

# **Water in the EU Macro-regional Strategies'**

## **structure –**

### **Background to the First EU Macro-regional strategies' workshop on water**

#### **EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES – AN OVERVIEW**

The four macro-regional strategies cover similar thematic areas – connectivity, environment, prosperity and cross-cutting areas, such as climate change, spatial planning and good governance, however there are significant differences in details and emphases in each thematic area. This is a result of focusing the available resources according to the different needs and potentials of the different regions.

Although the general structure is roughly the same in all four strategies (objectives, thematic fields, actions, project examples / flagships), the wording and detail of levels is different in each strategy (as shown in appendix 2).

#### **EUSBR – EU STRATEGY FOR THE BALTIC REGION (2009)**

EUSBR defines three objectives in line with the three general thematic areas of the strategies (environment, connectivity and prosperity), which are specified in four sub-objectives each. Target indicators are presented for all sub-objectives.

The details of the thematic fields of action in the strategy have been elaborated in 13 Policy Areas (PA) and four Horizontal Actions (HA), which cover the wide range of issues outlined in the strategy. For each of the PAs and HAs detailed objectives, target indicators have been defined, and several actions for fulfilling these objectives have also been indicated. The ongoing and completed Flagships for all PAs and HAs are presented in an annex to the EUSBR Action Plan.

The thematic focus of the strategy can be measured through the number of actions under each PAs and HAs. Large number of actions have been defined under PAs Bioeconomy (8), Safety (7), Energy, Health and Nutri (6-6), which shows the balanced nature of the strategy; innovation, climate and transport are areas that received less emphases in the action plans.

#### **EUSDR – EU STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION (2011)**

EUSDR defines four objectives ("pillars"), three corresponding to the general thematic areas of the strategies (environment, connectivity and prosperity), complemented by a fourth pillar targeting capacity building and common solutions against organised crime. While target indicators have not been defined (on any level), the potentially available funds have been included for each pillar.

Under the Pillars, 11 Priority Areas (PAs) have been formulated, all of them presenting different issues (ranging from education, through organised crime to the preservation of biodiversity) to be tackled in the region. The specific challenges in the Danube region have also been collected regarding all issues. Under all actions of the PAs, the specific actions are well detailed, most of them explained through project examples.

The EUSDR, while describing several actions for the development of education and economy, based on the number of proposed actions, clearly focuses on infrastructural developments in the fields of transport, environment and tourism.

#### EUSAIR – EU STRATEGY FOR THE ADRIATIC AND IONIAN REGION (2014)

The overall structure of the EUSAIR is similar to that of EUSDR, defining four Pillars (objectives), detailed in 10 Topics, all including indicative actions for the specific challenges. The four Pillars include the development of tourism as a separate objective, showing the importance of the field in the region. Sub-objectives have also been defined for all Pillars, further specifying the development needs in the region.

Indicators have been defined for all actions, as well as examples of possible projects.

Besides the focus on tourism (over 25% of the indicative actions directly target tourism development), the focus on maritime transport and environment can be highlighted, all originating from the characteristics of the region.

#### EUSALP – EU STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION (2015)

The structure of EUSALP is slightly less complex than that of the other regional strategies, as it includes only two levels. Nine actions have been defined directly under the three Thematic Areas, while one single objective was specified for all thematic areas. The strategy covers good governance, including institutional capacity, as a cross-cutting area, with no specific actions defined.

The details of the strategy have been described under the actions, with both examples of indicators and projects presented for all actions.

EUSALP doesn't have a clear thematic focus, as economy, environment and connectivity are all well represented in the proposed actions, however the emphasis on economic development and innovation is somewhat larger than in the other macro-regional strategies.

#### MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN STRUCTURE AND THEMES

In summary, although the wording of the levels is rather diverse, the structures of the strategies are comparable with some minor limitations, among which the most visible one is the EUSALP which uses one less level than the other strategies. Some more differences can be seen in the utilisation of indicators and project examples; these programming tools are used in great variance in the strategies.

