**EUSDR Report June 2013**

**Priority Area 11**

**SECURITY**

# Overall progress

## State of play

## After the first report in June 2012, the Steering Group of Priority Area 11 continued its work in pragmatic and result-oriented manner in the four thematic areas for cooperation outlined at its first meeting in June 2011 in Sofia (enhancing the police cooperation, strengthening customs and border control through contact centres, border management and document security, strengthening the rule-of-law and combating corruption). The new reported period marks the transition from identifying priorities and preparation to the implementation of the set objectives and measures.

Convinced that the broad participation of all countries and organisations is an important condition for the development of the Strategy, the three coordinating parties continue to invest efforts in the involvement of all stakeholders. Five Steering Group meetings within PA 11 have been held as for the moment. Relatively active and very good participation in the Steering Group work is in place. There is a growing core of countries that actively participate in the cooperation. Most of which have elaborated projects under PA11. PACs continue its efforts for active involvement of all countries.

As a result of Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) consultations and with the active support of the EUBAM, Moldova and Ukraine are participating in the work of the Steering Group of PA 11. The PACs shall continue their work for associating more closely the two countries in the activities and projects that are of interest for them. The PACs were active in establishing cooperation also with other stakeholders. Contact was established for cooperation with Poland – a country that is not a member of the EUSDR. The PACs are open for future cooperation.

In view of obtaining synergy of efforts of the different PAs of EUSDR, the possibilities for horizontal cooperation were explored. During the Vth SG meeting discussions have been started with the PACs of PA 1a and agreement was reached to organise a joint expert meeting. Also the cooperation in the field of customs received a new impetus. In the context of enlargement of the scope of cooperation, contacts were established with the EUSBSR. The PACs remain open for future discussions.

During the new period, the cooperation with the non-governmental sector has continued. Such structures were involved in providing scientific expertise, as for example in the implementation of the Rule-of-Law project.

The PA 11 member countries believe that the successful outcome of their efforts is tightly linked to the project implementation. The expression of this commitment is the register of the project proposals that is kept by the Coordination Bureau in Sofia. Their total number is 28, six of which have already received a Letter of Recommendation by the Steering Group.

Financing of projects was one of the key issues where attention was focused within PA11. During the last year intensive efforts on the challenge to identify possibilities for funding through various EU programmes were done. A special seminar on the opportunities for projects funding was organised in September 2012 in Sofia for exchange of experience between countries, and on the other hand to receive advance information from the EC for the financing mechanisms, which will be established during the new financial period (2014-2020) so that the PA 11 is ready to draft reasonable projects and succeed in attaining relevant funding.

Two projects were submitted for funding under the ISEC programme. The project "Cooperation Southeast Danube Region" is awaiting for a decision from the EC and the Hungarian project “Setting up the structure of a Danube River Forum” has received a grant.

Significant progress was made and concrete results were achieved in enhancing the police cooperation at the three key areas that were set in January 2012 during the Conference of the Chiefs of Police of the European Capitals in Munich (drug trafficking, corruption and trafficking in human beings).

Political support to the work under PA 11 was given during the Ministerial Danube Security Conference, held in Munich in May 2013. Moreover, the ministers agreed for a new (fourth) area to be added to the other three already set areas of police cooperation – the fight against cybercrime, in view of its particular importance for security.

Strategic planning started within PA 11 - as a result of joint and purposeful efforts, the Danube countries managed to outline a long-term vision for enhancing the cooperation between the law enforcement authorities along the Danube River through contact points for exchange of information. The establishment of the network of contact centres and the coordination centre in Mohács are considered as a strategic project idea under PA 11 of the EUSDR. The idea received a political support by the ministers at their conference in May in Munich. This strategic project provides possibilities for fast exchange of information, coordinated joint activities and also coordinated control along the Danube River, so that all countries have one and the same real-time picture of the situation on the river. Positive experience is already in place in the Black Sea Cooperation Forum and the Black Sea Border Cooperation and Information Centre in Burgas as an example of working cooperation between the border police/border guard authorities in the Black Sea Region for efficient counteraction of transborder crime.

The two on-going projects in the field of strengthening the rule of law and combating corruption (Rule-of-Law project and European Anti-corruption Training project) contribute to enhancing trans-border cooperation in prevention and fight against corruption in countries from the Danube region and Western Balkans through elaborating and implementing comprehensive anticorruption policies at national level in compliance with the EU policy in the area of the fight against corruption.

