**MINUTES of THE 4th**

**STEERING GROUP MEETING**

**OF**

**PA4 – TO RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF WATERS – OF THE EUSDR**

**DATE: 5th of November 2012**

**VENUE: Danubius Hotel Helia,**

**62-64, Kárpát utca, Budapest, Hungary,**

**1st floor, URANUS room**

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss activities implemented since the 3rd SG meeting, to discuss and approve modifications to the roadmaps of the PA4 actions, to provide information about the Stakeholders Seminar (StS) being held on 6 November 2012 and about the upcoming Annual Stakeholder Forum that will be held on 27-28 November 2012 in Regensburg and other business related to the facilitating of implementation of the EUSDR.

The meeting was attended by the SG members or their substitutes of the following Danube countries: HU, RO, SK and by the representatives of ICPDR and GWP. (Please see the detailed list of participants attached.)

The meeting was chaired by PACs László Perger (HU) and Radoslav Bujnovsky (SK), minutes were taken by Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper (HU).

The Agenda of the meeting was the following:

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| 9.30 – 10.00 | Registration |
| 10.00 – 10.10 | Welcome, introduction of delegates and new members of SG |
| 10.10 – 10.20 | Presentation of the proposed agenda, approval of the agenda |
| 10.20 – 10.50 | Discussion and decision on new labelling mode of project ideas and completed projects (LoA) |
| 10.50 – 12.00 | Discussion and decision on new projects, project ideas, donation of LoRs and LoAs  Only two projects: Peter and RO. |
| 12.00 – 13.15 | ***Lunch break – sandwich lunch*** |
| 13.15 – 16.10 | Review of progress of tasks drawn up in roadmaps, amendments modifications to the roadmaps |
| 16.10 – 16.40 | ***Coffee break*** |
| 16.40 – 17.00 | Information about Pillar 2 StS |
| 17.00 – 17.30 | Information about the preparedness for the EUSDR Annual Stakeholder Forum, feedbacks, discussion |
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1. **Welcome, introduction, agenda**

After the welcome of the HU PAC the participants introduced themselves.

The Hungarian Government Commissioner Balázs Medgyesy also provided a **welcome speech** and emphasised the following points prior the discussions:

It is good to see that the SG is operational by now and it is doing regular business. He mentioned that the SG meeting is the last opportunity to discuss issues before the Stakeholder’s Seminar (StS) and the Regensburg meeting. He pointed out that the StS will be an important step to meet all stakeholders who are focusing on environmental issues, present a new opportunity to underlining science that supports our work and formulate a message to Regensburg. He stressed that *sustainable development* builds on water – we are using the most substantial resources of the region for our future utilization and as more and more areas are competing for this resource, we have to use it in the most efficient way. He mentioned that the EUSDR is an *important tool for macro-regional cooperation*, optimising the administration, and on the long run it is another tool for *competitiveness* and that for green industry we need to use cutting edge technologies. He also stressed that P4 is very closely linked to competitiveness.

1. **Restoring and maintenance the quality of waters**

After his welcome speech the agenda was agreed and then PAC Bujnovsky provided a **presentation** on **Restoring and maintenance the quality of waters**. (See attached)

He emphasised that the Mandate of PA4 is concerning the provision of activities, approval of projects and cooperation with other PAs. He provided the lists of supported projects as follows:

List of proposed projects supplied with LoRs:

1. Blue Danube – Improved framework conditions for fast track eco- innovation in waste water treatment (Ac 04)
2. ProTisza – Promoting strategic partnership enabling cooperation in the Tisza river basin (Ac 02)
3. Danube sediment management – assessment for restoration of sediment, balance in the Danube river basin (Ac 10)
4. CC-Ware – Mitigating vulnerability of water resources (Ac 12)
5. FoWaP – Forests for drinking water protection (Ac 13)
6. SEE River – Sustainable integrated management of international river, corridors in SEE countries (Ac 02)
7. SEWABIS – Environmental status of sediment, water and biota in the Sava river basin (AC 02)
8. GoodWater – Strategies for development the water management instruments on water protected areas (AC 12)
9. PS-RED – Emissions reduction of priority substances in the Danube basin (Ac 01)
10. Hydrology study for the Sava river basin (Ac 02)
11. Towards sustainable sediment management using the Sava river basin as a showcase (Ac 02)
12. Protection and sustainable use of water resources from alluvial aquifers in the Sava river basin (Ac 12)
13. ICZM –Improvement of the integrated coastal zone management in the Black sea region (Ac 14)

During the discussions the participants informed the SG that the SEE river project is running, and CC Ware, Sava river, ICZM improvement projects are also financed.

