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**IV Progress Report**

 



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# executive summary

The IV Progress Report of the Implementation of the activities within PA 11 “Security” of the European Strategy for the Danube Region aims at presenting the work done and the progress achieved within PA 11 during the last year (June 2014 – July 2015) in correspondence with our targets and objectives. The period covered was very intense and rich in events and the main emphasis was put on the further development of PA 11 project portfolio.

The present Report rests on the structure proposed by the EC at the same time reflecting the specific characteristics of the work in Priority Area “Security”. It is structured in three main parts:

* After the introductory part, which gives a brief picture of the overall progress in PA 11, “Implementation” contains thematic sections that address our targets and objectives.
* “Governance” and
* “Funding” are the focus of the last part of the Report.

The advance in each of the four thematic targets is the backbone in the Report structure. Special emphasis is put on the lessons learned during the last year.

The Report contains two Annexes, which aim is to illustrate the headway in the project implementation.

During the reported period two Steering Group meetings took place (in November 2014 and in July 2015). The growing number of actively involved partners in the meetings is a clear sign that the stakeholders see the added value of the work.

One of the key actions within PA 11 in the past year is related to the active work in developing project proposals. Both instruments – TAF-DRP and START provided indispensable opportunities for development and implementation of projects within PA 11. The possibilities of the new Danube Transnational Program are to be further explored.

One of the “success stories” within PA 11 is the final stage of the implementation and the conclusion of PA 11 “flagship project” - “Setting up the Structure of a Danube River Forum” (DARIF). Hungary has taken up the challenge within the EUSDR Priority Area 11 to lay the foundations of the law enforcement cooperation along the Danube in the framework of the DARIF project. The implementation of the project was a proper answer to the security challenges along the Danube and it considerably improved the common work of those who take part in inland navigation and its control.

Taking into account the specificity of the security area, among our “success stories” we find the growing cooperation with the NGOs in the face of the two foundations – “Hanns Seidel Foundation” and “Konrad Adenauer Foundation”. In the spirit of partnership and shared values, the two foundations continued to support the development and the implementation of projects within PA 11.

Last but not least, among our “success stories” we see the growing horizontal cooperation within the EUSDR between PA 11 “Security” and PA 1a “To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways”. As a result of the joint work, a practical Manual on border controls along the Danube and its navigable tributaries is to be published in autumn 2015.

The challenges ahead of PA 11 are related to the further development of the impetus already gained. Due to the specificity of the security issues, the better communication of our activities and their visibility to the public remain issues of key importance.

Among our challenging plans we include also the continuous enlargement of the scope of our work. Taking into account the dynamic changes in the Danube region on one hand and the changes in the field of security, in 2013 PA 11 added the topic ***“cybersecurity”*** among its activities (the topic was approved in the Ministerial conference of EUSDR Ministers of the Interior in May 2013 in Munich). Two years later, in July 2015 on the initiative of the PACs and the approval of the Steering Group, PA 11 broadens the scope of its work with the topics ***of combatting the terrorism*** and ***migration***. Thus PA 11 portfolio will be fully corresponding to the latest EU agenda on security (which prioritizes terrorism, organized crime and cybercrime). In this context two Ministerial meetings (dedicated on the two new topics) are to be organized in November 2015 and January 2016.

# 2. Implementation

Driven by the ambition to continually improve our work and to place it in the framework of the European area of internal security, we are taking stock of our achievements and looking ahead to respond the challenges in the future.

The achievements of opening up Europe favour old and new crime phenomena that have an impact on all major cities and require a mutual adaptation of the existing security architectures. As an essential part of these transnational efforts the exchange of information among police organisations, which is necessary for an integral and sustainable combat against the criminal structures, needs to be intensified.

The latest European Agenda on Security (COM(2015) 185 final) prioritises **terrorism, organised crime** and **cybercrime** as interlinked areas with a strong cross-border dimension, where EU action can make a real difference. The topic of the organized crime and the cybercrime are already part of PA 11 work. With the insertion of the priority “combatting terrorism” in our revised targets and objectives, our activities are fully embedded in the EU agenda.

## 2.1 Policy development

Dealing with such an important, challenging and dynamic topic as “security”, in PA 11 we plan our future activities stepping up on the “lessons learned” and carefully analysing the possible future trends.

*At macro-regional level we emphasize on the following “lessons learned”:*

**The importance of the active involvement of PA 11 partners and stakeholders and the relevant EUSDR actors**

Guided by the principle to embed PA 11 activities within the general framework of the EUSDR, we continue with our efforts to address the most important issues that have macro-regional impact in the field of security (such as organized crime and cybercrime – crimes that “do not know boundaries”).

**The horizontal cooperation is giving added value to our work and allows us to create synergies at macro regional level**

The cooperation between PA 11 “Security” and PA 1a “To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways” has taken concrete shape. One of its tangible results is the development of a practical document – “Manual on border controls along the Danube and its navigable tributaries”, which will be published in autumn 2015.

**Better communication and visibility of our work**

Due to the specificity of the activities in the field of security, the visibility and the communication of the efforts and the concrete results achieved is not always an easy task. At the same time the importance to attract the potential donors for the project implementation requires certain “publicity”. We should continue with our efforts to communicate our work in an adequate, open and proactive manner.

***The way ahead***

**Continuously enriching the content of our work** – driven by the ambition to be flexible, open and creative in our work, the Priority Area Coordinators and the Steering Group agreed on including the topics of migration and combatting terrorism among PA 11 activities. Thus PA 11 activities will fully correspond to the EU Agenda on Security, which prioritizes “strong EU response to terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters”, “disrupting organized crime” and “fighting cybercrime”.

**Further development of the strategic idea for developing a network of contact centres along the Danube river –** following the successful implementation of the “flagship” project within PA 11 (DARIF), PA 11 will continue the purposeful efforts on the strategic long term idea of developing a network of contact centres for law enforcement cooperation along the Danube. Being identified as “strategic goal”, the establishment of such a network is seen as highly beneficial at macro-regional level as it will facilitate the joint reactions, the control checks and it will have positive impact on the the quality of the navigation in general.

