

## **EUSDR Report June 2013**

### **Priority Area 3**

#### ***To Promote Culture, Tourism and People to People Contacts***

#### **General remarks:**

*This report covers the period June 2012 – June 2013.*

*The language of this report should be clear, simple, well-structured and should address the content rather than aiming for quantity.*

*The main aims of this report are:*

- To illustrate what is happening (i.e. increasing/ decreasing/ changing etc.) because of the Strategy since last year. In this sense, the report should outline concrete facts and examples. Vague and general comments (e.g. "the situation is progressing favourably and quite rapidly") should preferably be avoided.*
- To explain the use of technical assistance funds for the year covered by the report (TA progress report).*

*Reporting on the Technical Assistance: The provisions regarding the submission of the TA progress report (implementation and financial report) specify that the reports will be submitted every six months starting from the starting date of the action (Article 1.2.2 of the Special Conditions of the Grant Agreement).*

*However, considering that a separate reporting exercise on the use of TA adds additional work, one of the two annual reports will be merged with the activity report on the PA implementation and will be submitted, for all PAs, by the end of June, as an integral part of the EUSDR PA implementation report.*

*The second annual TA report will be submitted by the end of December each year.*

## 1. OVERALL PROGRESS

### 1.1. State of play

A little over two years into the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 3 “To Promote Culture, Tourism, People to People Contacts” is making a stable and consistent way towards the attainment of its targets.

Transcendental collective effort has been made by all EUSDR countries and PA-3 Steering Group members to initiate the work on Target 1 “To develop a Danube brand for the entire Danube Region based on already existing work by 2015” and Target 2 “To support the implementation of a harmonized monitoring system, dedicated to tourism, able to provide complete and comparable statistical data in all the 14 states part of the EUSDR”.

Needless to say, apart from this strong collective emphasis, Targets 3 (“Develop new and support existing Cultural Routes relevant in the Danube Region”), 4 (“Develop green tourist products along the Danube Region.”) and 6 (“Ensure the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage and natural values by developing relevant clusters and networks of museums, interpretation and visitors centers within the Danube Region.”) have been in the radar mainly through the endorsement of numerous projects, while Targets 5 (“To create a ‘Blue Book’ on Danube cultural identity.”) and 7 (“Promoting exchange and networking in the field of contemporary arts in the Danube Region.”) are currently being tackled through concrete organizational and coordination steps which will allow their attainment.

It is all the more important to highlight the extensive partnership network that is being developed both in the region and beyond its borders. Priority Area 3 now counts with the strong support and commitment of the UNWTO, INRouTe, DCC, ETC, CoDCR, GIZ, Collegium Hungaricum, Danube Tourism Commission, and also various central, regional and local administrations, a wide range of non-governmental organizations, business support centers and mobility networks.

#### - **Main achievements**

- Positive effects: it can be stated that the existence of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region has boosted the cooperation with regards to the design and implementation of projects contributing to the overall Strategy objectives, namely bringing about growth and cohesion in the region. To name but a few directly contributing to the Targets of the Priority Area – “DanubeHIKE – hiking routes along the Danube”, to which a Letter of Recommendation has been endorsed, “Cultural Routes in the Middle and Lower Danube – The Route of the Roman Emperors and The Danube Wine Route” and DanubeFOOD, both undergoing the procedure of assessment towards receiving a Letter of Recommendation, DATOURWAY, TRANSDANUBE, TOURNET, Danube Limes UNESCO World Heritage, Danube Cultural Cluster. Proposals for upgrading both finalized and still on-going projects have been generated among existing and new partners.
- Besides clearly technical involvement, strong political support for Danube cooperation has been generated. The Danube Forum organized by the Priority Area Coordinators during the international tourism exhibition ITB Berlin 2013 presented a platform for Members of the European Parliament to exchange views on “tangible” future activities along with high-level

representatives of the UNWTO and ETC. The Danube Committee at the European Parliament itself hosted a dedicated event to the work of Priority Area 3. In a series of “floating” conferences along the Danube at the end of May parliamentarians and officials from EUSDR countries supported the establishment of Danube Parliamentarian Network with the involvement of all Danube Region parliaments. At a Regional Conference on Territorial Cooperation, which took place on the same boat presented and which was organized by the Bulgarian Co-coordinator of the Priority Area with the support of GIZ, the new EGTC regulation was presented to officials from Danube municipalities from Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia with the aim of initiating the establishment of an EGTC with tourism as one of its main areas of intervention.