Key objective I: Security offensive - Enhancing police cooperation

With the aim of strengthening international police cooperation in combating illicit **drug trafficking** t*he project “Cooperation Southeast Danube Region”* initiated by the Bavarian State Criminal Police Office is about to be started. The expected result of the project is increased effectiveness of the fight against drug trafficking through continued harmonisation with EU standards and practices in the participating countries.

The joint efforts of the countries from the Danube Region in the fight against **trafficking in human beings** started with the *Regional conference on combating* ***trafficking in human beings*** held in October 2012 in Sofia. It proved to be a useful platform for brainstorming and discussions on the possibilities for macro-regional projects which are still an on-going process.

The beginning of exchange of experience and best practices, as well as outlining synergies of existing initiatives and cooperation in **combatting cybercrime** will be marked by a project under PA 11 that already has received a Letter of Recommendation by the Steering Group. A Seminar on combating cybercrime is foreseen for October 2013 in Stuttgart.

Key objective II: Danube centres for cooperation and information

Consistent efforts are being made for enhancing cooperation through contact centres along the Danube River. The discussion that started during the First Round Table in April 2012, where an agreement was achieved to work for setting up a network of contact centres, continued at the Steering Group meetings of PA 11. During the III SG meeting (June 2012, Munich) three relevant project ideas received a Letter of Recommendation by the Steering Group. Then during the IV SG meeting (December 2012, Sofia) these projects were presented in detail and their future implementation was discussed.

In support of the efforts so far, an exchange of experience with the existing cooperation between the Black Sea littoral states was done through an expert visit of a Hungarian delegation to the Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre in Burgas. Furthermore, in long-term perspective cooperation between the two initiatives could be established in view of linking the Danube region and the Black Sea Region.

In view of achieving still greater support for the idea with a focus on the practical aspects as well as for discussing the future steps and challenges related to the development of this strategic project, the Second Round Table was held on 28-29 May 2013 in Sofia. The general understanding was outlined that the successful implementation of the project shall contribute to achieving real added value of all Danube countries’ efforts in the framework of the PA 11 “Security”.

The implementation of the project of Hungary on establishment of the Danube Law Enforcement Forum and coordination centre in Mohács is about to start with a kick-off conference in September 2013 as it was approved for financial support under the ISEC programme of the European Commission.

To provide for a more effective communication environment for exchange of information between the coordination centre and the national contact points, setting up of a police river information system is foreseen. The PORIS project is based on the Austrian positive experience. It aims to set-up compatible national interconnections of the police forces of all Danube countries to the River Information System. Austria is ready to start implementation as soon as funding is secured. The expected result is planned control on vessels along the Danube which could saves efforts, personnel and financing, as well as the duplicating of efforts.

Key objective III: System of border control and document inspection management

The kick-off event was a symposium on EU Border Management and Security of Travel Documents in the Danube Region (Sofia II) in Sofia from 18 to 20 April 2012. The country-specific calls for action that were identified act as a catalyst in order to drive forward changes based on EU experiences and EU standards. This in terms of three aspects:

* The applicable EU acquis as well as experience in the implementation;
* New developments, e.g. on “smart borders“ ;
* The issue “visa“ for the areas “travels“ and “pre-border checks“.

The field of traditional ID documents has also been covered.

A follow-up is planned for 2014 or 2015. The task now is to define the requirements which will ensure the ID security in the cyber area on a sustainable basis. For top security documents of the traditional kind, ID proof is obligatory. This must also be discussed for the “documents“ and the e-ID functions which are used online. This also implies in view of the millions of uses of Internet services and the related problems of theft or falsified identities.

In this respect the key topic will be expanded by ID security in the worldwide web. Solutions are being worked on worldwide and also within the EU. These must be interoperable in the EU in particular because of the European internal market, the border-control free space, all the more because of their comprehensive use across borders.

With this aim in mind, an e-ID symposium will be held in Budapest in December 2013 where requirements and experience will be exchanged on this topic. The countries of the Danube region are invited to exchange experiences and requirements regarding these issues. The symposium is up-to-date as the discussion has already been started or is in full swing in these countries.