Although all strategies cover a rather wide range of thematic areas and actions, the differences in the thematic focuses of the strategies are much more pronounced, with each strategy focusing on the specific characteristics and issues of the given macro-region. The EUSBR, covering diverse regions has a rather general focus, EUSDR puts emphasis on infrastructural development, EUSAIR on tourism and maritime issues, and EUSALP focuses more on economic development. It has to be noted though, that the number of actions, detailedness of a given thematic area does not necessarily reflect the real prioritisation of the actual strategy, instead the funds in the support of a given area may be a more telling indicator for inherent prioritisation.

#### WATER ISSUES IN THE EU STRATEGIES

Water issues related to the above three highlighted thematic areas are found in the EU strategies on different levels and receive different emphasis. It is common to all strategies that

besides viewing water as an important natural resource, the availability and the use of which shall be preserved. The following table shows the place of the above water issues within the EU strategies as discussed in the strategic documents and the action plans.

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Thematic areas	EUSBSR	EUSDR	EUSAIR	EUSALP
Water quality and availability	<p>PA Bioeconomy: Agriculture, forestry and fisheries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prevent pollution and reduce the use of hazardous substances</li> <li>2. Mitigate and remediate contamination</li> <li>3. Facilitate implementation of regulatory frameworks and conventions</li> <li>4. Promote research and innovative management</li> </ol> <p>PA Safe - To become a leading region in maritime safety and security</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop co-operation in maritime surveillance and information exchange</li> <li>5. Enhancing the safety of transportation of oil, hazardous and noxious substances</li> </ol> <p>PA Nutri - Reducing nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Managing nutrients more efficiently</li> <li>2. Improving waste water treatment</li> <li>4. Improve nutrient load data</li> </ol> <p>HA Climate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low-emission development</li> <li>2. Climate change adaptation</li> </ol>	<p>PA4 Water Quality</p> <p>Action - "To implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan"</p> <p>Action - "To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents"</p> <p>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"</p> <p>Action - "To assure the proper control and progressive substitution of substances that are considered problematic for Danube Region"</p> <p>Action - "To promote measures to limit water abstraction"</p> <p>Action - "To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply"</p> <p>P6 To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils</p> <p>Preservation of biodiversity and landscapes</p> <p>Action - "To decrease the input of pesticides into the environment of the Danube Region"</p> <p>Action - "To remove safely obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals in the area of Danube Region"</p>	<p>3.1. Environmental quality - The marine environment</p> <p>Action - Increasing marine knowledge</p>	<p>PA 3 Environment and energy</p> <p>"Action 6: To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources</p> <p>Relevant keywords:"</p> <p>Watershed management, provision of safe drinking water</p>

