

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL POLICY

The Director-General

Brussels,
OB D(2011)**Subject: EU Strategy for the Danube Region - Implementation**

Dear National Contact Points

Dear Priority Area Coordinators

All the Steering Groups of the Priority Areas have now taken place and this provides us with a better view of where we stand with regard to the implementation phase. The purpose of this note is to share with you the Commission's thoughts on progress so far and to provide you with some additional information.

1. Annex 1 summarises the results of the kick-off Steering Group meetings held in June. I would like to congratulate the Priority Area Coordinators for the good work achieved so far. In particular, I am aware of the tight deadlines under which you had to work which makes the achievements even more impressive. However, I have been made aware that some countries did not attend the Steering Group meetings. This is an issue, as the Steering Groups should be able to claim that their decisions are legitimate as they represent the views of the 14 Danube countries. Hence, I would invite all National Contact Points to ensure that the nominated members to the different Steering Groups attend the next meetings.
2. Annex 2 indicates the list of deliverables we propose for June 2012. Indeed, as you know, the Commission has to report back to the Council in December 2012 and it would be to all our benefits to be able to show genuine progress.
3. Annex 3 lists the targets which have been agreed by the Steering Groups under each Priority Area. They will be further discussed by the High Level Group of senior officials which will be convened in the Autumn.
4. Annex 4 concerns the alignment of funds and provides a draft template for the 'letter of recommendation' (this draft is still under discussion in DG Regional Policy and a final version will be sent to you soon). The projects which contribute to the objectives of the EUSDR could be given priority in the selection process by funding bodies. Concretely, the projects considered good by the Steering Groups could be granted a 'letter of recommendation' with which the project leader could go to the different funding sources. As the 'letter of recommendation' will show the support by the Danube countries, it would help to provide a degree of priority to the project in

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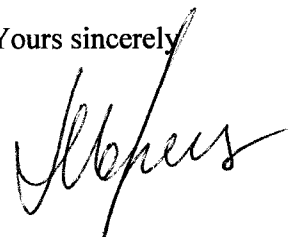
accessing funds. DG Regional Policy will inform the Structural Funds programmes that, when they receive a project with a 'letter of recommendation', they should give it the appropriate level of priority.

5. Finally, in the coming weeks we will provide a note on 'good practices for the alignment of funding'.

It is clear from the work of the past months that the Danube countries have now taken the ownership of the implementation. I very much welcome this, as it is a sign that the countries are committed to delivering concrete results and are looking forward to the next steps.

for the Director General absent,
Normunds Popens
Deputy Director General

Yours sincerely



Dirk Ahner

Annexes: Annex 1 - Feedback from the kick-off Steering Group meetings
Annex 2 - List of deliverables by June 2012
Annex 3 - List of agreed targets
Annex 4 - Letter of recommendation

Copies: Persons following the EUSDR in the operational DGs;
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