**The significance of the continuous support for the project implementation within PA 11** – the project portfolio is a kind of a “business card” of each Priority Area as it gives the image of the concrete achievements and the tangible results. The support of the PACs and the Coordination Bureau for the project initiatives to be developed within PA 11 is of crucial importance.

## 2.2.2 Progress in the implementation of PA 11 targets

### 2.2.1 Target I - Security offensive - Enhancing police cooperation with the aim of improving security and tackling serious and organised crime in the EUSDR countries and strengthening the efforts against terrorism threats

The grounds of the activities under PA 11 Target I are to be found among the priorities agreed upon at the Danube Police Chief Conference in Munich in January 2012 (fight against trafficking in drugs, trafficking in human beings and corruption). These were confirmed at the Ministerial Danube Security Conference held in Munich on 6/7 May 2013 within the framework of the European Strategy for the Danube Region. The conference signalled the addition of cybercrime to the list of priority areas.

#### 2.2.1.1 Action: To enhance the cooperation in the area of combating illicit drug smuggling

Based on the long standing fruitful activity of the Working Group South East for Combating Drug Trafficking ("AG Südost") for mutual exchange of information and experience in the fight against drug trafficking and the coordinated joint actions on the South Eastern route, the Bavarian State Criminal Police Office (BLKA) took the initiative to develop a project - **“Cooperation Southeast – Danube Region”.**

Following the conclusions from the Danube Police Chief Conference to integrate AG Südost as a separate project into the EUSDR and to open it for non-members in the near futureto integrate all countries involved in the Strategy, the project aims at enhancing the exchange of information and strengthening cooperation between the law enforcement authorities to promote security and tackle organised crime; to achieve a high and common level of qualification for all organisational units involved.

The project was launched on 1 January 2014 and will be implemented under the leadership of the Bavarian State Criminal Police Office with the Austrian Federal Criminal Police Office and the Czech Republic (National Police) participating as partners. The target groups are experts and investigators from law enforcement and customs authorities charged with combating international drug crime.

The project is implemented via two mechanisms: two major conferences were organized during the project period (2014-2015) and attended by experts and investigators. The basis for joint operational measures will be established. In addition to that, a transnational exercises was carried out (controlled delivery).

The kick-off meeting was held in Munich on 15 and 16 January 2014 and was attended by the BLKA and its project partners, the Austrian Criminal Police Office and NPC Prague. A kick-off brochure was issued to the participants.

The 153rd conference of AG Südost was held in Austria from 30 September to 2 October 2014. The number of participants from countries who announced their attendance significantly increased. A brochure – published bilingual in English and German – summed up the progress and the outcomes of the conference. A major exercise (controlled delivery) took place in May 2015. The 11-day exercise was carried out in Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany. The debriefing with representatives of the countries that participated in the exercise was held in Hungary in June 2015.

***Expected outcomes:*** The development of a common strategy for combating drug trafficking in the Danube region is one of the most important outcomes to follow the project implementation. The further enhancement of the cooperation between the participating countries and the achievement of higher level of qualification for all organisational units involved are among the expected results. Sustainability will be obtained by generally optimising and intensifying cooperation, in particular the international operational cooperation (permanent exchange of information between investigators and regular transnational exercises. The macro-regional impact concerns the general level of security in the Danube region.

#### 2.2.1.2 Action: To intensify the cooperation in combating the Internet crimes (cybercrime)

Cyber-attacks today represent a significant risk for various actors (states, companies, individuals), having an impact on economic development of a region. Since the Internet has no boundaries and attacks might target a number of countries at the same time, it is necessary that teams tackling and coordinating fight against cyber-attacks cooperate on international level and build mutual trust with each other. Their members need to possess advanced knowledge of cyber security to be able to fight these attacks.

With the respect to the above mentioned, the Czech Republic (CZ.NIC Association) submitted a project ***“Cybersecurity in the Danube Region”*** during the the 1st call of START – Danube Region Project Fund. After endorsement of PA 11 Steering Group, the proposal was approved for financing under the START.

The major target groups are the national Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT), which are the teams that address and coordinate cyber incidents on national level and are responsible for education and awareness-raising activities. The project is based on the fact that so far there has been no activity linking the individual national CSIRT teams in the Danube Region, while there are many common issues including the need to safeguard critical infrastructure. Bearing this in mind, the project aims at strengthening CSIRT’s institutional capacities, mutual cooperation and exchange of best practices. To efficiently fight cyber-attacks the project partners will present and share various tools for incident management, prevention and elimination of these attacks. Educational workshops will be organized to focus on knowledge and skills needed for CSIRTs. An integral part of the trainings’ output will be the creation of recommendations on the individual types of cyber-attacks.

With the Czech Republic as a project leader and Austria, Croatia, Moldova, Serbia and Slovakia as partners, the project implementation started in April 2015 with the duration of 1 year.

***Expected outcomes***: The project implementation will contribute to strengthening and improving of information security, sharing (software) tools, information and trainings for security teams, including best-practice exchange. At macro-regional level, the outcomes are related to improving the security in the Danube states in the area of cybercrime through close cooperation among CSIRTs in countries of the Danube region in order to efficiently address cyber attacks and to prevent them. Considering that cyber crime knows no boundaries and some types of attacks are regionally targeted, the project will establish an information flow among the individual teams. The aim is that the information exchange works also after its completion on the basis of ongoing needs (attacks).

Thanks to participation of a Moldovan and a Serbian partner, the project will target also the area of transformation cooperation (promotion of democracy and human rights defence, on the establishment and reinforcement of democratic institutions, the rule of law, civil society and the principles of good governance - all that through education, spread of information, views and experience) The above mentioned activities together with the training will strengthen the expert capacities. Last but not least it is vital to mention the dissemination activities that aim not only to promote the project itself but also the Danube Strategy and the benefits of the cooperation among partners in this region.

#### 2.2.1.3 Action: To enhance the fight against illicit trafficking of firearms in the Danube Region

The illicit trafficking of firearms is one of key forms of crime, defined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. After the armed conflict in the Western Balkans (WB) in the 90ies, large quantities of weapons, particularly military arms, remained on stock and are ending in the black market. The region remains an important warehousing and distribution region for illicit arms, which are then smuggled by organized crime networks into the EU.