- *Outline on the future. Next steps and challenges. What, if anything, is missing in order to achieve the planned goals?*
  - o The work on the attainment of PA-3 Targets has clearly marked one key challenge – financial resources. This is especially true for the work on Targets that require collective effort (T1, T2). The need for consistency in applying a holistic approach in our work requires the allocation of dedicated EU funds following the example of the funds granted to Priority Area 1A.
  - o A Working Group on cultural issues will be established later on this year on the occasion of the *DonauFest* in Bratislava.
- *Lessons learned, positive or negative.*
  - o As already stated, the main challenge ahead is financing of large-scale activities. Notwithstanding, this has so far been addressed through an increased level of flexibility. That is, realizing that countries cannot commit national funds for “macro-regional” exercises, contribution will come through man-hours in carrying out tasks that could otherwise be outsourced. While economic on the one hand, this is clearly more inefficient in light of the need of burdening national administrations with additional activities not many countries are technically able to respond to.
  - o There is a tendency for Steering Group members to see Coordinators as the only driving force behind the implementation and the initiation of supporting activities. This has been approached through punctual interventions which made possible certain tasks and activities to be delegated to a limited number of countries (Austria, Hungary and Serbia).

## **1.2. Process**

*The input under this sub-chapter shall be limited to maximum 2 pages.*

*This sub-chapter shall include information on:*

- *Progress made since the last reporting period on the governance of the PA (including the organisation and functioning of the PACs, Steering Groups, Working Groups etc and the links with stakeholders);*
  - o The work on the implementation of the Strategy has clearly received an increased attention both at Coordinators’ and Steering Group’s level and at more operational, working level. The processes this particular attention has catalysed have brought about increased dynamics of interaction and stronger emphasis on the need of real accomplishments.

In the first place, a joint specialized strategic structure on the development of tourism along the Danube, Focal Point Destination Danube, has been established in Sofia between the Ministry of Economy and Energy and the German Organization for International Cooperation *GIZ*. The role of this joint structure will be, among other things related to the implementation of Bulgaria's tourism policy along the Danube, to support the coordination process of PA-3. An FPDD service unit was recently established in Russe, thereby assuring direct link with regional partners and stakeholders.

In the same time, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration of Romania has set up a special Danube Strategy Compartment to handle issues related to the implementation of the Strategy and to support the line Ministries in their work. This newly created structure is not dedicated exclusively to PA3 but, due to the horizontal role of MDRAP in implementing EUSDR in Romania, supports the general implementation of EUSDR in Romania and has the following main objectives:

- supports the involvement of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration (MDRAP) in implementing the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in the fields of competence of the institution;
  - follows MDRAP goals regarding the sustainable development of the Danube Region;
  - promotes and supports the development of projects to support the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region;
  - develops and engages in projects to achieve the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region;
  - manages the technical assistance grant awarded by the European Commission Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration for the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and activities are undertaken in this context;
  - represents, within the mandate granted by the Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration, MDRAP and state interests in meetings dedicated to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region Danube;
- Besides setting up the Working Group on Branding, several steps have been taken towards minimizing the fragmentation in and speeding up the decision-making process at Steering Group level. The amended Rules of Procedure allow shorter feedback periods through electronic communication without the particular need for convoking a meeting. Moreover, this allows for stronger focus on strategic discussions during the regular meetings, as opposed to strictly operational issues.
  - The improved dialogue and the strong commitment by the Priority Area Coordinators and their partners allowed for countries that had never before participated in Steering Group meetings to start attending them – Moldova participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Regular SG Meeting in Romania for the first time, while several meetings and discussions were held with the Ukrainian and the Bosnian NCPs in order to encourage their PA-3 SG appointed representatives to contribute to the work.
- *Outline of the significant changes (including comparisons with the last reporting period as well) in your work/network approach resulting from the Strategy (e.g. larger networks, more*

*visibility), including any problems encountered and any solutions found; Links with projects from other Priority Areas; Publicity measures (such as website, stakeholder seminars, publications) etc.*

- As previously outlined, the effects of the Strategy to the regional cooperation are manifold. In the first place, the macro-regional context has brought about increased visibility of joint activities taking place in different parts of the region. This, while improving the recognition and trust among existing partners, has played a positive role in attracting a wider array of contributors and stakeholders. That is, great support has been generated through a series of events largely aimed at assuring political commitment at all levels.

