones?

The selected policy areas contribute to the targets of Europe 2020 as well as ET2020 and reflect the current priorities derived from the European Semester. Thus those areas are contributing to the key strategic domains for growth and development as well as to strengthening the European cohesion and contributing to a sustainable development of the region.

Furthermore the priority areas of PA9 derive from the need for developing stronger and well-functioning systems of vocational education and training and for enhancing skills anticipation and matching. The development of the right skills and competences is of particular importance to respond to the changes and challenges on the labour markets in the EUSDR economies.

There is also a need for further measures in making education more inclusive and to support labour market integration in particular for disadvantaged groups such as Roma, young people, elderly and woman in order to foster social fairness and contribute to active citizenship. For instance, in order to succeed in education and on the labour market, actions supporting young people, from low socioeconomic backgrounds, need to be further developed. The provision of right competences and the anticipation of necessary skills required by emerging industries such as "Ecotourism" are necessary for the sustainable development of the region. Decreasing the number of early school leavers, the availability and quality of early childhood education and care as well as participation in life-long learning pose common challenges in the region.

In order to tackle the issues and challenges described the steering group of PA9 adopted and further developed the rolling PA9 work programme.

2.1.2 MAIN POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS

Question 4: Based on what has been reported under section 2.1.1: what are the PAs' main policy achievements and developments during the reporting period?

The Strategy further requires a sound coordination by the PACs and a clear commitment from all stakeholders. PA9 has effectively continued its efforts to ensure ownership by a very broad stakeholder community. PACs 9 have successfully established and is enlarging a network of different stakeholders guaranteeing future cooperation between relevant actors, i.a. through the involvement of existing regional cooperation networks and initiatives. In this way, PA9 - acting as a common umbrella - provides a reference point for many organizations, initiatives and networks in the Danube Region in order to discuss and

Question 4: Based on what has been reported under section 2.1.1: what are the PAs' main policy achievements and developments during the reporting period?

exchange views on on-going activities, initiatives and policy developments and to develop new initiatives/projects.

PA9 has set actions i.a. by (co-)organising several events and related thematic workshops that provide space to present and discuss measures, initiatives and actions both from a policy- as well as project-based perspective. For instance, to tackle the issues of youth unemployment and to serve as a meeting point between formal and non-formal learning institutions, PA9 in collaboration with Interkulturelles Zentrum Wien successfully launched the initiative of the EUSDR Youth Platform for a second time on 17-19 May 2016. To provide a platform for interaction between teachers under the format of eTwinning PA9 and OeAD organised the thematic conference "learning, teaching, exchanging – school cooperation in the Danube region" on 9 and 10 June. PA9 is also actively cooperating with the ERI SEE. In this context, the AT Federal Ministry of Education co-organised a main event within the framework of the Berlin Process on 18 and 19 May on the subject of company- and practice-oriented high-quality vocational education and training. The event resulted in launching the Western Balkans Alliance for work-based learning. PA9, in collaboration with KKA, also set several actions in VET, e.g. with the project "Cooperation between Schools and the Business Sector in the field of tourism" or the project "VEN-Income generation in VET schools and colleges". Furthermore a Labour Market Coordination Project between Moldova and Austria was initialised by PA9 in cooperation with L&R. PA9 also actively participated at the 5th Annual Forum in Ulm on 29 and 30 October and led three workshops there: "Enhancing skills and competences through educational cooperation", "Labour Market Know How Exchange" and "Roma and Sinti: Participation as a Key to Empowerment".

Several participating countries set reform initiatives and/or adopted new legislative measures to further promote quality and equality in education. For instance in AT a major structural reform in the educational system is undergoing focusing on both quality and equality. The reform measures that were rolled out range from early-childhood education to lifelong learning with the aim to enhance education outcomes, in particular of disadvantaged groups. Furthermore BG adopted the Pre-School and School Education Act with the aim of facilitating equal access to good-quality pre-school education. And CZ adopted an Education Law Amendment Act that brings about a significant progress in inclusive education, supporting integration of disabled and socially disadvantaged children into the main educational programme.

Countries have also taken measures to improve the transition between different forms and stages of education and from education to the labour market. Further measures were implemented to reduce the unemployment rate of vulnerable groups such as Roma, young and elderly. In Austria for example the ESF OP focusses also on Roma and the first call was already launched during the reporting period. It is a success, that 12 projects for a better integration from Roma into the labour market already started their work. RO for example worked out an 'anti poverty package', which uses an integrative approach comprising education, health, housing, social protection and transport and SI adopted an anti segregation legislation, which is yet to be implemented to bring about positive change and increase Roma participation in mainstream education, including preschool education.

Within this overall policy context and following a strategic discourse between participating countries of the EUSDR in the SG, PA9 targets were revised in order to correspond better to the current challenges, to be more thematically focussed, to lead to higher synergies and to facilitate monitoring progress in accordance with the new reporting requirements.

2.1.3 POLICY LESSONS LEARNED

Question 5: Based on what has been reported in sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2: what are the policy related lessons learned (positive or negative) from the PAs implementation during the reporting period (with focus on those that are important for the future EUSDR policy development)?

PA9 has increased cooperation in the Danube Region in the fields of labour market and education and continues to be a useful framework in order to strengthen on-going and enable future cooperation processes. Moreover, it has given projects and cooperation platforms in the Danube Region additional visibility and

serves as their common umbrella. The following points can be highlighted:

- Stakeholder value cooperation as of utmost importance.
- In general there is a high level of willingness to cooperate. Nevertheless it is necessary to further deepen the ownership of all Danube Region countries.
- There is a high level of transparency on relevant project activities and a clustering of knowledge. A consistent bottom-up approach ensures that claiming ownership of projects and ideas is secured and that not only funding alone fosters the topics.
- Direct link and interaction between policy making and project activities on the ground is crucial for the success of PA9 and EUSDR.
- Support of travel and accommodation costs has proven useful in order to ensure the participation of non-member states in relevant PA9 activities.
- Integration of regional platforms and best-use of existing cooperation projects is beneficial to the activities and actions set by PA9.
- Networks help to support better cooperation as well as various events and mentoring activities, also to identify relevant players.
- Mutual exchange of experience contributes to the improvement of labour markets and social inclusion in the regions.
- National/regional specific needs are identified (by EUSDR participating states).

2.1.4 FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Question 6: Based on what has been reported in section 2.1.3: what next steps and challenges for future policy development the PA finds important to share for further consideration discussion or development (incl. possible solutions to overcome the challenges)?

Further investments to improve the quality and efficiency of (vocational) education and training and enhancing already existing systems will be necessary to tackle future challenges of societies and on the labour markets in the region. It will also be necessary to take additional measures to address long term unemployment by improving activation measures, second chance education and introduce high-quality training tailored to individuals' needs.