This topic is of key importance especially for the countries with the Schengen Border but also for the EU as a whole. The issue of illicit arms trafficking from the WB has been included in the Operational Action Plan under the EU Policy Cycle for organized and serious international crime, providing the framework for priorities in that area. The basis is Europol’s Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment, pointing out the most critical areas of crime in the EU. Another operational initiative at the EU level is the informal European Firearms Experts group (EFE), providing expertise in the field of illicit trafficking in firearms.

On these grounds, the Slovenian NGO – “Foundation - Centre for European Perspective” developed a project proposal “Illicit Trafficking of Firearms in the Danube Region”. The project was submitted during the 1st call of START – Danube Region Project Fund. After endorsement of PA 11 Steering Group, the proposal was approved for financing under the START.

The main objective of the project is to improve the fight against illicit trafficking of firearms in the Danube Region through strengthened cooperation between practitioners (law enforcement and judicial authorities) and researchers.

***Expected outcomes:*** International networking among practitioners from criminal law enforcement and judicial authorities as well as researchers and Europol should be improved. Project will enhance law enforcement activities and security in Danube area.

#### 2.2.1.4 Action: To strengthen and intensify the law enforcement and police cooperation in the field of property crime

Within the framework of the action “To strengthen and intensify the law enforcement and police cooperation in the field of property crime”, The Munich Police Headquarters designed a project called "**Danube Property Crime Project**" within the framework of EUSDR. Alongside several subjects already being dealt with by running international projects, the topic of domestic burglary committed by traveling offenders is also supposed to play a major role within the Danube Strategy. The phenomenon has already gained heavy presence, not only in the criminal statistics, but also among the citizens who have already been victims of burglaries or have lost their feeling of safety within their own four walls.

The project "Danube Property Crime Project" focuses on combating property crime, especially domestic burglary committed by mobile organized crime groups. The project aims at creating an expert network for combating property crime, the development of a joint situation report, the revelation of perpetrators’ travel routes and the distribution channels of stolen goods. Furthermore, it focuses also on the improvement of information exchange and, building on this, conducting joint investigations and destroying identified structures of mobile organized crime groups. At the same time, the project pursues the objective to develop countermeasures against any recognized deficiencies in the international cooperation of law enforcement agencies, to make these countermeasures available to the Strategy countries and to use them in other areas of crime.

The project is implemented with the financial support of Hanns Seidel Foundation. Project partners are Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Serbia and Europol. The first out of three planned expert meetings will be held in November 2015 in Serbia, later on in Bulgaria and Romania. Finally, a joint report with a project review, the outcomes, a situation report and further steps will be published.

***Expected outcomes:*** The development ofa common situation report on the perpetrators' travel routes and the distribution channels for stolen goods by analysing ongoing investigations and closed cases in this crime field, establishment of international network of experts and initiating the exchange of information within this network on a regular basis are among the expected results of the project implementation. The most tangible aspects of the macro-regional impact of the project are seen in the improvement of the “everyday security” of the citizens in the Danube region.

### 2.2.2 Target II - Developing strategic long-term cooperation between law enforcement actors along the Danube River by strengthening networks for cooperation by 2020

Since the launch of the Strategy, PA 11 stands for the implementation of a strategic long-term project idea for enhancing the cooperation between the law enforcement authorities along the Danube River through a network of contact points for exchange of information. The development of this concept has been counting also on the highest political support, outlined by the Ministers during the Danube Security Conference (May 2013).

***2.2.2.1 Action: To establish a network of contact and coordination centres along the Danube River***

The reported period marked a very important stage in the realisation of this idea – the conclusion of the flagship project within PA 11 - *“Setting up the Structure of a Danube River Forum”* (DARIF).

The project *“Setting up the Structure of a Danube River Forum”* (DARIF) initiated by the Ministry of Interior of Hungary and implemented between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2015, also became the flagship project within the EUSDR Priority Area 11 with unanimous support. The DARIF is strongly related to the goals of the Priority Area 11 *“To work together to tackle security and organised crime”*. The project developed by Hungary, aimed at enhancing the transnational law enforcement cooperation along the Danube in order to tackle the increasing threats of illegal activities and accidents on the Danube waterway.

The main objectives of the DARIF were the common strengthening of the security of the waterway on the Danube, the effective and harmonised action against criminal activities and organized crime related to the waterway and the establishment of a cross border professional law enforcement cooperation in order to make the Danube a modern and secure traffic corridor with regard to the transport of goods and passenger transport.

In the second year of the project implementation, the following activities took place:

***2nd Joint Operation (21-25 July 2014)*** – the operation was coordinated by the Temporary Coordination Centre in the Border Port of Mohács with the involvement of liaison officers from the ten member states of DARIF as well as Frontex, Europol, Interpol and EUBAM. The team was responsible for maintaining the constant flow of information, the implementation of their national operational plans, the daily contact between the Temporary Coordination Centre and their national contact points and also the mutual assistance among them. The national operational plans were based on the needs, demands, risk analyses, available resources and chosen objectives of each country. The representatives of Europol and Interpol provided the operation with access to international databases.

***Outcomes:***

Controls covered the whole length of the Danube and its banks, as well as the Rhine–Main–Danube Canal. Authorities focused mostly on illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of cigarettes, tobacco products and drugs, fish poaching, document forgery, illegal employment and apprehension of wanted persons. It also turned out that the smooth organization of operations requires at least one assistant in Mohács, who is responsible for the organizational related to the liaison officers and their activities.

***3rd Joint Operation (10-14 November 2014)*** – the operation was also implemented with the involvement of liaison officers from the ten member states of DARIF as well as Frontex, Europol, Interpol, Aquapol and EUBAM.

***Outcomes:***

Controls covered the whole length of the Danube and its banks, as well as the Rhine–Main–Danube Canal. Authorities focused mostly on illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, smuggling of cigarettes, tobacco products and drugs, fish poaching, document forgery, illegal employment and apprehension of wanted persons. The team at Mohács was responsible first of all for maintaining the constant flow of information, for the implementation of their national operational plans and for the daily contact between the Temporary Coordination Centre and their national contact points. The representatives of Europol and Interpol provided the operation with constant access to international databases.