Before the floating conferences at the end of May, in which Parliamentarians from the Danube Region declared their support for regional parliamentarian network, the organization of a Danube Forum at ITB Berlin 2013 can be claimed as an important milestone in streamlining the political discourse towards real accomplishments.

The opportunity to “bring” the Strategy down to the local level, where interventions are more visible, has been embraced through a conference on territorial cooperation between representatives of municipalities, Territorial and Cross-border Cooperation units and NGOs from Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia where the possibilities of upgrading existing initiatives through the EU instruments for territorial cooperation have been discussed. A real outcome of this conference is a declaration signed by the delegates in which they state their will to actively participate in the institutionalization of a regional cooperation platform. First formal meeting of the platform was proposed to be held in Serbia in September this year.

- Surely a decisive “instrument” on better linking Priority Areas in the design and implementation of projects and initiatives is the possibility to attend Steering Group meetings of other Priority Areas. So far, proceedings from the last SG meetings of PA-1A, PA-8 and PA-10 have been made available.
  - In the meantime, the commitment for better coordination and cooperation among Priority Area Coordinators has been endorsed through the organization of the First PAC Meeting at the end of April this year in Sofia. The meeting served as setting a platform for continuous communication among EUSDR PACs and between them and other stakeholders towards finding common solutions for the challenges in the Coordination work.
- *What, if anything, is missing in order to streamline the governance of the PA (progress not depending exclusively on your PA)? What are you planning to improve in the governance of the PA (progress entirely depending on your PA).*
- One of the biggest challenges in the Priority Area governance and coordination is securing continuous structural commitment. Although the Strategy is acknowledged as politically important, resource dedication for complementing the “sanitary minimum” is largely dependent on the changes in the agenda of executing administrations.

Attached to this, there are significant legislative “gaps” which impede technical assistance funds from sustaining some of their concrete purposes, such as remuneration for executing and financial officers.

- Just like a year ago, the ultimate success of the Strategy as a macro-regional instrument for cooperation among 14 countries, hence the work of Priority Area 3, is

strongly linked to two very concrete aspects: financial resources for travel and “real” participation are scarce in several countries, thus marginalizing the latter in the overall process; geographic proximity to the Danube is of crucial significance to the physical/tangible outcomes of joint decisions and related initiatives, especially in the domain of tourism.

- Improvement of the governance process is of vital significance to the overall implementation progress, yet, this seems unrealistic if at least two conditions are not fulfilled. The first one is to provide dedicated resources to enable non-riparian (except CZ) and non-EU countries to travel and participate in the decision-making process. The second is to secure dedicated funds for large activities and projects which cannot be financed through EU programs, national funds or otherwise.

Concrete steps have been taken towards supporting the participation of non-riparian (except CZ) and non-EU countries through the involvement of donor organizations, yet, at some point this might influence the “ownership” of the outcomes of concrete actions. Similarly, large-scope interventions which are not fundable through EU programs because of “ineligible” partnership structures are bound to source partial funding from donor organizations.

- In the meantime, a web platform dedicated to PA-3 is currently being developed to allow the promotion of the Priority Area, as well as to provide a tool for video-conference and an online document library, thus enhancing the communication among SG members.

In addition, there are concrete efforts for improving technical capacity through enhancing local and regional partnerships and through involving “external” support, like the case of Focal Point Destination Danube in Sofia and its service unit in Russe.

### **1.3. Funding**

Similarly to the previous reporting period, when there were no concrete funds dedicated specifically to the Danube region, projects approved and implemented during the current period have mainly been funded through Cross Border Cooperation programs, South East Europe Territorial Cooperation Program, Competitiveness and Innovation Program, Operational Programs, donor organizations and national budgets.

It is worth noting that due to the specific character of projects in the domains of tourism and culture, banks and other financing institutions are seldom identified as attainable sources of funds.

In the same time, the current process of restructuring the South East Europe Program and the Competitiveness and Innovation Program, respectively into Danube Program and Ionian-Adriatic Program, and Competitiveness for Small and Medium Enterprises Program, is not resulting into improved opportunities for direct funding of projects in the area of tourism development as reflected in the Priority Area targets. Indeed, initiatives in the domain of culture find their place in the objectives of the funding programs, yet, it seems difficult to find a direct link between them and the attainment of Priority Area targets on culture.