Another challenge is to find effective inclusion and integration strategies for disadvantaged groups, such as Roma, in education and employment. Especially young people are more than others threatened by social exclusion. Decreasing the number of early school leavers, the availability and quality of early childhood education and care as well as participation in life-long learning will continue to pose common challenges in the region. Furthermore, the issue of attracting highly qualified persons for the teaching profession needs to be addressed in most parts of the region.

New challenges will also arise in view of the integration of refugees in education and labour markets. Especially the not-so-favourable labour market outcomes for the disadvantaged young refugees need to be addressed with meaningful measures.

PA9 will continue and enhance cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in order to commonly address future challenges.

2.2 PROGRESS ON PA'S TARGETS

Table 1: Progress on targets during the reporting period

PA Targets (number and wording of the target)		Progress during the reporting period				Clarifications
		Completed	Satisfactory progress	Delayed progress	Other	
(a)		(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
(I)	Contribution to a higher employment rate in the Danube Region, especially through tackling youth and long-term unemployment	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(II)	Contribution to improved educational outcomes and relevant skills and competences in the Danube Region, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, active citizenship and well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(III)	Contribution to increased quality and efficiency of education, training and labour market systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(IV)	Contribution to ensuring inclusive education and training and promoting inclusive labour markets, equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as the promotion of civic competences and lifelong learning opportunities for all	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

PA Targets (number and wording of the target)	Progress during the reporting period				Clarifications
	Completed	Satisfactory progress	Delayed progress	Other	
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
(V) Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Question 7: Based on the information provided in Table 1, what is the PAs overall self-evaluation with regards to reaching the applicable targets? Any other positive experience or other important information to that respect that the PA considers necessary (or good) to be shared should be included here as well.

The targets of PA9 are process oriented and are well progressing and contributing to ET 2020 and Europe 2020, which is evident in terms of projects, the improved networking and coordination as well as in the exchange and discourse on and between different policy levels.

Question 8: What, if anything, was/is missing in order to achieve the progress in reaching the targets as previously planned?

-

Question 9: Are there any plans (or needs) for revising/updating the list of targets, applicable for the PA? If so, please provide details.

The targets of PA9 have been revised in a strategic discourse of the SG in the first half of 2016. The new targets correspond better to current challenges, are more thematically focussed and additionally facilitate monitoring progress.

2.3 PROGRESS ON PA'S ACTIONS

Table 2: Progress on actions during the reporting period

PA Targets (number)	Progress on action for reaching the targets during the reporting period							
	To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies	To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments	To support creativity and entrepreneurship	To support lifelong learning and expanding learning mobility	To promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through education and training	To improve cross-sector policy coordination to address demographic and migration challenges	To fight poverty and social exclusion of marginalized communities in the Danube Region, especially the Roma communities	To promote gender equality on the labour market, especially in payment
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
(I)		ASP				ASP		
(II)	ASP	ASP	ASP	ASP	ASP			
(III)	ASP	ASP						
(IV)				ASP	ASP		ASP	APD
(V)	ASP	ASP	ASP	ASP	ASP	ASP	ASP	APD

Legend:

ASP	actions, whose implementation is satisfactory progressing (according to what was initially planned in the Roadmap);
APD	actions, whose implementation is progressing with delays (comparing to what was initially planned in the Roadmap);
ACcp	actions completed in current reporting period;
ACpp	actions completed in previous reporting period(s);
ANS	actions, whose implementation has not started yet;

Question 10: Based on the information provided in Table 2, what is the PA's overall self - evaluation regarding the progress in implementing the actions? A positive experience or other important information to that respect that the PA considers necessary (or good) to be shared should be included here as well.

The implementation of actions is progressing well on all levels and the actions are supporting each other and are often intertwined in terms of projects. Several actions are supporting different targets which contribute to the effectiveness of the set actions. Incentives were set to steer and coordinate the implementation of

Working Groups, i.a. with regard to project development. Regional ownership is ensured through the identification of relevant stakeholders.

A8 is progressing with delays, because at the moment increasing numbers of unemployed people, NEETS etc. are much more in the focus of the steering group members, but there will be a focus on the development of A8-projects within the DTP during the next reporting period.

Question 11: What, if anything, was/is missing in order to achieve the progress in implementing the actions as previously planned?

-

Question 12: Are there any plans (or needs) for revising/updating the actions, applicable for the PA? If so, please provide details.

In practice, by further developing the actions initially foreseen in the AP {COM(2010) 715}, PA9 since 2011 has structured its work in eight related work areas. These work areas have been proposed by the SG as revised actions in April 2016.

2.4 PROGRESS ON MILESTONES

NB: PA9 actions are process-oriented and currently implemented in accordance with a “rolling” work programme which is continuously updated and comprises of cooperation networks and initiatives, projects and events. Consequently, PA9 has not defined “milestones” for the implementation of the actions. A potential additional definition of milestones for the future is therefore subject to further discussion and elaboration by the PA9 Steering Group.

Table 3: Progress on milestones during the reporting period

PA Actions (numbers)	Progress on milestones during the reporting period									
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	M10
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)
A1	n.a.									
A2										
A3										
A4										

Legend:

MSP	milestones that are satisfactory progressing (according to what was initially planned in the Roadmap);
MPD	milestones that are progressing with delays (comparing to what was initially planned in the Roadmap);
MCcp	milestones completed in current reporting period;
MCpp	milestones completed in previous reporting period(s);

MNS milestones, whose implementation has not started yet;

Question 13: Based on the information provided in Table 3, what is the PAs overall self - evaluation regarding the progress in reaching the milestones? A positive experience or other important information to that the PA considers necessary (or as good) to be shared should be included here as well

n.a.

Question 14: What, if anything, was/is missing in order to achieve the progress in reaching the milestones as previously planned?

n.a.

2.5 PROGRESS ON ACTIVITIES

Table 4 Activities undertaken to progress on PA implementation

PA Actions (numbers)	Activities undertaken during the reporting period to progress on PA implementation
(a)	(b)
A1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Identification and labelling of strategic project "Cooperation between Schools and the Business Sector in the field of tourism": § Labelling of Project "FairGuidance" § ERI SEE Governing Board and Consultative Body Meeting in Belgrade (December 2015) § CECE DG Conference in Prague (March 2016) § Participation at the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the Western Balkans Platform on Education and Training in Sarajevo (June 2016) § Conference 'Building a Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning' in Vienna (May 2016) § PA9 Workshop "Enhancing skills and competences through educational cooperation", AF 2015 in Ulm (October 2015) § Participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February 2016, May 2016) § Continuous update of PA9 website, preparation of PA9 folder § Participation at NC/PAC Meeting in Bratislava (May 2016) § Participation at PAC Meeting in Bratislava (March 2016) and PAC Workshop in Brussels (January 2016) § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016) § Coordination with ongoing projects/initiatives: ERI SEE, CECE, ETF, DESK, Cooperations between schools and the business sector in the field of tourism, DALIVET, Green Competences for Ecotourism
A2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Identification and labelling of the strategic project "EDU LAB" § Other projects: DALMEX: meeting with all partners (8th October 2015) to support preparation + continuing coordination and support § PA9 Workshop "Labour Market Know-How-Exchange" at the Annual Forum (Ulm, October 2015) § Meeting with the ESF Managing Authorities Bayern and Baden-Württemberg (May 2016) to prepare a common workshop § Participation DTP Info-Day (30th September 2015), § Participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February 2016, May 2016); § Continuous update of PA9 website, preparation of PA9 folder § Participation at NC/PAC Meeting in Bratislava (May 2016) § Participation at PAC Meeting in Bratislava (March 2016) and PAC Workshop in Brussels (January 2016) § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016) § Support of ongoing projects/initiatives: Bilateral Exchange in Labour Market Policy Austria – Moldova,
A3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Identification and labelling of strategic project "Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship § PA9 Workshop "Enhancing skills and competences through educational cooperation", AF 2015 in Ulm (October 2015) § Participation DTP Info-Day (30th September 2015), participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February