During the ***2nd Technical Workshop (27-28 January 2015)*** more than 60 experts from the member states of the project discussed and evaluated the draft publication of the project that contains the results and future recommendations of the DARIF. Participants were presented the activities of the Danube Commission and products of security companies. The work continued in the five parallel thematic workshops during which participants discussed the details and finalize the texts that have been incorporated into the DARIF publication. (important topic of the 2nd TW was also the De-Briefing of the JOPs.)

***Outcomes:*** The experts unanimously regarded the workshops as highly successful, constructive and fruitful discussions about the recommendations for future law enforcement cooperation along the Danube which could be incorporated into the project publication based on the lessons-learned from the joint operations.

The ***Final Conference of the project*** (12-13 May 2015) was attended by high-level delegations from the ten member states of the project and representatives of international organizations and law enforcement agencies and NGOs.

***Outcomes:*** The almost 80 participants were presented the results of the expert groups and at the closing session unanimously adopted the Joint Recommendations, in which the partners expressed their intention to continue the cooperation.

*In conclusion, following the initiative taken by Hungary to lay the foundations of the law enforcement cooperation along the Danube in the framework of the DARIF project, the exchange and strengthening the professional knowledge and experiences of all the ten member states of the project were crucial. One of the major outcomes of the project refers to the extended cooperation in several fields - border management, customs management, criminal risk analysis, disaster management and water policing.*

*The cooperation emerged during the implementation of the project was a proper answer to the security challenges placed by the Danube and it considerably improved the common work of those who take part in inland navigation and its control.* *The knowledge and preparedness of the participants of DARIF and their work done in the project can guarantee a firm background for the continuation of the cooperation within the Danube River Forum at political as well as expert level and for the establishment of a Permanent Coordination Centre to facilitate the flow of information.*

***The idea to set up a network of contact points along the Danube and to further upgrade the centre in Mohács (Hungary) is perceived as a strategic and long-term objective in PA 11. The high political support for its implementation, the expected added value of the enhanced cross-border cooperation and the improved exchange of information are the key elements for the further work in this direction.***

#### 2.2.2.2 Action: To establish standardised operational procedures for joint activities in case of transboundary technical-technological water traffic accidents and to strengthen the naval transport protection

The Danube Region is one interrelated and interdependent ecosystem, incorporating a rich and unique flora and fauna. It is diverse, including not only the immediate river Danube, its tributaries, lowlands and the remarkable delta, but also the major part of the Carpathian Mountains, the Balkans and part of the Alps. The pollution from contaminated sites or waste disposal in this region has major impact on water quality, flora and fauna.

One of the risks occurring lately, which could permanently damage the Danube River eco-system is the transport of hazardous products. Romania performs regularly transport of nuclear fuel spent resulting from atomic power plant at Kozloduy - Bulgaria in Ukraine and effective protection is provided by the Romanian Gendarmerie forces in cooperation with the National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control. In this context on the initiative of the General Inspectorate of Romanian Gendarmerie, a project proposal ***“Strengthening the naval transport protection capacities of Romanian Gendarmerie”*** was developed. The purpose of the project proposal is to enhance the operational protection capacity for the naval transport of hazardous products on the Danube River in order to prevent radiological accidents, accidental marine pollution or terrorist attacks.

***Expected outcomes of the project:*** At macro-regional level the project proposal has as main purpose to protect population in areas located along the navigable channel through which hazardous, nuclear and radioactive materials are transported, eliminate the risk of security incidents over transports, incidents that could produce an increase of pollution or radioactivity and thus, the risk of contamination of the population and environment, especially the Danube Delta.

***Next steps: Suitable financial source for the project implementation are to be identified.***

#### 2.2.2.3 Action: To continue demining in the mine-suspected areas of the Danube region

On the initiative of the Czech National Police (in partnership with the Slovak Republic and Hungary), a project proposal on the cooperation in the area of explosive systems and discarded ammunition has been submitted to the 2nd call of TAF-DRP. Following the endorsement of PA 11 Steering Group, the project idea was approved for financing (via consultancy services).

The project proposal aims at facing issues which have a strong international dimension, namely the use and disposal of improvised explosive systems. The use of improvised explosive systems when committing a crime is a permanent security threat, particularly in Central Europe. A similar serious jeopardy on health, life and property is presented by aerial bombs with the chemical fuses which still date from World War II and can still be found in Central Europe and pose a risk to civilian population.

There has not been sufficient cooperation in this field and only few international seminars have taken place so far. That is what the project intends to change. Proposed project aims to increase and exchange knowledge and expertise in the area of improvised explosive systems and unexploded devices in view of increasing safety. In order to do so, there is a plan to organize workshops on various topics (new tactical procedures for disposing improvised explosive devices, new tactical procedures and technical means when disposing bombs with chemical fuses etc.) and also practical training sessions between Explosive Ordnance of Disposal (EOD) Departments of participating countries. Practical session will help gaining new experience in solving module situation based on real cases as well as verifying used tactical and technical means of engaged units.

Following the consultancy services, the project was divided into 2 parts – first, aimed at improvised explosive systems; second, aimed at discarded ammunition. Both areas will be implemented independently in the duration of 4 years. Three financial programmes were identified as suitable for the project: 1) Danube Transnational Programme 2) Union Civil Protection Mechanism and 3) Internal Security Fund.

***Next steps: Suitable financial source for the project implementation are to be identified.***

### 2.2.3 Target III - Improving the systems of border control, document inspection management and cooperation on consular related issues in the Danube region

The topics of border control, document inspection management and consular issues concern a specific part of the security policy. Finding the balance between ensuring a high level of border security and maintaining the travel facilities is an issue of key importance for the whole macro-region. By involving the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministries of the Interior in the 14 EUSDR member-states, the efforts are focused on elaborating joint answers to the challenges faced by the countries.