Nevertheless, expectations are that the newly introduced instrument for support of project proposal development, Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects, will increase the chances of finding financial means for the implementation of ideas and initiatives in the domains of culture and tourism.

A clear and straightforward set of criteria for labeling relevant projects was adopted by the Priority Area Steering Group at its 4<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting in November last year in Bucharest. On a scale of up to 100 points, projects are assessed according to their relevance to the PA Targets, their intended economic, social and cultural impact, their added value, and their quality both in terms of structure and financial provisions. Projects labeled as relevant and contributing to the attainment of PA Targets receive a Letter of Recommendations.

Nevertheless, and as long as there are no specific criteria for Danube projects in the Operational Programs and the EU financing instruments, the above Letters can still not be regarded as providing formal support towards funding. The link between Letters of Recommendation and program criteria is currently considered a question of central importance with regards to the prospects of financing Danube projects in the next Programming Period. The discussions held during the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> Regular Steering Group meeting, as well as during the 1<sup>st</sup> PAC Meeting in Sofia and at the last NCP/PAC Meeting in Brussels, clearly indicate that this is a matter of urgent consideration with regards to the sustainability in the implementation of the Strategy.

Yet another challenge is posed by the lack of financing for small projects and initiatives in the domain of culture. Plans are that this issue will be addressed as top priority after the Working group on culture is established later on this year.

## **2. PROGRESS BY TARGET**

Target 1 - “To develop a Danube brand for the entire Danube Region based on already existing work”

- Developing the Danube Brand (Target 1): after the approval of the Branding Roadmap and following a decision of the Steering Group, a Branding Task Force was established with a first meeting in Belgrade in July 2012. The immediate consequence of the meeting was the decision to start preparing a concept note for an initial market perception analysis with the aim to assess the customer understanding of the Danube region as a consistent tourism destination. As a result, the coordination and carrying out of operational activities on the concept note preparation was delegated to the Priority Area Coordinators, the UNWTO and the Danube Competence Centre.

In a series of technical meetings with UNWTO (Regional Programme for Europe) experts in September and October of 2012, a first concept note draft was prepared. Among the main topics of the discussions were the geographic scope of the analysis, the funding possibilities, the challenges related to tendering and carrying out of the work.

After presenting and discussing the proposed draft with the Steering Group at its Fourth Regular Meeting in Bucharest (22-23 November 2012), remarks and comments were taken into consideration towards a re-draft, which was backed-up by a serious amount of information and strategic documentation on the development of tourism and national marketing strategies SG member countries provided. During the meeting it was clearly indicated that various countries were not in a position to allocate specific funds for financing this big and first of its kind market perception analysis.

Again, and taking the latter into consideration, in a series of working sessions with UNWTO experts and designated consultants methodological framework for a set of three analyses – external market perception analysis (source markets have been

identified), internal stakeholder analysis and destination/product audit (EUSDR countries). This approach will allow the latter two to be carried out at national level, following the agreed methodology, with the assumption countries/administrations in charge will commit human resources/man hours instead of lump sums. On the other hand, funding possibilities have to be explicitly identified among EU and other programs for the external analysis to be carried out.

- A Branding Task Force meeting will be held in July to finalize the methodology on the (external) market perception analysis, the (internal) stakeholder analysis and the destination/product audit. Availability of funds needs to be assessed, while, in parallel, a decision has to be made as to the consortium structure towards tendering the external analysis. The TF meeting will also develop the timeframe for the two internal analyses to be carried out, tentatively over a period of about 4 months, preferably starting already in September this year.
- During the last Steering Group meeting held in the city of Ruse, Bulgaria in the month of May 2013, it was decided to address the Commission with regard to the possibility to benefit of a financial support from the EC in order to carry out the external analysis, following the precedent of financial support granted to PA 1A for the development of a new barge project i.e.

Target 2 - “To support the implementation of a harmonized monitoring system, dedicated to tourism, able to provide complete and comparable statistical data in all the 14 states part of the EUSDR”

- System for statistical analysis and monitoring at sub-regional level (Target 2): after consultations with UNWTO experts and the explicit involvement of INRouTe – The International Network on Regional Economics, Mobility and Tourism, the work in the attainment of Target 2 of the Priority Area was formally initiated by a workshop in Predeal, Romania. The meeting was attended by representatives of 9 EUSDR countries, mainly experts in statistics and tourism development who discussed with INRouTE and UNWTO experts the challenges ahead of gathering and interpreting tourism relevant data at sub-regional level.