<i>PA Actions (numbers)</i>	<i>Activities undertaken during the reporting period to progress on PA implementation</i>
<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>
	2016, May 2016) § Continuous update of PA9 website § Participation at PAC Meeting in Bratislava (March 2016) and PAC Workshop in Brussels (January 2016) § Participation at NC/PAC Meeting in Bratislava (May 2016) § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016) § Coordination with ongoing projects/initiatives: (d)unavision, VEN – Income Generation in VET schools and colleges
A4	§ PA9 Workshop "Enhancing skills and competences through educational cooperation", AF 2015 in Ulm (October 2015) § Thematic Conference: learning, teaching, exchanging – school cooperations in the Danube Region, Linz (June 2016) § Participation DTP Info-Day (30 th September 2015), participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February 2016, May 2016) § Continuous update of PA9 website, preparation of PA9 folder § Participation at NC/PAC Meeting in Bratislava (May 2016) § Participation at PAC Meeting in Bratislava (March 2016) and PAC Workshop in Brussels (January 2016) § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016) § Coordination with ongoing projects/initiatives: CEEPUS, ESCAPE, Milestones of Learning Development, Removing obstacles to recognition of qualifications, workshops on learning, teaching, exchanging between – school cooperations in the Danube Region
A5	§ Identification and labelling of strategic projects “aces - Academy of Central European Schools – Act local!” and “EUSDR Youth Platform” § PA9 Workshop "Roma and Sinti: Participation as a Key to Empowerment”, AF 2015 in Ulm (October 2015) § 2 nd EUSDR YP, May 2016 § Danube Peace Boat E.U.R.O.P.E., Kick-off event in Vienna (July 2015) § Participation DTP Info-Day (30 th September 2015), participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February 2016, May 2016) § Continuous update of PA9 website, preparation of PA9 folder § Participation at NC/PAC Meeting in Bratislava (May 2016) § Participation at PAC Meeting in Bratislava (March 2016) and PAC Workshop in Brussels (January 2016) § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016) § Coordination with ongoing projects/initiatives: aces / academy of Central European schools, Concordia Vocational Training, Danube Peace Boat, eschool4S, Sprachenoffensive, Youth Platform, Roma EduDanube
A6	§ Identification and labelling of the strategic project “EDU LAB” § Other projects: YOUMIG support in preparation § Meeting with the ESF Managing Authorities Bayern and Baden-Württemberg (May 2016) to prepare a common workshop § Participation DTP Info-Day (30 th September 2015),

<i>PA Actions (numbers)</i>	<i>Activities undertaken during the reporting period to progress on PA implementation</i>
<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February 2016, May 2016) § Continuous update of PA9 website, preparation of PA9 folder § Participation at NC/PAC Meeting in Bratislava (May 2016) § Participation at PAC Meeting in Bratislava (March 2016) and PAC Workshop in Brussels (January 2016) § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016)
A7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § EDU LAB: coordination/support § Other projects: all in all 12 ESF empowerment projects in Austria have been initiated § PA 9 Workshop “Roma and Sinti: Participation as a Key to Empowerment” at the Annual Forum in Ulm 2015 § Meeting with the ESF Managing Authorities Bayern and Baden-Württemberg (May 2016) to prepare a common workshop § Participation Austrian Roma Platform § Participation DTP Info-Day (30th September 2015), § Participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February 2016, May 2016); § Continuous update of PA9 website, preparation of PA9 folder § Participation at NC/PAC Meeting in Bratislava (May 2016) § Participation at PAC Meeting in Bratislava (March 2016) and PAC Workshop in Brussels (January 2016) § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016) § Support of ongoing projects/initiatives: ESRA, RomaEdu-Danube, RID – roma integration across the Danube
A8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Coordination/cooperation: Austrian PAC became Member in the Gender Mainstreaming Working Group of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection to prepare the development of project ideas. § Participation DTP Info-Day (30th September 2015), participation at the Austrian National Coordination Meetings (December 2015, February 2016, May 2016); § SG Meeting (Chisinau, March 2016)

2.6 EUSDR STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Table 5: Projects identified and proposed by PA (PACs + SG) as EUSDR strategic project (SP)

<i>Title of project proposed by PA as ESDR SP during the reporting period</i>	<i>Date of PA meeting when the project was approved as potential ESDR SP</i>	<i>To which PA target the project is relevant?</i>	<i>Main project activities of the EUSDR SP</i>	<i>Targeted funding source(s) for the SP</i>

<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>	<i>(c)</i>	<i>(d)</i>	<i>(e)</i>
aces Academy of Central European Schools – Act local!	Approved by SG in silent procedure on 27 April 2016	2, 3, 4, 5	aces – Act local! offers concrete opportunities for taking action, creating new partnerships and empowering the actors in order to support sustainable social development. A yearly contest for community projects of schools will be established. The aces Academy will provide trainings on coordination of the project. The goal is to establish a wide ‘aces’ network after 10 years.	NA
New Danubian Governance in Labour market Relevance of Higher Education [EDU LAB]	Approved by SG in silent procedure on 27 April 2016	1, 2, 3, 5	There will be an analysis of existing governance models. Preparing a stakeholder dialogue on best practices and development of e-learning courses for stakeholders. Furthermore development of a new governance model. Capacity building and training. Pilot activities in Slovakia, Bulgaria and Serbia. Development of a “Danubian Charta for young talents.	EU funds
EUSDR Youth Platform	Approved by SG in silent procedure on 27 April 2016	2, 3, 4, 5	Regular conferences and meetings to foster cross sectoral cooperation for innovative educational approaches in the EUSDR region. The Platform serves as a meeting point between formal and non-formal learning institutions, to share experiences and to contribute to a more cohesive society. Furthermore it fosters project development and explores possible funding opportunities within Erasmus+ or the Danube Region Programme or other funding instruments.	EU funds/other
Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship (Danube Enter)	Approved by SG in silent procedure on 27 April 2016	2, 5	The project addresses common challenges through an integrated approach which includes the whole package of services and activities that fill the identified gaps and create important cooperation links among the participating countries (education, business support, cross-sector integration of creative thinking methods, alternative sources of funding). The competence centre is seen as focused environment where people and organizations meet together in order to be educated and trained, develop professional skills working on real projects and create together know-how that will contribute to their development.	EU funds/private funds
Cooperation between Schools and the Business Sector in the field of tourism	Approved by SG in silent procedure on 27 April 2016	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	The project aims to improve the quality of practical training through an improved and close cooperation between the education sector and the VET providers on the one hand and the	National/regional funds