Building up on the outcomes of the previous event within this target (Symposium on EU border management and security of travel documents in the Danube Region – April 2012, Sofia) on 8-10 June 2015 the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a Round Table on “Possibilities for cooperation on consular and visa issues in the Danube Region”. Representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of 12 countries from the Danube region (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Bulgaria) had the opportunity to share information on the main national and supranational challenges in the area of consular protection and visa policy.

Within the *section “Consular support and assistance”* the participants shared information about their experience on international cooperation and the existing bilateral agreements on consular protection (on the example set by similar agreements of Austria with Slovenia, the Czech Republic and the Slovak republic; of Bulgaria with Montenegro, etc.). The representative of the European Commission paid special attention to the obligation of the EU Member States to incorporate the Council Directive on the coordination and cooperation measures to facilitate consular protection for unrepresented citizens of the Union in third countries into their national legislation. Further, he pointed at the exchange of information and data during major crisis events among the EU Member States through the Consular OnLine (CoOL) platform. Special attention was attached also to the national expertise on registering and exchange of personal data involving several countries in times of major crises.

In most contributions the idea for horizontal cooperation and operational contacts in cases of major crisis events and for preliminary exchange of information and best practices between the responsible authorities of the countries in the Danube region was encouraged.

The thematic session *“Visa policies and visa regime”* the participants shared information about the visa policies and visa regime of the countries in the region. According to the draft topics the Schengen Member States briefed on the different challenges and impacts of the introduction of biometrics and outsourcing in the visa proceeding. In a key-note speech the representative of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights focused on the obligations of the EU Member States according to the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights, the Visa Code and the VIS Regulation to protect the dignity of the visa applicants. Safe for the coordination between the Schengen Member States and one agreement between Bulgaria and Montenegro for representation, the countries in the region do not cooperate, as a rule, on visa issues. Among others this situation arises from the lack of platforms and possibilities for exchange of information and best practices and also from lack of working contacts between the national experts. Most delegations registered their interest in the exchange of information and best practices about the organizational, technological and technical aspects of the introduction of biometrics in visa and border information systems.

***Outcomes and recommendations:*** *The major conclusion drawn by the Round Table was that the lack of information in cases of major disasters or other common challenges could play a substantial negative impact on the citizens of the countries in the Danube region. Following the discussions, the Austrian and Slovenian delegations suggested a regional focal point for urgent information exchange in cases of major disasters and other common challenges between the EU Member States and the non EU countries from the Danube region to be established.*

*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria expressed its readiness to assume the role of such a focal point and to establish a related web based platform similar to CoOL in case the other participating countries from the Danube region may so agree. The Bulgarian side appeal to the Members of the Steering Group of Priority Area 11 to discuss the establishment of a regional focal point for urgent information exchange in cases of major disasters following the initiative of the Round Table. Bulgaria invites the Members of the Steering Group to hold a further discussion on the interest in the exchange of information and best practices about the introduction of biometrics in visa and border information systems.*

*In conclusion, strengthening and deepening of the cooperation on visa and consular issues will be part of the activities for continuation of the project.*

### 2.2.4 Target IV - Promoting the rule of law and the fight against corruption

#### 2.2.4.1. Action: To enhance the joint efforts in combating corruption and organised crime

Organized crime is a major global and regional security risk that has direct impact in the security and the prosperity at macro-regional level.

Guided by the idea to adress one of the most important problems in the Danube region, Romania initiated a project “Comprehensive and integrated approach in prevention and fight against organized crime”. Its implementation started in March 2015 and will continue till the end of November 2015. Project partners are Baden-Württemberg Land, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Moldova.

The project aims at enhancing cross-border cooperation between law enforcement agencies in prevention and fight against organized crime in countries from the Danube Region through elaborating and implementing comprehensive policies at national level in compliance with the EU policy in the field of the fight against organized crime. The specific thematic focus areas, in which internationally and regionally agreed development goals should be achieved and addressed to, include: smuggling, intra-communitarian trading, trafficking of migrants, trafficking in persons, cybercrime, child pornography, drug trafficking.

The target group consists in police officers specialized in fighting against organized crime, policy makers and senior advisers from the countries from the Danube Region.

Since the launch of the project a Steering Group conference and three workshops took part in Romania. The main topics of the workshops were: Smuggling and Intra-Communitarian Trading (May 2015), Cybercrime and Child Pornography (June 2015) and Trafficking of Migrants, Trafficking in Persons and Drug Trafficking (July 2015). The final conference is foreseen for November 2015.

The project is implemented with the financial support of Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The project was approved by the Steering Group and is labelled as “PA 11 project”.

***Expected outcomes:*** *The two international conferences are expected to increase the awareness of the phenomenon “organized crime” among specialists from the Danube Region partner countries. The workshops will improve the coherence among law enforcement agencies for countering organized crime. Within the framework of the project implementation 80 police officers will be trained in combating organized crime. The comprehensive Manual will include best practices, different approaches of the phenomenon in the respect of the judicial system present in the partner countries, possible development of innovative tools of cooperation.*

*The added value of the project at macro-regional level is seen in the enhanced cooperation between the project partners through exchange of information.*

#### 2.2.4.2. Action: To support the Danube states in the administrative cooperation and improvement of qualifications of law enforcement

*Project proposal* ***“Preventing corruption in cooperation with Danube region states****”*

Combating corruption is amongst the major challenges within the area of security. Since the launch of the Strategy in 2011 PA 11 has dedicated particular efforts on this problem as it is seen as highly sensitive topic that has negative impact both at national and macro-regional level.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova (MIA), via of Border Police Department (BPD) took the initiative to develop a project proposal – **“*Preventing corruption in cooperation with Danube region states*”.**

Following the endorsement of the Steering Group, the proposal was approved for financing during the 2nd call of the TAF-DRP instrument. The general objective of the project is to promote the cooperation in the anti-corruption field, developing the instruments for prevention and counteraction of corruption in the Danube region countries.

The project idea aims to realize the following activities in order to prevent corruption in the Republic of Moldova considering neighbouring and further Danube Region countries - Exchange and analysis of good practices based on research and study visits; Development of anti-corruption strategies including targeted anti-corruption guides; Staff training sessions in close cooperation with international and Danube area NGOs specializing in this field.