Key objective IV: Strengthening the rule of law and combating corruption

In the field of **corruption counteraction,** the reported period was extremely intensive in related activities. The two on-going projects in PA 11 are at final stage of implementation – the *European Anti-Corruption Training*, led by Austria, Slovenia and Slovakia and the *Rule of Law – implementing comprehensive and integrated approach in preventing and counteracting corruption in the Danube Region* – a joint project of Bulgaria and Germany, implemented with financial support from Konrad Adenauer Foundation and national financing from Bulgaria. Complementing each other, the two projects provide for a comprehensive platform for focused discussions and exchange of experience thus contributing significantly to an enhanced cooperation in the fight against this phenomenon.

The implementation of the following relevant projects will be concluded in 2013:

Bulgaria and Germany are implementing the Rule-of-Law (RoL) project with the financial support of the RoL Programme for South East Europe of Konrad Adenauer Foundation as well as with Bulgarian national co-financing. From June 2012 to March 2013 the three planned workshops at expert level were held under the project. The area of countering corruption was highlighted in three perspectives such as prevention of conflict of interest, criminal and civil asset forfeiture and links between organised crime and corruption. As a result best practices in countering corruption were exchanged and models and systems used in this field were identified. The concluding event on this project – a high level conference for summarising the results will be held in 2013 in Bulgaria.

The closing of the project will be marked by another significant outcome - a study named “Fighting corruption in the Danube region - an overview of potential capabilities and limits of national anti-corruption measures” drafted by the Max Planck Institute. Based on the specific methods and approaches of the Danube Region countries in their fight against corruption the study will outline the best practices. The results of the workshops and the scientific expertise will outline the strategic directions for further development of the cooperation in prevention of and fight against corruption in the Danube region.

Since 2011 EACT project, led by Austria has been a key focus of cooperation. EACT pursues an integrated approach.Structured on the basis of „practise meets practise“, the project consists in total of a kick-off conference in 2011, 15 working group meetings between 2011 and 2013 and a final conference in fall 2013. During the project implementation best practices are identified and the exchange of experience at the highest level is promoted. The work is guided by three fundamental principles which are reflected in three working groups: prevention, investigation and international cooperation. During the whole time-frame and process of EACT, participants use the innovative and secure online database platform EPE (Europol Platform for Experts), which ensures that the secure exchange of information, documents, case studies and expertise as well as the preparation for an upcoming meeting is available for the participants on a consistent basis.

PA 11 is considering on joint customs (border controls) on the Danube. The aim is to bring about more coordinated controls accompanied by better security. Administrative work for ship owners could be reduced and so could travelling times of the vessels.

## Process

1. *Continuing cooperation and involving all stakeholders in the work under PA 11 of the EUSDR*

Keeping in mind that the implementation of the objectives requires the engagement of all the participating stakeholders in the Danube region, the three coordinating parties – Germany, Bavaria and Bulgaria – continue to invest efforts in the involvement of the relevant actors.

- Two Steering Group meetings within PA 11 were held since June 2012 (in December 2012 in Sofia and in June 2013 in Berlin). The activities during these meetings include analyses of the work done as of that date, feedback about the latest development of the on-going projects and some of the project ideas, outlining follow-up steps and holding bilateral talks.

*-* In March 2013, PAC Germany held meetings with the Romanian NCP and representatives of the Embassy of Romania in Berlin (ambassador and police attaché) to discuss and promote the further involvement of Romania in the cooperation under PA 11. An agreement for continued close cooperation was reached and Romania was requested to provide more detailed information on its project ideas.

*-* At the IV Steering Group meeting in Sofia PACs requested the European Union border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine - EUBAM to take initiative towards the representatives of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine for the PA 11 the EUSDR to become active member of the Steering Group. Information meetings were organised to update the involved authorities and to stress the importance of the activities of the Steering Group for the benefit of their countries. On the V Steering Group meeting in Berlin representatives of both countries were present and took part in the meeting. EUBAM is committed to continue its support to both countries to establish an effective network in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine related to the PA 11 and to participate in the development and implementation of projects and activities of the Steering Group.

1. *Political support to activities within PA 11*

- First Annual Forum of the EUSDR – Representatives of the Coordination Bureau of PA 11 participated in the First Annual Forum of the EUSDR, held on 27-28 November in Regensburg, Bavaria (Germany) where they presented the progress of activities within the Priority Area “Security”.

- Danube Security Conference - the Interior Ministers within the framework of the PA 11 of EUSDR convened at their first meeting on 6 - 7 May 2013 in Munich. The objective was to make a stock of the work done so far and initiate further actions and projects for the protection and security of the people in the Danube region and to pool existing resources. The focus of the conference was on cybercrime.

