

SUMMARY NOTE on:

Workshop (2) on Mobilisation of Resources

Moderator:	Mr. Jean-Marie Seyler, EC - DG REGIO
Key note speaker:	Mr. Colin Wolfe, EC - DG REGIO
Key note speaker:	Mr. Jueri Rute, EC, DG AGRI
Key note speaker:	Ms. Kiril Geratliev, European Territorial Cooperation Department, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, BG
Key note speaker:	Ms. Milena Messori, Bucharest Office, European Investment Bank
Key note speaker:	Ms. Therese Sobieski, EC, DG Enlargement
Rapporteur:	László Flórián, EC – DG REGIO

The full title of the workshop was: "Mobilisation of resources to implement the Danube Strategy, its actions and projects, including contribution of Cohesion Policy to the Strategy". Thus the moderator of the workshop started with an overview of activities in this area so far, stressing the need to mobilise the resources which are there, so no invention of new instruments is necessary.

The first speaker (CW) in his contribution summarized: conferences and public consultation collected a lot of information and ideas; time has come to make things happen! It is not only the funding which is necessary but also the better alignment of policies. And if we discuss funding then not only EU finances are to be discussed but also national, regional, local funding, funding from financial institutions and even private finances. It is clear – he stated – that EU funding is already planned in existing operational programmes, but it is necessary to find the links and make connections between European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and Operational Programmes (OP)' priorities, include into the discussion those implementing the OPs, find interconnections with partners from other regions from other member states. It is most necessary to look for gaps and find good ideas to resolve these (exchange of good experience).

Discussion (experts from SI, RO) showed the goodwill to rethink the existing structures of OPs with possible corrections, taking into consideration the EUSDR and the EU 2020 as well, however the policy alignment on EU-level has also been demanded.

The second speaker (JR) highlighted the experience of the rural development in the Baltic area (in the framework of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region - EUSBSR) and stressed for EUSBSR the importance of both better targeting of existing resources as well as the ownership of (responsibility for) priority areas that are to be supported. The priority areas of DG AGRI Action Plan for EUSBSR could perhaps be used. He also put importance on the exchange of best practices and networking.

Discussion: colleagues from BG, HU agreed with the highlighted ideas, however proposed separation of cooperation on strategic level (political) and local level (real

partnership, action groups); even the existing Danube offices could be of help. A "global partnership" could also act as bridges connecting problems like e.g. sanitation problems in rural areas.

Kiril Gerantliev presented the work and experiences of "his" directorate in the ETC, South-East Europe programme, Black Sea programme and INTERACT. He pointed out that even if the current period has already programmed the resources for development, there is still space for the EUSDR, the labelling of projects is possible and a better coordination of various funds (Structural Funds, Instrument for Pre Accession, European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument) would enable to fulfil the EUSDR priorities.

During the discussion it has been emphasized that not size of the project is important but rather how it fits into the approach of the EUSDR. The question of national co-financing has also been touched and (in BG case) the decision of the Council of Ministers has been envisaged for possible transfer of finances to funds.

The important contribution from the European Investment Bank (MM) accented the main aim of EIB: to support member states and candidate countries during the crisis but also in their aim to participate in the EUSDR. The main message: funds are there! There is however sometimes a lack of projects which could be financed. And all this happens in spite of the fact that 3 of EUSDR priorities coincide with the general priorities of EIB for support. The EIB has participated in BSS and is ready to participate in EUSDR as well, however the prioritisation (but no fragmentation) of projects seems to be important for them.

In the discussion details of support, conditions for SMEs, taking risks, questions of loans versus grants, financial engineering questions have been considered.

Finally the contribution from DG Enlargement (TS) concentrated on the possibilities of support for "enlargement" countries and their contribution to the EUSDR. She highlighted the availability of funding in line with the need of harmonisation of legislation, presented the main IPA-priorities and their interlinking with future EUSDR priorities, the need for concentration and synergies, stressed that all future activities and projects have to be realistic.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS:

- necessity to align policies (national and EU)
- make links between EUSDR priorities and OP priorities
- transfer experience (best practices, know-how, networking etc.)
- important: ownership and responsibility for priority areas
- partnership on all levels
- funds ready and available, lack of adequate projects
- prioritising of projects necessary
- concentration, coherence and synergies – main issues
- building bridges with neighbouring (and not neighbouring) countries
- stay realistic!

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