	April 2016		key players of the labour market and the tourism industry on the other. Thus the project promotes and improves the vocational education and training systems, which will be able to develop and maintain a close cooperation with the economic sector and meet the labour market requirements adequately.	
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Question 15: Were any of the projects included in Table 5 already approved for funding during the reporting period? If so, please complete Table 6 below with the information only for those projects.

Table 6: Proposed EUSDR strategic projects, which were approved for funding

<i>Title of project proposed by PA as ESDR SP, approved for funding</i>	<i>Total amount of approved funding</i>	<i>Approved funding source(s) for the EUSDR SP</i>
<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>	<i>(c)</i>

3 FUNDING

3.1 MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN TERMS OF FUNDING

Question 16: What is considered as PAs main achievement/s with regards to funding sources and opportunities for EUSDR projects? Short analysis relevant only to the duration of the reporting period needs to be provided.

The budget period 2014-2020 sets new impulses and provides the framework to make the Strategy a success on all levels of intervention. PA9 is communicating all relevant information on the funding possibilities on its website as well as at several various conferences accessible for interested stakeholders.

The Erasmus+ programme remains an important funding instrument for EUSDR projects as it provides a strong transnational element and supports European cooperation in the field of education and training. By now, several Erasmus+ projects have been labelled by the SG and are part of the PA9 work programme. The thematic conferences on “Learning, teaching, exchanging – school cooperations in the Danube Region” or the Youth Platform serve as examples for annually events of dissemination of information on funding related to Erasmus+.

Furthermore, countries of the Danube Region have the possibility to use the potential of ESI funds. Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty or investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning are thematic objectives to which the ESF can make a major contribution on national level. For example within the Austrian ESF a call with a focus on labour market integration of Roma coordinated by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection was launched and as a result there are 13 ESF-financed projects at the moment. In order to implement PA9 projects through the ESF, its transnational element would need to be strengthened. During the reporting period PA9 has been involved in the preparations of a workshop with the ESF Managing Authorities of the Danube Region, which was held in July 2015.

The ERDF on the other hand allows countries to implement also projects with a strong cross-border and transnational element, e.g. via Interreg Europe or cross-border Interreg Programmes. The new funding opportunity within the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) is especially helpful for strengthening the cooperation in the Danube Region and its development. Integrating the area of education and training as well as the labour market as a social dimension in the DTP through several interventions by EUSDR PAC 9 was an important achievement and also contributes towards more visibility of PA9 activities. The DTP has already launched its first call within the reporting period, which is quite a relevant push-factor for projects within the EUSDR region. The first projects will start in 2018.

Another potential funding source for transnational EUSDR projects represents the Central Europe Programme 2014-2020 (CE) in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation objective and financed by the ERDF.

Already existing funding opportunities like the pilot initiative "START – Danube Region Project Fund", launched and coordinated by the City of Vienna, are a welcome development, as PA9 has continuously addressed the need for financing of smaller transnational projects. The aim of the programme is to provide support in the form of seed money helping organisations and institutions to initiate and to implement projects with relevance for the Danube Region. The second call of START was launched in 2015. 16 projects were submitted to Priority Area 9 of which 13 passed the formal check and were subject of a review by the Priority Area Coordinators with the involvement of the SG. Two PA9 project applications were granted for START funding with a focus on the integration of Roma into the labour market and education systems.

Nevertheless there is still need for making available both comprehensive and user-friendly information on potential funds in order for project leaders and applicants to fully understand and exploit all funding opportunities. Lead partners seem to already take advantage of the newly established funding opportunities, however the Budget Period 2014-2012 has still not started in all EUSDR-countries, therefore the development of new projects was delayed.

3.2 LESSONS LEARNED

Question 17: What are the lessons learned (positive or negative) during the reporting period, with regards to funding sources and opportunities for EUSDR projects and what responses to those the PA considers as relevant?

Existing programmes at local, regional, national and community level mostly differ in terms of their regional focus or refer to the different legal status of the DR countries (e.g. Member States, non-EU Member States). This occasionally leads to challenges for innovative partnerships as it creates barriers for joint actions. For instance, in order to implement PA9 projects within Erasmus+, the inclusion of some third countries remains challenging. Besides that, there is a need for improvement of the communication and coordination between ESI funds and EUSDR representatives on national level and within the whole Danube Region. Furthermore the existing practice of ERDF-funded programmes – like DTP – is a potential barrier for beneficiaries from some states because of the pre-financing principle.

Another issue is that EUSDR PA9-related proposals sometimes do not receive funding due to the fact that the strategy is not fully embedded in mainstream programmes and due to very competitive procedures. The simple fact that a project proposal is based on or refers to the EUSDR does not allow for additional points in evaluation in most cases. Therefore, in order to achieve a more substantial impact on the Danube Region, it would be necessary to consider assigning additional points to proposals with a clear contribution to EU macro-regional strategies or to publish selected targeted calls.

The experience of the two calls within START shows that a fund for the development of projects and/or the implementation of small projects is successful and relevant for the development of project ideas for DTP or other funds.

The question of funding of the cooperation structure of the Priority Area remains a challenge when it comes to the coordination of the Strategy. The Technical Assistance (TA) which was granted by the Commission to the PACs starting in 2012 has proven to be very supportive regarding funding of coordination, networking and project development activities. A new call of interest for Technical Assistance support (2015-2016) to PAC activities was published on the EUSDR website on 10th July 2015 which is administered by the DSP. The experiences so far show that the project implementation works well.

3.3 THE FUTURE

Question 18: Based on what has been reported so far in Sections 3.1 and 3.2, what next steps and challenges in terms of funding sources and opportunities for EUSDR projects that are important to be shared for further consideration, discussion or development (incl. possible solutions to overcome the challenges)?

Please answer also the same question with respect to better alignment of funding to support the PA and the EUSDR in general.

To live up to the purpose and the essence of a MRS further efforts are needed in terms of designing and communicating the macro-regional dimension to the various EU framework programmes. Among others, the embedding of the EUSDR into programmes financed from ESIF is an important step to widen the possibilities of funding and as such opening the pathway towards new project/ initiative ideas. An important step is the Coordination Meeting of national ESF Managing Authorities “Embedding EUSDR into ESF” in Munich in July 2016.