Over the two days of the workshop, an action plan was devised with the following milestones, among others: identification of observation units (according to territorial classifications), setting up of an Inter-institutional platform at technical level, considerations on the need for Tourism Observatory.

The strong commitment of all partners involved was ensured by official talks held during the 55<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UNWTO Commission for Europe in Izmir, Turkey in March this year. An official letter to the UNWTO Secretary General Mr. Taleb Rifai has been endorsed by the Priority Area Steering Group at its 5<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting in Russe (16-17 May 2013) in seeking stronger support through UNWTO technical assistance and capacity building programs.

- An official request for Technical Assistance for Capacity Building Program in support of the work on developing a system for statistical analysis and monitoring of tourism at sub-regional level will be addressed to the UNWTO Secretary General.

Target 3 - “Develop new and support existing Cultural Routes relevant in the Danube Region”

- Works have been initiated among members of the SG for the creation and development of new cultural routes in the Danube Region. In this respect at this stage we are finalising the discussions on the launch of the Roman Emperors’ Route and



Danube Wine Route where Roman Heritage and wine producing traditions are the central elements. The Roman Emperors' Route will apply for certification by the Institute of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

A more recent project has been brought to our attention, the DanubeFOOD, a project aiming at the recognition of culinary tourism products along the Danube. In the case of DanubeFOOD tours and the enlargement of the Danube wine route, the general thematic theme will be cuisine and culture, the itinerary proposed may be composed of several different local areas: not only local culinary traditions and places of cultural heritage will be part of it, but also protected natural sites, historic places or some outstanding rural areas could join in order to increase the attractiveness of the itinerary.

Target 4 - "Develop green tourist products along the Danube Region"

- The SG has already assessed and awarded a letter of recommendation for the project DanubeHIKE which has the general goal to develop hiking tourism as another sustainable tourism product co-existing with cycling tourism, which has become the most popular tourist activity in the Upper Danube region.

Target 5 - "To create a 'Blue Book' on Danube cultural identity"

- Works on this target are foreseen to be started in the second semester of 2013

Target 6 - "Ensure the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage and natural values by developing relevant clusters and networks of museums, interpretation and visitors centers within the Danube Region"

- Works on this target are foreseen to be started in the second semester of 2013

Target 7 - "Promoting exchange and networking in the field of contemporary arts in the Danube Region."

- Works on this target are foreseen to be started in the second semester of 2013

## ***Annex 1: Roadmaps to implement each action***

### ***Roadmap 1: Perception Analysis in support of Target 1 of Priority Area 3***

#### ***Action 1***

- *After setting up a Task Force on branding, the first TF Meeting was held in Belgrade in July 2012. The TF members delegated the PACs, the UNWTO and the Danube Competence Centre to carry out the operational work towards developing a Concept Note for a Perception Analysis and identifying potential source of funding.*
- *In a series of technical meetings between PACs, UNWTO and DCC a first Concept Note was drafted and then presented to the attention of the Steering Group. After a round of discussions and comments, the Concept Note was re-drafted with the following key elements:*
  - o *Internal stakeholder analysis and Product/experience audit (approx. 4 months; cost – man/hours + management/coordination est. 30,000 EUR if outsourced): focus groups and questionnaires*
  - o *External market perception analysis (approx. 4-5 months; field research cost – est. 50,000 EUR per source market + 35,000 to 40,000 EUR for management/coordination): desk research on all EUSDR countries; field research in identified source markets (based on relative volume of visitors to the Danube Region), focus groups*
- *Several challenges have been identified: involvement of non-riparian (Except CZ) and non – EU countries in the preparation and supporting activities, which results in lack of comprehensive strategic supporting information; commitment by national administrations to carrying out the internal analyses; commitment of national funding for the external analysis as well as for coordination/management needs throughout the course of the studies; funding for the external analysis.*
- *A Task Force meeting will be held in July to finalize the methodological structures for the three studies, to prepare final Terms of Reference and to discuss the potential tendering consortium according to the identified funding opportunities.*

## ***Roadmap 2: Developing a System for Statistical Analysis and Monitoring of Tourism at sub-regional level in support of Target 2 of Priority Area 3***