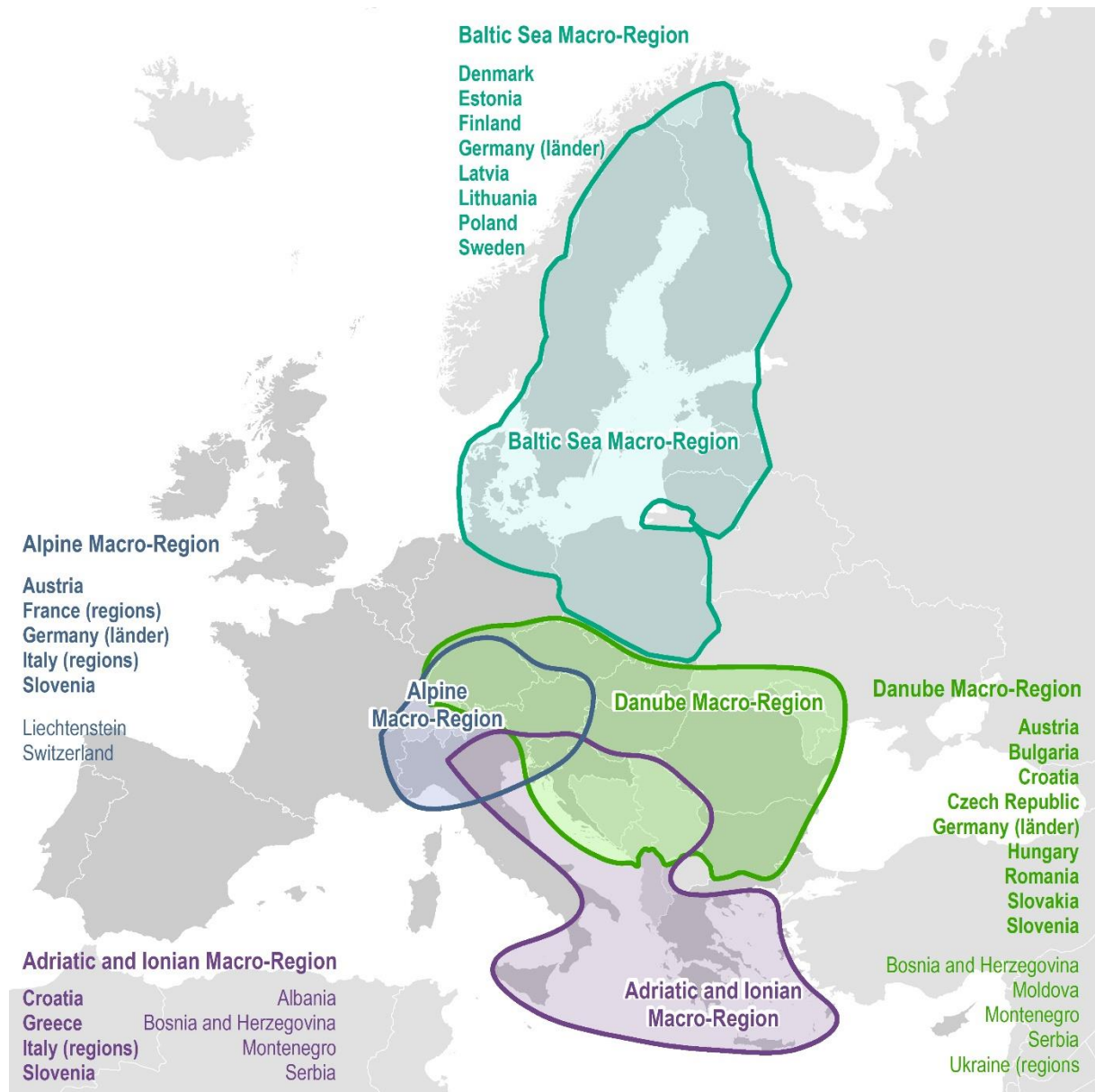
Thematic areas	EUSBSR	EUSDR	EUSAIR	EUSALP
Environmental risks related to waters	<p>HA Climate</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low-emission development</li> <li>2. Climate change adaptation</li> </ol>	<p>PA5 To manage environmental risks</p> <p>Action - "To develop and adopt one single overarching floods management plan at basin level or a set of flood risk management plans coordinated at the level of the international river basin"</p> <p>Action - "To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection, and more generally to analyse and identify the best response to flood risk (including "green infrastructure")"</p> <p>Action - "To extend the coverage of the European Floods Alert System (EFAS) system to the whole Danube river basin, to step up preparedness efforts at regional level (including better knowledge of each other's national systems) and to further promote joint responses to natural disasters and to flood events in particular, including early warning systems"</p> <p>Action - "To strengthen operational cooperation among the emergency response authorities in the Danube countries and to improve the interoperability of the available assets"</p> <p>Action - "To continuously update the existing database of accident risk spots (ARS Inventory), contaminated sites and sites used for the storage of dangerous substances"</p> <p>Action - "To develop rapid response procedures and plans in case of industrial accidental river pollution"</p>	<p>3.1. Environmental quality - The marine environment</p> <p>Action - Increasing marine knowledge</p>	<p>PA 3 Environment and energy</p> <p>"Action 7: To develop ecological connectivity in the whole EUSALP territory</p> <p>Relevant keywords:"</p> <p>Ecological connectivity / methods and information</p> <p>"Action 8: To improve risk management and to better manage climate change, including major natural risks prevention</p> <p>Relevant keywords:"</p> <p>Observation and modelling climate change</p> <p>Region-wide adaptation / strategy</p> <p>Risk management and early warning systems</p>