Positive developments can also be expected by the possibility of seed money for projects within the DTP and also the funding possibility for strategic projects coordinated by PA10. But for the success of such funding possibilities a simple and reliable funding mechanism – like already tested and proved by START projects – is essential and has to be guaranteed also in future.

For the funding of the cooperation structure of the Priority Area from 2017 onwards it will be essential that the DANUBE Transnational Programme creates a sustainable, simple and reliable funding that facilitates and supports the activities of the Priority Area Coordinators based on equality for all Danube countries and

also take into consideration challenges, like co-financing or pre-financing especially for PA Coordinators from Non-EU-Member States.

4 GOVERNANCE

4.1 ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONING OF PA

Question 19: Describe shortly any significant changes that have occurred during the reporting period on PA's governance in terms of organisation and functioning of PACs and SGs?

Priority Area 9 is coordinated by Austria and the Republic of Moldova. On behalf of Austria, Roland Hanak, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, and Jürgen Schick, Federal Ministry of Education act as Priority Area Coordinators. On behalf of the Republic of Moldova, Ludmila Pavlov, Ministry of Education and in 2015 Anna Gherganova, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Head of Employment Policy Department, was nominated as new PAC. During the reporting period a functioning coordination and communication within the PAC9-Team has been established.

PACs have successfully established a network of different stakeholders guaranteeing efficient cooperation between relevant actors, i.a. through the involvement of existing regional cooperation networks and initiatives, e.g. ERI SEE and the ETF. The chosen work mode of the PACs, which has put the ownership of initiatives and common success strongly at its centre, provides a sound basis for sustainable cooperation during the reporting period and also in future. Furthermore, PACs and SG members regularly contribute to respective national coordination networks and platforms organised within respective EUSDR countries. These platforms have proven to be useful when it comes to coordinating the implementation process of the EUSDR and contribute significantly to a mutual exchange.

The SG can be seen as the main body of coordination within the framework of PA9. The 10th meeting of the SG took place in Chisinau in March 2016. The meeting provided space for SG members to give an overview on the reform priorities in the area of Education and Labour Market Policy of their respective country. Furthermore, the meeting enabled the discussion and exchange of experience related to the activities of each working area and to provide information on funding of projects or PA9 activities. An important topic of the meeting was also the revision on the targets of PA9.

Question 20: Please provide in Table 7 the requested information on attendance (+/-) of Danube countries at SG meetings held during the reporting period.

Table 7: Attendance of SG meetings

SG meeting	AT	BA	BG	CZ	DE	HR	HU	MD	ME	RO	RS	SI	SK	UA
10 th SG	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	-

4.2 COORDINATION AND COOPERATION ACTIVITIES

Question 21: Based on what has been reported in Section 2.5, please provide short description on what has been achieved with the undertaken activities for coordination, cooperation and establishing links with other PAs? Please describe also any methods/tools that are put in place as a result (if applicable).

In the reporting period coordinators of PA9 and several of its SG members have continued to participate in a wide range of conferences, workshops and meetings organised by other actors to coordinate and cooperate with other PAs. In particular, PACs have participated i.a. at the Annual Forum of the Danube Strategy in Ulm on 29th and 30th October 2015, coordination meetings of the Austrian NC on 3rd December 2015, 29th

February 2016 and 10th May 2016 in Vienna, the workshop of DSP in Brussels on 14th and 15th January 2016, the meeting of EUSDR Priority Area Coordinator in Bratislava on 8th March 2016 and the meeting of National Contact Points and Priority Area Coordinators in Bratislava on 23rd May 2016. Each meeting provided space to discuss relevant issues, like supporting activities for PACs, handling of Technical Assistance 2015/16, application within DTP, concept of EUSDR strategic projects, targets revision etc. and to find common solutions.

Question 22: Based on what has been reported in Section 2.5, please provide short description on what has been achieved with the undertaken activities for coordination, cooperation and establishing links with EU institutions (EC, EP, CoR, EESC, etc.) and/or other institutions (national, regional, international, as appropriate). Same applies also for activities for using the funding opportunities of the EC centrally managed programmes. Please describe also any methods/tools that are put in place as a result (if applicable).

The SG Meeting in Chisinau further facilitated the communication and cooperation with the EC, the DSP as well as several other institutions on national, regional, international level. A cooperation with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights was initiated by PAC9 Austria in the course of the workshop “Roma and Sinti: Participation as a Key to Empowerment” within the Annual Forum in Ulm. The Austrian PACs are also member of the Austrian Roma Platform, which meets at least twice a year.

Following a first meeting on 26th June 2014 within the framework of the 3rd Annual Forum of the EUSDR, the cooperation and exchange of experiences with the EUSBSR coordinator of PA education has been continued.

PA9 put a strong focus on identifying existing relevant networks in the Danube Region and successfully integrated them into PA9 activities with the aim to create synergies and to exchange information on developments of policies and projects. The cooperation with networks, like ERI SEE or CECE is a successful approach and was continued during the reporting period. Of particular relevance is also the continuous cooperation with the European Training Foundation. The ETF provides input to the discussions in “People and Skills” SGs and other formats, sharing information about relevant EU developments, the situation in the ETF partner countries and promoting regional cooperation in the fields of education and training, labour market and social inclusion in line with the principles of the Strategy for the Danube Region.

Question 23: Based on what has been reported in Section 2.5, please provide short description on what has been achieved with the undertaken activities for cooperation between the PA (PACs and SG) and the authorities dealing with ESIF funding and more specifically with the Managing Authorities and the Monitoring Committees of programs of interest to the PA. Please describe also any methods/tools that are put in place as a result (if applicable).

The Austrian PACs ensure regular exchange and communication with the relevant contact persons of DTP, Erasmus+ (Austrian National Agencies), START, TAF and other relevant funding possibilities (like cross border Interreg programmes). The main focus of these activities is to provide the SG members as well as relevant stakeholders with recent information about the programmes.

Furthermore the exchange between the ESF Managing Authorities of the Danube Region and PAC9, Austria, was intensified and possible cooperation where discussed during a first meeting in Munich on 4th May 2016. As a result of this meeting a conference for ESF Managing Authorities of the Danube Region will be held in July 2016 with the aim to establish a cooperation structure with PA9.

4.3 ACTIVITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT OF STAKEHOLDERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Question 24: Based on what has been reported in Section 2.5, please provide short description on what has been achieved with the undertaken activities for involvement of stakeholders, incl. civil society (e.g. stakeholder conferences, activities with national/regional parliaments, other events, networks, platforms, etc.). Please describe also any methods/tools that are put in place as a result (if applicable).