The project is based on a strong and intensive cooperation between the Southern Danube and Central European area as well as international organisations and will include staff training sessions and study visits in order to transfer good practices and to develop the human capacities. The dissemination activities will include campaigns and conferences including high-level think tanks and the civil society. In the framework of pilot actions an in-depth need assessment and research on best practices will lead to the design of a specific anti-corruption guide for each involved public authority.

The consultancy aimed to further develop the project idea, together with the partners, to identify the ideal funding source, to provide elements for a project proposal. All these activities have been fulfilled during the consultancy.

***Next steps:*** *The project leader will apply for funding under the Danube Transnational Programme 2014-2020 to guarantee the real project implementation.*

# governance

From the very first beginning PA 11 has relied on a strong political support. The clear political engagement in our activities and the enhanced involvement of the Danube countries will continue to be solid pillars in our work in the years to come.

During the past year two Steering Group (SG) meetings were organized. The *8th SG meeting* took place in November 2014 in Sofia. 9 EUSDR countries participated in the meeting (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and the Slovak Republic), as well as the European Commission, EUROPOL, Regional Cooperation Council, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Foundation; Representatives from PA 1a (EUSDR), represented by ViaDonau and PA “Crime” (EUSBSR). Under the Bulgarian Chairmanship, the 8th meeting of the PA 11 Steering Group was aimed to focus at progress in the project implementation. Special emphasis was put on the horizontal cooperation.

Last year marked a period of accumulated interest in the development of projects within PA 11. The initiative of countries that sent project proposals for the first time is seen as a promising sign (ex. Slovenia, Serbia). Strengthening the cooperation with the two foundations – Hanns Seidel and Konrad Adenauer was outlined. Linking the different PAs within the Danube Strategy is a key challenge at macro-regional level.

The *9th SG meeting* took place in July 2015 in the Federal Ministry of the Interior in Berlin, Germany. The Steering Group members of the 10 EUSDR countries were present (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine), as well as the European Commission, EUROPOL, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS), Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), South-East Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), PA 1a (EUSDR), EuroVienna, Joint Secretariat of Danube Transnational Programme (JS of DTP). Under the Chairmanship of the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the IX meeting of the PA 11 Steering Group focused on the current progress of the ongoing projects and activities within the framework of PA 11. Special emphasize was given on the available opportunities for funding projects in PA 11. The Priority Area Coordinators outlined the main achievements and tendencies of PA 11 work in the last eight months*.*

Both Steering Group meetings helped the participants to exchange information on the current progress of the on-going projects within PA 11 and elucidated the way ahead for the planned ones. Steering Group meetings should continue to have strongly practical focus and emphasize on concrete achievements and results.

Among the *lessons learned* in the past year we place:

***The significance of active involvement of PA 11 stakeholders***

The EUSDR countries and the relevant stakeholders could be permanently involved if they see the possibility for concrete cooperation and feasible results. In the beginning one of the biggest challenges for our priority area was the lack of particular instrument for financing projects. We passed a long way trying to keep the interest and not to lose motivation. In the last year one of the hallmarks in PA 11 agenda is the progress in the project implementation, the presentation of new ideas and initiatives. In the Register of the project proposals kept by our Coordination Bureau there are 48 proposals included.

***The importance of the “everyday work”***

Undoubtedly, the highest political commitment is very important but the bottom-up approach is the essence of our work. The Coordination Bureau established in the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior to support the PACs, to facilitate the Steering Group and to structure the everyday work, will continue to be active, energetic and dedicated structure in the achievement of PA 11 targets.

*Publicity measures (website, stakeholder seminars, publications) etc.*

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 is updating regularly the website of PA 11. The participation in different events (such as the III EUSDR Annual Forum) allows PA 11 work to be communicated in terms of projects implementation. These events allow to see the work of the priority area against the background of other PA work and to exchange good practices and information on faced challenges.

*Outline of the future. Next steps and challenges.*

PA 11 has always been looking for the added value of the work, to increase the effectiveness and to achieve tangible results. We will continue our efforts for identifying common grounds and thematic overlappingof joint initiatives with different partners.

Along with the enlargement of the thematic scope (by including the topics of migration and combatting terrorism), one of our next challenges is to further explore and develop the cooperation with the customs authorities. The common initiatives could be related to joint development of concrete project ideas, organizing stakeholder events and exchange of best practices. The added value of the cross sectoral cooperation will result in better visibility and impact of our activities. We are convinced that the common voice leads to higher acceptance and better results.

The practical-oriented approach in the four thematic areas of cooperation (reflecting the PA 11 targets) will remain a fundamental priority within PA 11.

# funding

Despite the difficulties in obtaining financing for projects within PA 11, the Steering Group members continue the process of generating project ideas and identifying possibilities for their funding through various EU programmes. The successful implementation of the DARIF project and the ingoing project "Cooperation Southeast Danube Region" obtained financing through the already expired ISEC program.

As it was pointed out among our “success stories” the cooperation with the two foundations – Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Hanns Seidel Foundation – is growing. Our efforts to involve the civil society in PA 11 work and to ensure their support for our activities will continue.

In the framework of the Second Call of the Technical Assistance Facility for Danube Region Projects (TAF-DRP) after conducting the necessary internal selection procedure, PA 11 submitted three project proposals. All of them were approved to receive support which gives a new impetus in the efforts for finding financing opportunities for the projects under PA 11.

Regarding the first call of the START instrument, two project proposals were approved for financing (the current state of play of the project implementation is described in the section “Implementation”).

The ongoing assessment of the project proposals submitted within the second call of START is giving promising results in view of enriching PA 11 project portfolio. The proposals approved by the PACs and the Steering Group are to be sent to the Implementation body (EuroVienna) in September.

The formal endorsement of the Danube Transnational Cooperation Programme by the European Commission will provide further opportunities for project initiatives.