Thematic areas	EUSBSR	EUSDR	EUSAIR	EUSALP
		<p>Action - "Anticipate regional and local impacts of climate change through research"</p> <p>Action - "To develop spatial planning and construction activities in the context of climate change and increased threats of floods"</p>		
Water in the support of biodiversity	<p>PA Bioeconomy: Agriculture, forestry and fisheries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursuing the bioeconomy actually and practically</li> <li>Improving policy coherence and policy learning in bioeconomy</li> <li>Engaging the private sector in the bioeconomy</li> <li>Develop sustainable strategies for wood</li> <li>Enhance the combined effects of the rural development programmes</li> <li>Develop and improve coordination and cooperation among Member States and stakeholders on fisheries management in the Baltic Sea</li> <li>Enhance the combined effects of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) programmes</li> <li>Recycling of nutrients from agriculture</li> </ol> <p>Biodiversity integrated into all actions</p>	<p>P6 To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils</p> <p>Preservation of biodiversity and landscapes</p> <p>Action - "To contribute to the 2050 EU vision and 2020 EU target for biodiversity"</p> <p>Action - "To manage Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas effectively"</p> <p>Action - "To protect and restore most valuable ecosystems and endangered animal species"</p> <p>Action - "To explore together the appropriateness of reviewing the Convention Concerning Fishing in the Waters of the Danube"</p> <p>Action - "To develop green infrastructure in order to connect different bio-geographic regions and habitats"</p> <p>Action - "To reduce the spread of invasive alien species (IAS)"</p> <p>Action - "To decrease the input of pesticides into the environment of the Danube Region"</p> <p>Action - "To remove safely obsolete pesticides and other obsolete chemicals in the area of Danube Region"</p>	<p>3.1. Environmental quality - The marine environment</p> <p>Action - Increasing marine knowledge</p> <p>3.2. Environmental quality - Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity</p> <p>Action - Development of joint management plans for cross-border habitats and ecosystems</p> <p>Action - Joint population level management plans for large carnivores and awareness-raising activities</p> <p>Action - Protection and restoration of coastal wetland areas and karst fields</p> <p>Action - Awareness-raising activities on implementation and financial aspects of environmentally-friendly farming practices</p> <p>2. Fisheries and aquaculture</p>	<p>PA 3 Environment and energy</p> <p>"Action 6: To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources</p> <p>Relevant keywords:"</p> <p>Products and services building on natural and cultural resources</p> <p>Preserving the Alpine identity</p> <p>"Valorisation of the natural and the cultural heritage</p> <p>Tourism"</p> <p>Protect and enhance agricultural and forestry systems of high natural value</p> <p>"Action 7: To develop ecological connectivity in the whole EUSALP territory</p> <p>Relevant keywords:"</p> <p>Ecological connectivity / methods and information</p> <p>Landscapes / methods and monitoring</p>

Thematic areas	EUSBSR	EUSDR	EUSAIR	EUSALP
		<p>Action - “To prepare and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographical areas (river basins, mountain ranges etc.)”</p> <p>PA5 To manage environmental risks</p> <p>Action - “To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection, and more generally to analyse and identify the best response to flood risk (including “green infrastructure”)”</p> <p>Action - “Anticipate regional and local impacts of climate change through research”</p> <p>Action - “To develop spatial planning and construction activities in the context of climate change and increased threats of floods”</p>		
	PA = Policy Area HA = Horizontal Action	PA = Priority Area	Number of themes	A = Action