Setting links with relevant stakeholders has been ensured by PA9 through the organisation of several

thematic workshops and events which foster discussion on topics such as empowering marginalised groups (Workshop “Roma and Sinti: Participation as a Key to Empowerment” within the Annual Forum in Ulm), the exchange of relevant labour market actors (Workshop Labour Market Know-How-Exchange within the Annual forum in Ulm), and supporting and empowering young people (EUSDR Youth Platform meeting in Vienna). PACs have also set several initiatives for project development. For example, the planned project on "Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship" has been developed under the umbrella of PA9 as well as the project “Danube Area Labour Market Exchange / DALMEX”.

Furthermore the SG meeting in Chisinau ensured, at first stage, familiarization of stakeholders from Moldova with EUSDR and funding opportunities within the strategy.

As indicated above providing a framework for discussions in the fields of education and labour market through the realisation of stakeholder conferences has proven effective in order to boost co-operation and collaboration of relevant stakeholders from countries of the Danube Region. Within the reporting period the preparations of the next stakeholder conference (October 2016) started. The aim of the conference is to provide a framework to review the last years of implementation, to present and discuss results and issues and to set the right steps for future developments.

The Working Group "Creativity and Entrepreneurship" consists of participants from Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, the Republic of Moldova and Romania. A main result of the working group was the development of a START project, which was successfully implemented and the output was a project application for the first call of DTP - "Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship" which is led by the Business Support Centre for SME in Ruse.

Another important topic in the framework of PA9 is the promotion of green competences. Based on a proposal by the Romanian Ministry of National Education and the National Centre for TVET an experts group on green competences was established during the 8th Steering Group Meeting of PA9 in Vienna on 5th November 2015. The experts group is i.a. working on the elaboration of a joint application for a transnational project in the field of green competences for Ecotourism in the Danube Region.

4.4 PUBLICITY AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Question 25: Based on what has been reported in Section 2.5, please provide short description on what has been achieved with the undertaken activities for better publicity and communication (e.g. publications, website developments, etc.). Same applies also for activities for better communication of PA's results and work as well as those related to public debate(s) on the macro - regional approach. Please describe also any methods/tools that are put in place as a result (if applicable).

Related to the publicity measures of PA9, the website www.peopleandskills-danuberegion.eu has proven to be an important and vital instrument to inform relevant stakeholders about on-going and implemented activities, projects and initiatives. The website has been continuously updated. The page also contributes to raise public awareness on the Strategy. In order to support the coordination and communication, electronic PA9 newsletters are additionally distributed among relevant stakeholders. Moreover, in the current reporting period an updated EUSDR PA9 Project Folder was developed, providing an overview of on-going and selected finished projects as well as some project ideas for which PA9 of the EUSDR serves as a common umbrella.

In addition to that, countries of the Danube Region are providing space on websites to inform interested stakeholder about on-going activities of EUSDR and in particular of PA9. For instance, relevant ministries in Austria and the Czech Republic are providing information on the EUSDR and in particular PA9 on its their websites

(https://www.sozialministerium.at/site/Arbeit_Behinderung/Arbeitsmarkt/EU_International/Der_Arbeitsmarkt_EU_und_international;
<https://www.bmb.gv.at/schulen/euint/index.html>;
<http://www.msmt.cz/mezinarodni-vztahy/makroregionalni-strategie-eu>).

4.5 LESSONS LEARNED

Question 26: Based on what has been reported so far in Section 4: what are the lessons learned (positive or negative), in terms of PA governance during the reporting period and what responses to those the PA considers as relevant?

- PACs have set up an efficient working structure and identified relevant stakeholders as well as their counterparts in the respective line ministries in the 14 DR countries.
- Regional ownership is ensured through the identification and involvement of relevant stakeholder.
- PA9 strengthens a necessary focus on young people within the Strategy, i.a. through the 1st EUSDR Youth Platform in Vienna on 15-17 December 2014 and the 2nd EUSDR Youth Platform in Vienna on 17-19 May 2016.
- PA9 strengthens the development of Roma projects within the Austrian ESF and within START/TAF-projects.
- By means of public relation activities (i.e. website, e-newsletter, project folder etc.) interested stakeholders and the general public are being continuously informed about the topics and activities of PA9.
- PACs identified relevant projects, planned projects and project ideas.
- The establishment of working groups in specific areas reporting back about their progress and activities to the SG proves meaningful.
- To deepen the ownership of all Danube Region countries it is necessary to support travel and accommodation costs to ensure the participation of non-Member States in relevant PA9 activities.
- Integration of regional platforms and best-use of existing cooperation projects is beneficial to the activities and actions set by PA9.

4.6 THE FUTURE

Question 27: Based on what has been reported so far in Section 4: what next steps and challenges for better PA governance in the future that the PA finds important to be shared for further consideration (incl. possible solutions to overcome the challenges)?

PA9 will maintain and further develop the existing network of key stakeholders. A main focus will be put on the participation of stakeholders from all countries of the Danube Region with the aim to intensify the cooperation also with Danube Countries which until now have participated to a lesser extent.

Furthermore, PAC9 will continue in the successful approach of close cooperation with regional platforms and networks to develop projects in the region and the support beneficiaries. One main event will be the next Stakeholder Conference of PA9 in Vienna on 5th October 2016 with a special focus on strategic challenges and existing funding opportunities like DTP, Erasmus+ etc.

The conference for ESF Managing Authorities within the Danube Region in Munich on 7th and 8th of July 2016 will provide space to establish a coordination structure between ESF Managing Authorities and PA9 (as well as PA10 and DSP).

Further coordination, cooperation and communication activities will be planned in line with the possibilities provided by the PAC support scheme within the DANUBE Transnational Programme.

ANNEX I: ROADMAPS TO IMPLEMENT EACH PA ACTION

NOTA BENE: PA9 Actions are process-oriented and currently implemented in accordance with a “rolling” work programme, which is continuously updated and comprises of cooperation networks and initiatives, projects and events. Consequently, PA9 has not defined “milestones” for the implementation of the actions. A potential definition of additional milestones for the future is therefore subject to further discussion and elaboration by the PA9 Steering Group.