1. *Strategic Planning* – as a result of the joint efforts of participating states, a long-term vision was outlined for enhancing the cooperation between the law enforcement authorities along the Danube River through contact points for exchange of information. The process started with the outlining of the idea at expert level during the First Round Table, and then political support was expressed by the ministers at the Danube Security Conference in Munich. As a follow-up, expert consultations started during the Second Round Table with the purpose of achieving concrete results and broader participation of states in the project.
2. *Exploring possibilities for horizontal cooperation with other PAs*

The coordinators of PA 11 are working consistently for the active involvement of all countries participating in EUSDR in the activities of PA 11. Moreover exploring of possibilities for horizontal cooperation with other PAs was started.

- In 2012 Poland, showed interest in cooperation under PA 11. It was confirmed that the southern voyvodships hope to cooperate within the framework of the EUSDR. Contacts were established with the Polish colleagues and the possibilities will be explored for specific activities and projects where Poland could be involved.

- Possibilities for cooperation with the PA 14 of EUSBSR were explored. Final results have not been reached to date, but the PACs of PA 11 remain open for contacts and possible talks in future.

- During the V Steering Group of PA 11 meeting for the first time representatives of PA 1a of the EUSDR took part. They presented their work, as well as their willingness to discuss joint activities for coordinated customs control in view of saving time and resources as to the law enforcement authorities, as well as to the owners of vessels. A representative of the Federal Ministry of Finance of Germany also joined the meeting. She stated the opinion that there is potential for holding talks. An agreement was reached for the PA 1a to organise a meeting in Austria until the end of this year where to present concrete proposals for joint activities which to be discussed by the experts. The aim is to bring about more coordinated controls accompanied by better security. Administrative work for ship owners could be reduced and so could travel times of the vessels. Thus horizontal cooperation shall be achieved, as well as customs authorities shall be involved in cooperation under PA 11.

1. *Financing process -* On 17-18 September 2012 in Sofia a working seminar was organised on the funding opportunities where the participating countries exchanged experience in this context. In January 2013 representatives of the Coordination Bureau in Sofia took part in the First PAC meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria where the future Transnational Danube Programme was presented by the EC and discussed. Then in May 2013 PACs representatives joined the meeting in Ljubljana where the Task Force for elaboration of the Danube Programme and the PACs held discussions on that topic. The PACs of PA 11 presented the joint position that the thematic objectives of the transnational program need to reflect in full all priority areas of the Danube Strategy.
2. *Work of PACs –* During the First PAC meeting in May 2013 in Sofia the PACs reported on established good cooperation and coordination between the three coordinating parties in PA 11, as well as the efficient mechanism for organising the work of the Steering Group, which holds regular meetings. At this meeting they could see their work against the background of the general results and the results achieved by the other priority areas, to adopt good ideas and practices and to understand how other PACs manage with the challenges that are similar to these faced within PA 11.
3. *Generating projects* - Despite the difficulties in obtaining financing for projects within PA 11, 3 projects are on-going and 3 are planned to be started. Since June 2012 two projects have received Letters of Recommendation (Cooperation South-East Danube - August 2012 (Bavaria) and Seminar on Combating Cybercrime - June 2013 (Baden- Württemberg).
4. *Scientific expertise –* The work under the Rule-of-Law project is supported with significant scientific expertise. The Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg is currently preparing a study “Fighting corruption in the Danube region - an overview of potential capabilities and limits of national anti-corruption measures” (to be implemented in 2013).
5. *Involving civil society* - it should be noted that in PA 11 there is a specificity concerning the priority participation of governmental institutions in providing security. Nevertheless, where possible we are trying to involve also non-governmental structures as for example the seminar on human trafficking in October 2012 where NGOs were drawn in. Also civil society organisations participated in the work under the Rule-of-Law Project.
6. *Publicity measures*

- Constant efforts are made to stay **visible and to inform the society** on the achieved results. A good contact is established with the members of the Steering Group of PA 11 and constructive dialogue is maintained. With the purpose of staying visible the Coordination Bureau in the Ministry of Interior created and is updating a website of the Danube Strategy.