One of the representatives of the ICPDR, Mr. Mair, mentioned that the Stakeholder Seminar will be an opportunity to link the different activities within Pillar B, like for instance activities on the sturgeon issue where the Danube Sturgeon Task Force was established under PA6, what is also relevant for PA4. Furthermore, Mr. Mair mentioned that the last **Joint Statement Meeting** took place in September in Budapest with participation of Priority Area Coordinators of PA1a and PA6, as a step towards integration within the EUSDR by *linking navigation with biodiversity issues*., Mr. Mair furthermore described the ongoing process launched by the ICPDR on the elaboration of “Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower Development in the Danube Basin” as also indicated in the EUSDR Action Plan, whereas an exchange with PA2 on this activity is would be welcome by the ICPDR..

The HU Government Commissioner Mr. Medgyesy stressed that it is important that all cross cutting issues are covered with the linkage of priority areas: Priority Area 2 adopted a roadmap that approaches water with hydropower, it is welcome to have more extended dialogue between these areas; in terms of inland navigation it is important to integrate areas.

HU PAC Mr. Perger mentioned that the problem the SG faces now is the full participation of the parties, that we all face problems with finances that creates an obstacle for the proper representation of the countries.

**3 Discussion and decision on new labelling mode of project ideas and completed projects (LoA)**

Mr Perger provided hand copies for a new description of **project labelling**.

Mr. Perger described the procedure: criteria in case of a project proposal as agreed before by the SG4, the new issue here is for projects that are already financed. A discussion started on the proposal and Mr. Liska suggested that the project labelling criteria should include a provision that only projects providing a clearly defined added value should be given the Danube strategy label to prevent an inflation of the value of EUSDR labelling. Mr. Perger explained that the letter of recommendation provides an extra rate for selection. There was extended discussion on the criteria: Mr. Liska recommended to put an added value criterion for projects under Point A). The representative of GWP, Mr. Fehér understood the concerns but pointed to the fact that if this SG increases the criteria, then many good projects could be eliminated. He stressed that we would not act as a pre-selecter and would rather examine whether projects fit to the strategy; he emphasised that the main decision is not with the SG, but with those who provide the financing. Mr. Tóth recommended linking the criteria more with the roadmaps, the majority of the SG supported the idea and agreed on the text.

The SG agreed on Point A.

The SG agreed on Pont B, no changes.

The SG also agreed on the text concerning project labelling.

The final version will be uploaded to the web site of PA4 and is attached to this document.

1. **Donation of LoRs, LoAs**

Peter Kiss informed the SG about a **Sopron project that submitted a request for LoR** on the day of the meeting. Mr. Perger said that a written procedure will be required according to the RoP. .

The RO member, Mr. Costache described that **one RO project will ask for a letter of merit**. (It will be the first letter of Merit)

1. **Roadmaps**

The SG continued the meeting with discussing the roadmaps and examined the proposed text that was sent to the SG members prior the meeting. All proposals were discussed and all was agreed by the SG. The final version will be uploaded to the web site of PA4 and is attached to this document.

1. **Upcoming events**

In the afternoon session Mr. Perger described the **planned event for the Stakeholder Seminar** on 6 November 2012 and mentioned that more than 120 participants registered. He described the presenters in the event and detailed the topics and presenters of the parallel workshops.

Afterwards Commissioner Medgyesy described the preparations for the **Regensburg meeting** and highlighted that it will be the first international event with large media coverage due to the fact that Ms. Merkel will also participate, the meeting will be held at very high level and more than 600 participants are expected. He encouraged everyone to participate.

At the closure of the SG meeting the participants agreed to have the next SG meeting in the first half of 2013 in Bratislava. Documents prior the next SG meeting will be circulated.

The Co-chairs thanked for everyone for the participation and for the useful contribution.

*All the four documents referred in this e-document as “attached” will be available in a separate ZIP file.*