Table 8: Roadmap to implement an action

ROADMAP FOR ACTION 1			
<i>EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap is related</i>	Target 2: Contribution to improved educational outcomes and relevant skills and competences in the Danube Region, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, active citizenship and well-being Target 3: Contribution to increased quality and efficiency of education, training and labour market systems Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels		
<i>EUSDR Action to which the Roadmap is related</i>	A/WA 1: To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	n.a.
<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>M1</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Key initiatives, projects and events to date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>
	Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE)	2004 - ongoing	ERI SEE
	Central European Cooperation in Education and Training (CECE)	2007 - 2017	AT, CZ, HU, SK, SI

	European Training Foundation (ETF)	ongoing	ETF
	Task Force Fostering and Building Human Capital of the Regional Cooperation Council	2008 - 2014	RO, AT, HR
	DESK – Evaluate and Safe Knowledge – Knowledge Community in Vocational Education	08/2017	DE - Landesakademie Esslingen
	Cooperation between schools and the Business Sector in the field of tourism	2014 - ongoing	AT - KKA
	DALIVET – Development of Apprenticeship Learning in IVET in Romania	10/2016	RO - National Centre for TVET
	Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in vocational education and training	2014	AT, RO
	Thematic Working Group “Innovative VET Schools Network”	2013	
	Optimizing the links between labour market and the educational system: modernising the vocational system in Romania	2012 – 2015	RO - National Centre for TVET
	Edu.Region – Education Network for the economic area and the labour market of lower Austria and the Southern Czech regions	2011 – 2013	AT – Landesakademie NÖ
	Modernizing VET system – improving performance, quality and attractiveness of VET	2013	ERI SEE
	Improving quality assurance (QA) in Vocational Education and Training (VET) through schools’ networks	2010 - 2013	RO - National Centre for TVET
	Capacity Building for Teachers of VET in the Danube Region	2012 – 2013	DE - BW
	Peer Learning event on VET within ET 2020 & PA9	2012	AT

	Establishment of an expert group on green competences for eco-tourism in the Danube region	2014	Ministry of education and Scientific research – Romania
	International Cooperation for School Leadership (ICSL)	2011 – 2013	HU – Tempus Public Agency
	Cluster of Knowledge on evidence-based policy making in education	2011 – 2013	RS
	FairGuidance	2015 - 2017	DE/ttg team training GmbH
	Enhanced Competitiveness and Employability through innovative learning in VET	Planned	AT/RO

ROADMAP FOR ACTION 2

<i>EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap is related</i>	<p>Target 1: Contribution to a higher employment rate in the Danube Region, especially through tackling youth and long-term unemployment</p> <p>Target 2: Contribution to improved educational outcomes and relevant skills and competences in the Danube Region, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, active citizenship and well-being</p> <p>Target 3: Contribution to increased quality and efficiency of education, training and labour market systems</p> <p>Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels</p>		
<i>EUSDR Action to which the Roadmap is related</i>	A/WA 2: To foster cooperation between key stakeholders of labour market, education and research policies in order to develop learning regions and environments	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	n.a.
Milestones	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>M1</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Key initiatives,	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>

<i>projects and events to date</i>			
	Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austro Hungarian Expert Academy	2008 – 2014	AT – L&R Research
	Cross-border discussion forum for Labour Market Policy: Austro Hungarian Expert Academy	2009 - 2014	AT – L&R Research
	Bilateral Exchange in Labour Market Policy Austria – Moldova	Ongoing	AT – L&R Research
	Virtual Qualification Network Austria – Bulgaria	2012 - 2014	AT – ÖSB Consulting
	Virtual Qualification Network Austria – Romania	2013 - 2015	AT – ÖSB Consulting
	Bilateral Exchange in Labour Market Policy Austria – Ukraine	2013 - 2015	AT – ÖSB Consulting
	DALMEX – Danube Area Labour Market Exchange	Planned	AT - ÖGB
	Creation of an Online Platform for Jobs, Work Mobility and Competences to Empower Economic Growth in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area – eJoker	Planned	BG - Human Resources Development Agency

ROADMAP FOR ACTION 3

<i>EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap is related</i>	<p>Target 2: Contribution to improved educational outcomes and relevant skills and competences in the Danube Region, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, active citizenship and well-being</p> <p>Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on</p>
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	transnational, regional and bilateral levels		
<i>EUSDR Action to which the Roadmap is related</i>	A/WA 3: To support creativity and entrepreneurship	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	n.a.
<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>MI</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Key initiatives, projects and events to date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>
	Thematic working group "Creativity and Entrepreneurship"	2013 - ongoing	BG - Business Support centre for SME
	Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship (START Project)	2015	BG - Business Support centre for SME
	SMART – Training Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Sustainable Economic Sectors	2012 - 2014	AT - European Office, Vienna Board of Education
	Empowering Young People – Connecting Europe	2012 - 2014	AT - BMBF / KKA
	(d)unaVision	2013 - 2015	DE - ThinkCamp
	Innovative Competency-Oriented E-learning in Tourism - ICOELITE	2013	BG - Business Support centre for SME
	ECO NET – Support for Training Firms in SEE	2012 - 2013	AT - KKA
	Training for teachers from economic VET schools to implement the training firms method	2010 - 2013	RO
	ET-Struct: Economic Educational Territorial – Structure	2010 - 2012	AT - European Office, Vienna Board of Education
	Development of an Innovative Tourism Product	Planned	BG - Business Support centre for SME

	in the Cross Border Area – the Creative Tourism Experience		
	Danube Competence Centres for Creativity and Entrepreneurship (DTP Project)	Planned	BG - Business Support centre for SME

ROADMAP FOR ACTION 4

<i>EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap is related</i>	<p>Target 2: Contribution to improved educational outcomes and relevant skills and competences in the Danube Region, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, active citizenship and well-being</p> <p>Target 4: Contribution to ensuring inclusive education and training and promoting inclusive labour markets, equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as the promotion of civic competences and lifelong learning opportunities for all</p> <p>Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels</p>		
<i>EUSDR Action to which the Roadmap is related</i>	A/WA 4: To support life-long learning and expanding learning mobility	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	n.a.
<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>MI</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Key initiatives, projects and events to date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>
	CEEPUS – Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies	2011 - 2018	N/A - Central office in AT
	Workshop on eTwinning (Learning, teaching, Exchanging – School Co-operations in the Danube Region)	2012 - ongoing	AT - OeAD
	Capacity Building Mobility Programme	2008 - 2013	AT – Task Force Fostering and Building

			Human Capital
	Milestones of Learning Development Strategic improvement and development of life-long learning programs within Danube Region	2015	BA –South East European Youth Network
	ESCAPE – Enhanced Skills, Competence and Practise for the Economy	2014 - 2017	AT - Business Academy Linz
	Training on competence based assessment for VET teachers	2010 - 2014	RO – National Centre for TVET
	Removing obstacles to Recognition of Qualifications	2014 - 2015	ERI SEE
	Development of National Qualification Frameworks	2013	ERI SEE
	GROSSTOUR – Sustainable Green Cross-Border Tourism Put in Practise	Planned	BG - Business Support centre for SME
	Development Tools for Cross-Border Labour Mobility	Planned	BG - Human Resources Development Agency

ROADMAP FOR ACTION 5			
<i>EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap is related</i>	<p>Target 2: Contribution to improved educational outcomes and relevant skills and competences in the Danube Region, focusing on learning outcomes for employability, entrepreneurship, innovation, active citizenship and well-being</p> <p>Target 4: Contribution to ensuring inclusive education and training and promoting inclusive labour markets, equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as the promotion of civic competences and lifelong learning opportunities for all</p> <p>Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels</p>		
<i>EUSDR Action to</i>	A/WA 5: To promote equity, social cohesion and active	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising</i>	n.a.