- During the Communication and Mobilisation for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region Conference held on 24-25 September 2012 in Vienna, PACs of PA 11 presented the **Communication Strategy** which the Steering Group for PA 11 adopted at its second meeting in December 2011 in Berlin. In the framework of the Communication Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for the EU two events were held in Sofia (Bulgaria) since June 2012. A Workshop on Financing Projects from European Funds within PA 11 was held in September 2012 and then in October 2012 a Regional Conference was held on the challenges in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

## Funding

As a specific challenge before PA 11 for the programme period 2007-2013, the lack of a particular financial instrument for projects funding should be noted. For example the Austrian PORIS project and the Romanian Comprehensive Assessment on the Danube project meet difficulties with regard to their funding. Despite, the difficulties in obtaining financing for projects within PA 11, so far 3 projects/ initiatives are being successfully implemented, and 3 more are about to begin.

During the last year the PA 11 stakeholders have been working on the challenge to generate project ideas and to identify possibilities for their funding through various EU programmes. On 17-18 September 2012 in Sofia a working seminar was organised on the funding opportunities for projects under PA 11. The participating countries exchanged their experience in this context.

With regard to PA 11 a dual approach is being pursued. On one hand, existing resources should be made use of. Strategies and projects in the policing area, for instance, should be implemented with existing financial and personnel resources and equipment, where possible. On the other hand PA 11 examines the extent to which existing funds and assistance programmes of the European Union could be used. The project "Cooperation Southeast Danube Region" was submitted to ISEC funding with the last general call for proposals in March 2013. In April 2013 the Hungarian project proposal “Setting up the structure of a Danube River Forum” has received a grant under the ISEC program.

Our efforts continue to involve civil society as much as possible, e.g. local NGOs and foundations. (Konrad – Adenauer - Foundation, Hanns - Seidel - Foundation). We have succeed to manage with the challenges regarding the financing of the Rule of Law project, but this is a short-term project and we would not have such a success on long-term projects without funding at EU level.

As regards the forthcoming financial period (2014 – 2020) the success of our activities depends to a great extent on the availability of financial resources. In this context we are encouraged by the establishment of a specific Transnational Cooperation Programme for the Danube Region. It is particularly important that the area of Security is incorporated in appropriate manner in one of the thematic objectives of the Future Danube Programme in view of its key significance for ensuring the prosperity and stability of the region. We hope that PA 11 shall be provided by better funding opportunities for implementation of projects in which our partners that are non-EU members could also participate. Moreover, we are convinced that the successful cooperation and achieving specific results in PA Security is a basis and necessary condition for efficient work also in the other areas.

During the V Steering Group meeting the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP) was presented to the Danube countries by the Bulgarian PAC as a possibility for receiving consultant services on elaborating projects. In consistence with the First Call timeframe, a schedule for submitting project proposals to apply for TAF was drafted and sent to all stakeholders in PA 11 in order to conduct the necessary selection procedure. The participating countries were encouraged to review their existing project ideas or to come forth new ones which could benefit from this facility.

# Progress by target

## Target: Efficient exchange of information between relevant law enforcement actors by 2015 with the aim of improving security and tackling serious and organised crime in the 14 countries

### Action: **Security offensive –Strengthening police cooperation.**

#### **The project “Cooperation Southeast Danube Region”** intends to integrate the successful South-East Task Force for Fighting Drug Trafficking (AG Südost) as a project under the EUSDR. The "AG Südost" developed a standardised search system to investigate methods of **drugs trafficking** by motor vehicle, which has been implemented in the investigation procedures of national police forces.

#### **The Regional Conference on the challenges in the fight agains**t **trafficking in human beings** and the joint efforts of the countries from the Danube Region, held in October 2012 was organised jointly by the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works and the Commission on Trafficking in Human Beings with the Council of Ministers. Eight countries from the Danube Region took part: Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Hungary and Croatia, as well as Bulgarian institutions working on that problem. The beginning of an exchange of ideas was set on the opportunities without duplicating efforts to develop projects with added value especially for the cooperation in the region.

#### **High Level Meeting:** Danube Security Conference (DSC)

At the invitation of the Bavarian State Minister of the Interior, Mr Joachim Herrmann, the Interior Ministers of the member states of the EUSDR convened for the Danube Security Conference in Munich on 6 - 7 May 2013. Eleven Danube countries were represented at the conference by their ministers, deputy-ministers and/or high-level professional manager Europol, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the German Bundestag and Hans Seidel Foundation also participated.