### ***Action 1***

- *A series of technical meeting between PACs, UNWTO and INRouTe experts, a seminar was organized in Predeal, Romania in December 2012. Representatives from statistical offices and tourism development administrations from 8 countries attended along with UNWTO, INRouTe and DCC.*
- *The work over the two days of the seminar produced an Action Plan with the following key milestones:*
  - a. *Inform the EUSDR Steering Group on the progress towards achieving Target 2 of Priority Area 3 (PA3):*
    - *Outcomes of the December 6-7 2012 Workshop: initial Action Plan*
    - *PA3 Coordinators develop “Advocacy Document” highlighting the importance of Target 2 within the context of the entire EUSDR*
    - *Officially invite and encourage all PA3 Steering Group Members (including national contact points) to take necessary steps for implementation of the technical part of the document*
  - b. *Setting up an Inter-Institutional Platform: The right people to champion this initiative (considering national EUSDR governance structures)*
  - c. *NTAs need to assume leadership for engaging other necessary partners (NSO, research entities, planning authorities, etc.) to engage own experts.*
- *The following technical issues have been considered:*
  - *Identification of frame of reference – observation units*
  - *Inter-institutional platform at technical level*
  - *Outline technical work to be carried out*
  - *Possible need for tourism observatory*
- *Several challenges have been identified: make the statistical component more explicit towards an integral tourism management approach; cooperation under high-level political pressure; national funding and technical capacity; sustainability and measurement of impact.*
- *An official request for technical support and capacity building programs will be addressed to the UNWTO Secretary General Mr. Taleb Rifai*

**Annex 2 - Projects approved by the steering group**

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name of the project</b>     | <i>[Name]</i>  |
| <b>Action related</b>          | <i>[Name of the action to which the project is related.]</i> |
| <b>Countries involved</b>      | <i>[List of countries.]</i>                                  |
| <b>Funding</b>                 | <i>[Amount; sources of funding.]</i>                         |
| <b>Stage of implementation</b> | <i>[Planned/ under implementation/ completed.]</i>           |
| <b>Description</b>             | <i>[Description.]</i>  |
| <b>Involvement of the PACs</b> | <i>[How do the PACs facilitate the implementation?]</i>      |
| <b>Next steps</b>              | <i>[How will the Danube Countries build on the project?]</i> |

*Use specific PA project templates if existing or the table above.*

### **Annex 3 – TA Progress Report**

*In accordance with the activities set in the Grant Agreement no. 2011CE160AT090:*

- *The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PA3 Steering Group took place in Bucharest, Romania, in November 2012. The total cost of the event was of approximately 14,000 euro.*
- *2 PAC meetings were organized and attended, with respective travel, accommodation and daily subsistence costs covered for one representative from the Bulgarian Ministry of Economy and Energy (former Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism).*
- *A seminar was organised in December 2012 in Predeal, Romania, in view of the target 2 - Developing a System for Statistical Analysis and Monitoring of Tourism at sub-regional level. The total cost of the event was of approximately 13,000 euro.*
- *Danube Forum at ITB Berlin 2013 was organized. Its aim was to extend a political platform for cooperation between the European Parliament, UNWTO and relevant regional stakeholders, including civil society. The cost of the event was 2,000 Euro, covered by a 10% shift of the budget heading “Service contract – Organization of seminars of co-beneficiary 2, the Ministry of Economy and Energy.*
- *2 seminars were organized in Bulgaria in April and May 2013 – one with the aim of strengthening horizontal cooperation among Priority Areas, and one with the aim of attaining Target 1 of Priority Area 3 – Developing Danube Brand by 2015. The exact cost of the first seminar was 7, 123. 51 Euro, while the second one is at an estimated cost of 6, 000 Euro (official invoice to be received).*
- *Public tender procedures were finalised by the Romanian Ministry for Regional Development and Public Administration for creating an integrated electronic platform for PA3 implementation. The public tender was made in accordance with the national legislation and in the respect of the allocated budget – a maximum amount of 14,864 euro. The electronic platform is currently in the process of development.*

*The platform is intended to assure proper and efficient communication instruments for the members of the Steering Group, to facilitate dissemination of financing opportunities at PA3 level and to support the achievement of objectives and targets by offering direct access to information related to PA3 implementation.*

- *Regarding the personnel costs included in the Grant Agreement, due to the Romanian legislation and related regulations, budget allocated for this purpose was not used to date by the 1<sup>st</sup> beneficiary. Currently, efforts are been made in order to find a solution to the issue.*
- *In order to facilitate implementation for the next period, an Amendment to the Grant Agreement was signed in March 2013, extending the implementation to 36 months and financing amount to 375.082,62 euro.*