**APPENDIX 1: MACRO-REGIONS ACROSS EUROPE**





**APPENDIX 2: OBJECTIVES AND PILLARS OF THE EU MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES**

Structure	EUSBSR	EUSDR	EUSAIR	EUSALP
Objectives	<p>Objectives (4 sub-objectives each):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Save the sea</li> <li>• Connect the region</li> <li>• Increase prosperity</li> </ul>	<p>Pillars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting the Danube region (3 PAs)</li> <li>• Protecting the environment in the Danube region (3 PAs)</li> <li>• Building prosperity in the Danube region (3 PAs)</li> <li>• Strengthening the Danube region (2 PAs)</li> </ul>	<p>Pillars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue growth (3 topics)</li> <li>• Connecting the region (3 topics)</li> <li>• Environmental quality (2 topics)</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism (2 topics)</li> </ul>	<p>3 Thematic Policy Areas (each with specific objectives)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic growth and innovation (3 actions) - objective: Fair access to job opportunities, building on the high competitiveness of the Region</li> <li>• Mobility and connectivity (2 actions) - objective: Sustainable internal and external accessibility to all</li> <li>• Environment and energy (4 actions) - objective: A more inclusive environmental framework for all and renewable and reliable energy solutions for the future</li> </ul> <p>1 Cross-cutting Policy Area: Governance, including institutional capacity - objective: A sound macro-regional governance model for the Region</p>

Structure	EUSBSR	EUSDR	EUSAIR	EUSALP
Thematic fields of action	<p>13 Policy Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bioeconomy (8 actions)</li> <li>• Culture (4 actions)</li> <li>• Education (5 actions)</li> <li>• Energy (6 actions)</li> <li>• Hazards (4 actions)</li> <li>• Health (6 actions)</li> <li>• Innovation (1 action)</li> <li>• Nutri (6 actions)</li> <li>• Safe (7 actions)</li> <li>• Secure (2 actions)</li> <li>• Ship (3 actions)</li> <li>• Tourism (2+2 actions)</li> <li>• Transport (3 actions)</li> </ul> <p>4 Horizontal Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity building (2 actions)</li> <li>• Climate (2 actions)</li> <li>• Neighbours (5 actions)</li> <li>• Spatial planning (no specific actions)</li> </ul>	<p>11 Priority Areas (PA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To improve mobility and intermodality (16 actions)</li> <li>• To encourage more sustainable energy (17 actions)</li> <li>• To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts (14 actions)</li> <li>• To restore and maintain the quality of waters (14 actions)</li> <li>• To manage environmental risks (8 actions)</li> <li>• To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils (16 actions)</li> <li>• To develop the Knowledge Society (research, education and ICT) (8 actions)</li> <li>• To support the competitiveness of enterprises (7 actions)</li> <li>• To invest in people and skills (8 actions)</li> <li>• To step up institutional capacity and cooperation (9 actions)</li> <li>• To work together to tackle security and organised crime (11 actions)</li> </ul>	<p>10 Topics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blue technologies (4 actions)</li> <li>• Fisheries and aquaculture (7 actions)</li> <li>• Maritime and marine governance and services (5 actions)</li> <li>• Maritime transport (3 actions)</li> <li>• Intermodal connections to the hinterland (6 actions)</li> <li>• Energy networks (4 actions)</li> <li>• The marine environment (4 actions)</li> <li>• Transnational terrestrial habitats and biodiversity (5 actions)</li> <li>• Diversified tourism offer (products and services) (8 actions)</li> <li>• Sustainable and responsible tourism management (innovation and quality) (7 actions)</li> </ul>	<p>9 Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop an effective research and innovation ecosystem</li> <li>• To increase the economic potential of strategic sectors</li> <li>• To improve the adequacy of labour market, education and training in strategic sectors</li> <li>• To promote inter-modality and interoperability in passenger and freight transport</li> <li>• To connect people electronically and promote accessibility to public services</li> <li>• To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources</li> <li>• To develop ecological connectivity in the whole EUSALP territory</li> <li>• To improve risk management and to better manage climate change, including major natural risks prevention</li> <li>• To make the territory a model region for energy efficiency and renewable energy</li> </ul>
Projects	Flagships	Examples of projects	Examples of possible projects	Examples of possible projects

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