The objective of this first meeting of Interior Ministers within the framework of the Danube Region Strategy was to provide a forum for the members to take stock of the achievements made in PA 11, to define new challenges, to initiate further actions and projects for the protection and security of the people in the Danube region and to pool existing resources. The focus of the conference was on cybercrime.

In the last two years, the police chiefs of the Danube region countries have already made the fight against drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings and corruption a priority of their joint efforts. At their conference in Munich, the Ministers stressed that these key issues need to be constantly reviewed, adapted and further developed.

Moreover, the conference signalled the addition of cybercrime to the list of priorities of the Danube Region Strategy. The planned cybercrime symposium to be held in Stuttgart in October 2013 is considered as a first step towards establishing a network of Danube region agencies competent in fighting cybercrime.

The ministers regard cyber-security as a key aspect of their security policies which has to be dealt with comprehensively and thoroughly. Cyber-security does not only refer to the fight against cybercrime but also to the resilience to cyber-attacks and other cyber incidents, with the main focus of activities being on the protection of critical infrastructures.

After a guest speech by a Europol representative, the participants reported on the situation in their countries and their strategies for combating online fraud, cyber-attacks on companies and child pornography on the Internet. The presentations were followed by a discussion of possible joint approaches, projects and counter-strategies. The Ministers agreed on the need of an integrated and comprehensive approach in the fight against cybercrime in the Danube Region.

The consider cross-border cooperation and the effective exchange of information are considered to be essential for achieving the common objectives. For this reason, the long-term perspective to set up a network of contact points along the Danube and the further upgrade of the centre in Hungary (Mohács) as coordination centre is regarded as a strategic project with an added value in that field.

At the end of the conference the ministers adopted a final communique expressing their political will to increase cooperation between their countries in order to promote the security of the people in the Danube region.

## Target: Effective co-operation between relevant law enforcement actors by 2015

### Action: **Strengthening the law enforcement cooperation through contact centres.**

#### “Second Round Table on Setting up Coordination Centre(s) for Border Police Cooperation/ Networking of Existing Centres under Priority Area 11 “Security” of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region” – 28-29 May 2013, Sofia

The following countries and organisations were present at the meeting: Bulgaria, Germany, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and EUBAM.

Bulgaria presented the Black Sea Cooperation Forum and the Black Sea Border Cooperation and Information Centre in Burgas, as a useful example for permanent and secure platform for real-time exchange of information between the participating states, contributing to the efficient control on vessels, crews and passengers, as well as for guaranteeing the free movement of vessels.

Hungary presented the progress in the implementation of the Project Danube Law Enforcement Forum and the Coordination Centre in Mohács. The implementation of the third stage of the project – Setting-up the structure of the Danube Law Enforcement Forum will start with a kick-off conference on 17-18 September 2013. A Final Communique is to be adopted there by which the delegations formally declare their cooperation in the project. During the implementation of the project two technical workshops and three joint operations on the Danube River are to be organised. The final conference on the project will be held in April 2015.

Austria presented development of the PORIS project. It is necessary to clarify legal and technical conditions for PORIS to become a transnational system for exchange of information between the states along the Danube River. There are protocols signed (bilateral, international) which enable the countries to avoid the differences in legislation.

Conclusions of the meeting:

The focuses of cooperation were outlined – enhanced exchange of information with possibilities for preventing actions, the so called early-warning system, as well as coordinating joint activities and performing joint operations.

Important challenges were mapped out – finding out the appropriate form for organising our cooperation, possibilities for establishing contact points/ using existing ones, establishing environment for communication and video conference connection.

The way ahead:

Countries will decide on their interest and possibilities to join the project. The work in the thematic groups of the Forum needs to start as soon as possible, so that until the closing conference of the Danube Forum project in April 2015 a decision of all countries will be taken on the framework and content of future cooperation in the Danube Forum. There is a need to clarify how to unite the ideas on establishing the network of contact points so that each country can draw greatest possible added value for itself and in the same time achieve maximum synergy of the efforts of all countries.

#### Action: **To develop further well-functioning system of border control and document inspection management**

An e-ID symposium will be held in Budapest in December 2013 where requirements and experience will be exchanged on this topic. Three generic aspects will be in the focus:

* The point of view of real benefits (expected by citizens)
* The point of view of technical security of e-ID solutions
* The question of where the e-ID function will be placed (on a public ID document such as the ID card or on a separate one).

The countries of the Danube region are invited to exchange experiences and requirements regarding these issues.