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

*This Annex should summarise the progress in the roadmap, in comparison with the last reporting period:*

* *Milestones (including deadlines)*
* *Outputs*
* *List of projects associated with the actions included in the roadmap:[Please specify only the name of the project as a full description will be included in annex 2.]*

**Target I - Security offensive - Enhancing police cooperation with the aim of improving security and tackling serious and organised crime in the EUSDR countries and strengthening the efforts against terrorism threats**

1. Action: To foster the cooperation in the field of countering smuggling and trafficking in human beings

***Milestones:***

***Outputs:***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To enhance the cooperation in the area of combating illicit drug smuggling

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To intensify the cooperation in combating the Internet crimes (cybercrime)

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To enhance the fight against illicit trafficking of firearms in the Danube Region

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To strengthen and intensify the law enforcement and police cooperation in the field of property crime

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To intensify the common approach in the fight against terrorism

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

**Target II - Developing strategic long-term cooperation between law enforcement actors along the Danube river by strengthening networks for cooperation by 2020**

1. Action: To establish a network of contact and coordination centres along the Danube River

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To strengthen the cooperation with key stakeholders – Europol, Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and others

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To work towards the involvement of the customs authorities in the cooperation within PA 11

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To establish standardised operational procedures for joint activities in case of transboundary technical-technological water traffic accidents and to strengthen the naval transport protection

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To continue demining in the mine-suspected areas of the Danube region

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

**Target III - Improving the systems of border control, document inspection management and cooperation on consular related issues in the Danube region**

1. Action: To further develop well-functioning border-management systems

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To enhance the cooperation on Consular and Visa Issues in The Danube Region

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To foster the cooperation and exchange of best practices on document inspection management

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To address the topic of better managing migration issues in the Danube Region

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

**Target IV - Promoting the rule of law and the fight against corruption.**

1. Action: To enhance the joint efforts in combating corruption and organised crime

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

1. Action: To support the Danube states in the administrative cooperation and improvement of qualifications of law enforcement