<i>which the Roadmap is related</i>	citizenship through education and training	<i>implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	
<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>M1</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Key initiatives, projects and events to date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>
	Concordia Vocational Training	2014 - 2017	RO - Concordia Foundation
	Workshop on “Empowering marginalised groups through education and training in the Danube Region”	2014	AT – OeAD
	EUSDR Youth Platform	2014 - Ongoing	AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum
	ACES – Academy of Central European Schools	Annual project cycles	SK – Vceli Dom / AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum
	Danube Peace Boat E.U.R.O.P.E	2015 - Ongoing	RS – Media Education Centre
	EdTWin – Education Twinning for European Citizenship in the Centroppe Region	2008 - 2011	AT – European Office, Vienna Board of Education
	Sprachenoffensive – Language Strategy	2003 - Ongoing	AT – Office Sprachkompetenz
	Eschool4S – E-School for Sustainability in the Danube Region	2016	DE – GIZ
	Collaboration of Schools and Communities for Sustainable Development – CoDeS	2014	CH – Stiftung Umweltbildung Schweiz
	Integration of Roma children into education system – countries of Danube Region	2015 – 2016	SLO – Institute for romological studies, education and culture
	Learning Pathway to Social Cohesion	Planned	AT – Interkulturelles Zentrum

ROADMAP FOR ACTION 6			
<i>EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap is related</i>	Target 1: Contribution to a higher employment rate in the Danube Region, especially through tackling youth and long-term unemployment Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels		
<i>EUSDR Action to which the Roadmap is related</i>	A/WA 6: To improve cross-sector policy coordination to address demographic and migration challenges	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	n.a.
<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>MI</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Key initiatives, projects and events to date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>
	Re-Turn – Regions benefitting from returning migrants		DE – Leibnitz Institute for Regional Geography
	Migration for Development in the Western Balkan (MIDWEB)		IOM
	Capacity Building of Institutions involved in migration management and reintegration of returnees		IOM
	SEEMIG – Managing Migration and its Effects in South-East Europe	2012 - 2014	HU – Hungarian Statistical Office
	Meeting of the Austrian Association of Cities: Poverty and Migration	2015	
	Addressing migration challenges, breaking stereotypes and raising awareness by measuring the well-being of young people in the Danube	planned	HU – Hungarian Statistical Office

	Region (YOUMIG)		
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ROADMAP FOR ACTION 7			
<i>EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap is related</i>	Target 4: Contribution to ensuring inclusive education and training and promoting inclusive labour markets, equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as the promotion of civic competences and lifelong learning opportunities for all Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels		
<i>EUSDR Action to which the Roadmap is related</i>	A/WA 7: To fight poverty and social exclusion of marginalised communities in the Danube Region, especially the Roma communities	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	n.a.
<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>M1</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Key initiatives, projects and events to date</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>
	European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under Structural Funds	Ongoing	EU Roma
	THARA – Amora Than	2015	AT – Volkshilfe Österreich
	ESRA – Hungarian Product and Cultural Fund as umbrella organisation, modelled on the experiences of a well-functioning Hungarian Product and Culture Fund cooperation	Ongoing	HU – ESRA
	Strategic Meeting “Fostering Cooperation and Institutional Capacity for Roma Integration in the Danube Region”	2014	
	Network Meeting	2014	EU Roma

	Workshop on East West Cooperation for Roma Integration	2015	EC – DG EMPL
	<p>12 ESF-Roma-Empowerment projects in Austria, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Support at Authorities and early childhood education, Verein Vida Pavlovic o Maro drom – Project for Integration of Roma and Sinti in Upper Austria, Volkshilfe Oberösterreich o Roma / Romni Qualification- and Counselling Center, Itworks / Kulturverein österreichischer Roma o THARA Romani Zor! Volkshilfe Österreich o ROMANO ZURALIPE, Programme for Empowerment from Roma and Romnja on the Labour Market, Romano Centro o ZORROM, Caritas der Diözese Graz-Seckau 	Till 2019	
	Roma integration across the Danube: Best practices and social entrepreneurship models exchange between Romania and Bulgaria	2016	Romanian Center for European Policies
	Integration of Roma Children into Education System – Countries of Danube Region – RomaEdu-Danube	2015-2016	Institute for romological studies, education and culture

ROADMAP FOR ACTION 8

EUSDR Target to which the Roadmap

Target 4: Contribution to ensuring inclusive education and training and promoting inclusive labour markets, equal opportunities and non-discrimination as well as the promotion of civic competences and lifelong learning opportunities for all

<i>is related</i>	Target 5: Contribution to a closer cooperation between educational, training, labour market and research institutions, in particular on transnational, regional and bilateral levels		
<i>EUSDR Action to which the Roadmap is related</i>	A/WA 8: To promote gender equality on the labour market, especially in payment	<i>Deadline (year) for finalising implementation of the EUSDR Action</i>	n.a.
Milestones	<i>Definition of milestone</i>	<i>Planned deadline for achieving the milestone</i>	<i>Responsible actors for the milestone</i>
<i>M1</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Key initiatives, projects and events to date	<i>Name</i>	<i>Status/Duration</i>	<i>Lead Partner</i>

ANNEX II: PA'S WORKPLAN FOR 2016

Table 9: PA's workplan for 2016

<i>Workplan for activities</i>	<i>Corresponding</i>		<i>2016</i>			
	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>	<i>(c)</i>	<i>(d)</i>	<i>(e)</i>	<i>(f)</i>	<i>(g)</i>
Policy development activities:						
11 th SG Meeting	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
4 th Stakeholder Conference	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Workplan for activities	Corresponding		2016			
	Actions	Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Activities related to Strategic projects:						
Constant screening of potential strategic projects	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x
Continuing coordination and support of labelled strategic projects			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities related to other projects:						
Workshop on “Policies to reduce informal employment”	7	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop on “Qualifications framework development, curricula adapted to labor market needs”	4	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workshop “Social Partnership in the Danube Region”	2	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination and cooperation activities:						
11 th SG Meeting	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
5 th Annual Forum	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
ERISEE GB and CB meeting	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activities for involvement of stakeholders and civil society:						
4 th Stakeholder Conference	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Participation at the EUSDR-Dialogforum, Tulln	1-8	n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicity and communication activities:						

<i>Workplan for activities</i>	<i>Corresponding</i>		<i>2016</i>			
	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Q1</i>	<i>Q2</i>	<i>Q3</i>	<i>Q4</i>
<i>(a)</i>	<i>(b)</i>	<i>(c)</i>	<i>(d)</i>	<i>(e)</i>	<i>(f)</i>	<i>(g)</i>
3 rd Issue of PA9 Info-Folder	1-8	n.a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
Administration of PA9 Website	1-8	n.a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Management activities:</i>						
11 th SG Meeting	1-8	n.a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Reporting TA 2015/2016	1-8	n.a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
Project Application TA 2017-2019 (DTP)	1-8	n.a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	x
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>