## Target: Promoting the rule of law - Assistance for participating countries by deepening and promoting the idea of the rule of law and strengthening and developing further democratic structures. Promoting (legal) certainty for the people by fighting against corruption.

2.3.1. Action: **European Anti-corruption Training**

EACT aims to develop best practice models through the exchange of expertise of its participants, mostly with the help of case studies, to ensure efficient and flexible future international cooperation on operative levels in corruption cases. Three working groups were established (Investigation and Prosecution, Prevention and International Cooperation) in the project framework.

Besides the other regular participant states, the Slovakian National Anti- Corruption Agency NACA and the Slovenian Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (KPK) as well as the latter’s Ministry of the Interior’s National Investigation Bureau (NPU) are specific partners within the Austrian-led project. While the Austrian side is organizing 5 working group meetings on the topic on “Investigation and Prosecution”, Slovenia is responsible for the 5 sessions on “Prevention” and Slovakia is in charge of 5 further meetings on “International Cooperation”.

Austria organized since June 2012 three working group meetings in autumn of the same year, as well as in January and June 2013 dealing with specific topics such as “Security Management in the Field of Anti-Corruption: Recruitment of Personnel, Need-To-Know Principle, Access Control, Protection against System Failure”, “Cloud Computing”, “Money Laundering” or “Tax Fraud”. Slovakia again lately administrated three meetings on topics such as “Joint Investigation Teams” or the general evaluation of best practices. The Slovenian partners in the same period held four meetings on issues as “Accessing, using and linking of existing Official Database”, “Whistle-blower Protection”, education and Awareness Raising and Education Programmes for Children and Youth.

In October 2013 the final conference will be held in Slovenia. At this occasion the results of the discussions will be published as best practices in the form of a manual for further use and application.

2.3.2. Action: **Rule of law. Implementing a comprehensive and integrated approach in prevention and fight against corruption.**

As a follow-up of the kick-off conference on the project (21-22 May 2012, Pravetz, Bulgaria), three international workshops were conducted.

#### **Seminar on Prevention of conflict of interests (28-29 June 2012, Sofia)**

The following countries participated: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Hungary, Latvia, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovenia. The following institutions and commissions joined the seminar: Transparency International, Berlin; Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Bucharest; EUROPOL.

Different European models of prevention and ascertainment of conflict of interest were presented, evaluated and discussed during the seminar.

#### **Seminar on Criminal and Civil Assets Forfeiture (3-6 October, Fischbachau, Bavaria)**

During the seminar in Fischbachau, legislation and national case studies in the field were presented by the representatives of Bavaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova and Serbia. In-depth thematic discussions were held on the strong and weak aspects of the relevant policies, and recommendations for better institutional coordination enhanced international co-operation and more educational measures were made.

The following important conclusions were drawn:

- Optimisation and improving the practice with regard to forfeiture of assets acquired through criminal activity in the countries from the Danube Region. For this purpose the experience and the good practices of German model could be used;

- The necessity to achieve better coherence and inter-institutional coordination was established;

- Training and improving qualification of staff with competence in the field was said to be very important element;

- Transborder cooperation is also considered of significant importance. Acquaintance with the legal systems of the different countries, as well as with the implemented methods for forfeiture of assets acquired through criminal activities, provide a broader view to the experts.

#### **Seminar on Addressing Organized Crime – Corruption Nexus (27 Feb–1 March 2013, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria)**

Representatives of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia and federal provinces Bavaria and Baden – Württemberg took part in the seminar. The participating countries have been given the opportunity to present their legislation and to share some good examples from their own practice. On the ground of the presentations and discussions a clearer view and common understanding of the link between the two phenomena was achieved, while systems and practices for finding such possible links were identified. The added value of the seminar`s work was also the encouragement of common approaches in prevention and the fight against the link between organised crime and corruption.

Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg and the Centre for the Study of the Democracy participated actively in this event. The representatives of Max Plank institute presented the study “Fighting corruption in the Danube region - an overview of potential capabilities and limits of national anti-corruption measures”, which shall be presented together with a joint document during the closing conference of the project.

At the end of March 2013 the Max Planck Institute distributed a Questionnaire on Corruption Prevention and Control with the aim to provide for drafting a comprehensive and thorough analysis in the framework of the study.

The results of the workshops and the scientific expertise will outline the strategic directions for further development of the cooperation in prevention of and fight against corruption in the Danube region.