***Milestones***

***Outputs***

***Projects associated with the action:***

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

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the project** | **Cooperation South-East Danube Region** |
| **Related action** | Security offensive –Strengthening police cooperation |
| **Countries involved** | 14 EUSDR states |
| **Funding** | EUR 293.108,36  Application was submitted to ISEC for funding with the last general call for proposals in March 2013. |
| **State of implementation** | The contract with the European Commission was closed on 21 November 2013. The project started on 1 January 2014. The kick-off meeting was held in Munich on 15 and 16 January 2014. |
| **Description** | The conclusion was drawn at the Danube Police Chief Conference to integrate the Cooperation Southeast Danube Region for Fighting Drug Trafficking (AG Südost) as a separate project into the EUSDR and open it for non- members in the near futureso as to integrate all countries involved in the Strategy.  The project will be implemented under the leadership of the BLKA with the Austrian Federal Criminal Police Office and the Czech Republic (NPC Prague) participating as partners.  The project aims at strengthening international police cooperation in combating illicit drug trafficking through continued harmonisation with EU standards and practices in the participating countries.  The project will promote the exchange of information and strengthen cooperation between the law enforcement authorities to promote security and tackle organised crime.  Sustainability will be obtained by generally optimising and intensifying cooperation, in particular the international operational cooperation (permanent exchange of information between investigators and regular transnational exercises.  The goal of the project is to develop a common strategy for combating drug trafficking in the Danube region and at the same time enhance the cooperation between the participating countries.  Additionally, the project aims at achieving a high and common level of qualification for all organisational units involved. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | PACs consider this project proposal as a good one and it is in line with EUSDR criteria. The project corresponds to one of the main targets of PA 11 “Effective co-operation between relevant law enforcement actors by 2015“. |
| **Next steps** | The project will be implemented via two mechanisms:  During the project period, it is planned to organise two major conferences, which will be attended by experts and investigators. In addition to that, it is intended to carry out a transnational exercise (controlled deliveries).  The target groups are experts and investigators from law enforcement and customs authorities charged with combating international drug crime.   * Conference of the Working Group South East (AG Südost) in Austria (30 September - 2 October 2014) * Controlled Delivery Exercise (May 2015) * Debriefing in Hungary (June 2015) * Conference of the Working Group South East (AG Südost) in the Czech Republic |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Symposium on Combating Cybercrime** |
| **Related action** | Security offensive –Strengthening police cooperation |
| **Countries involved** | 14 EUSDR states |
| **Funding** | Budget approx. EUR 50.000 |
| **State of implementation** | Finalised |
| **Description** | Cybercrime is a typical transnational phenomenon which requires effective cross-border strategies and cooperation as hardly as any other. Hence, the quality and intensity of cooperation in this field has to be improved in the entire Danube Region.  The objective of the project was to enhance and intensify cross-border cooperation of the law enforcement agencies in the Danube region in terms of combating cybercrime or maintaining cyber-security respectively. To this end the event focused on the exchange of best practices and new approaches in combating this type of crime.  Experts from nine countries participating in the EUSDR (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Romania and the Republic of Moldova) as well as from France and Switzerland congregated on 17 October 2013 at the international Symposium „Cybercrime - Building Alliances for a Safer Digital World“ in Stuttgart (Germany). Overall about 140 participants discussed strategies for combating cybercrime; the challenges were highlighted and approaches to overcome them presented.  The symposium proved impressively that cybercrime is one of the key challenges for all law enforcement agencies already right now but even more in future as more and more crimes will shift from the real world into the cyberspace. This event is considered as a first step towards establishing a network of Danube region agencies competent in fighting cybercrime. The requirements of effective strategies to combat cybercrime, for enhanced international police cooperation and alliances with other stakeholders underline that further improvements could be tackled by a tailor-made international project which could perhaps be financed out of the new EU Internal Security Fund. Further details on this issue shall be discussed in due time within the Steering Group of PA 11. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | PACs consider this project proposal as important as the fight against the cybercrime should be promoted in the Danube region.  The project corresponds to the action “To intensify the prosecution of Internet crime (cybercrime)” within the target “Effective cooperation between relevant law enforcement actors by 2015” and it contributed to the strengthening of the police cooperation in the Danube region. |
| **Next steps** | Continuing cooperation in the field of combating cybercrime in a new project of PA 11 in view of future establishment of networks of relevant experts in the Danube region |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Setting up Coordination Centre(s) for Border Police Cooperation/ Networking of Existing Centres** |
| **Action related** | Strengthening the law enforcement cooperation through contact centres |
| **Countries involved** | Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, EUBAM |
| **Funding** | Technical Assistance |
| **Stage of implementation** | On-going |
| **Description** | The project idea was defined as agreed to be a strategic dimension of the work at the ministerial Danube Security Conference on 6th/7th May 2013 in Munich. It will be filled with content and will succeed to establish permanent and sustainable police cooperation.  The outlined focuses of cooperation – 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 mapped out – finding out the appropriate form for organising the cooperation, possibilities for establishing contact points/ using existing ones, establishing environment for communication and video conference connection.  The representatives of the participating countries expressed positive attitude for involvement of their countries in the projects during the Second Round Table held in May 2013 in Sofia – some more concretely, other more generally supported the establishment of the network of contact centres and the PORIS system.  PACs asked the participants as an impetus of the meeting to consult their countries on the necessary practical steps for involvement of the respective country in the project. Also countries were asked to think strategic on future development of related projects in view of finding the appropriate form for cooperation, creating framework and filling it with content. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | The PACs support the project idea and take active part in enabling discussions and decisions making on further implementation. |
| **Next steps** | Countries will decide on the future development of the project. It is important to work on our cooperation and at the end to have the support and to implement the project with the participation of largest possible number of countries from the Danube Region. It is only in that way that a real added value in our Priority Area could be achieved and this is our task. |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Setting up the Structure of a Danube River Forum (DARIF)** |
| **Action related** | Strengthening the law enforcement cooperation through contact centres |
| **Countries involved** | Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldavia, Ukraine |
| **Funding** | IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme  External Borders Fund  EC ISEC Programme |
| **Stage of implementation** | The infrastructural conditions have already been established in the Mohács Border Crossing Port (offices, data communication lines etc.).  The first phase of the Danube Law Enforcement Coordination Centre project has been successfully completed, the Hungarian-Croatian Common Contact Point Office was officially opened at the port in Mohács on 6th December 2012 and it started to operate from 1 January 2013.  The political will needed for the second phase was established by the adoption of the Action Plan signed by the Ministers of Interior of Serbia and Hungary on 24th January 2012. Practical implementation is not started so far.  The third phase - developing the system of the Danube River Forum (DARIF) - is in process with the support of the European Commission. Within the framework of the ISEC programme financial support was granted.  The implementation of the project started with a high-level Kick-off Conference 17-19 September 2013. During the conference the specific plans for the project implementation were introduced. The Kick-off Conference was concluded by the adoption of a Joint Declaration in which the delegations formally confirmed their participation in the project while emphasizing the importance of cross-border cooperation and effective information exchange.  Two workshops were held in December 2013 and in May 2014 and a joint operation in April 2014. During the workshops the implementation of the project and the organisation of the joint operations were discussed in the framework of the five expert groups. During the seminar in May 2014 the report on the 1st Joint Operation was presented and the results were discussed in view of planning the next operations.  The 1st Joint Operation was performed successfully on 7-11 April 2014 by the participating states. Detailed Framework Operational Plan has been elaborated by the Ministry of Interior of Hungary for the operation with national sub-plans of the member states as annexes. Each participating Member State have operated their own national contact points and have delegated one liaison officer to Mohács to take part actively in the daily work of the Temporary Coordination Centre, and to keep contact with their national authorities. Frontex, Europol and EUBAM liaison officers have also participated. |
| **Description** | The main objectives of the Hungarian project are as follows:   * To increase jointly the safety and security of the Danube; * To take harmonised and efficient measures against river related crimes (incl. organised crimes); * To establish transnational, cross border and operative law enforcement cooperation platform for the Danube.   Relying on the resources provided by the European Union, *the implementation of the Danube Law Enforcement Coordination Centre project is planned in three stages*.  *At the first stage* of the project a Croatian-Hungarian Common Contact Point Office was established.  *At the second stage* Police Authorities of Serbia will join this CCPO.The project will be financed by the External Border Fund.  *In the third phase* two main lines are identified to reach the continuous exchange of information, on one hand to develop a Strategic Forum, and on the other hand, to establish a Coordination Centre in the frame of the DARIF.  The aim of the Strategic Forum System is to develop a form of cooperation in which the law enforcement leaders and experts of the Danube Region Countries to discuss the current issues in relation to the security of the Danube river way, which increases the effectiveness of the cooperation not only in particular sections of the Danube, but also focusing on the entire line of the Danube. The system of the Cooperation Forum will be implemented with active participation of the Member States, in accordance with the Member States' demands and requirements. In parallel to that, the Coordination Centre which was created at the Border Crossing Port at Mohács - as a common contact point - coordinates the law enforcement international activities, support the implementation of joint actions and the transmission of relevant information by the Member States.  The total costs of the project funded by ISEC Programme: **290 870 €, c**ontribution from EC: **261 783 €** |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Letter of recommendation issued by PAC on 19.06.2012 |
| **Next steps** | * 2nd Joint operation (July 2014) * 3rd Joint operation (November 2014) * 2nd Technical Workshop (January 2015) * Final Conference (April 2015) |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **PoRIS – Police River Information Service** |
| **Action related** | Strengthening the law enforcement cooperation through contact centres. |
| **Countries involved** | all countries along the Danube, EU- as well as non-EU countries |
| **Funding** | e.g. ISEC, IPA, ENPI, TAIEX |
| **Stage of implementation** | Readiness to start implementation. Possibilities for funding are looked for. |
| **Description** | The main objectives of the Austrian Project proposal “PORIS” are currently part of the “DARIF” project. Austria has therefore modified its project objectives and initialized a national study about the legal and technical feasibility of cross-border networking of the River Information Service (RIS) for security purposes in cooperation with the Technical University of Graz and the Via Donau (National inland waterway authority). At this time the financing is under review. As far as the study is funded from national funds, it is expected that the results will be available in March 2016. Austria intends to provide the relevant results of the study to the EUSDR. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | PACs, BG and GER fully support the project. The project is in line with the strategic target of PA 11 Security, namely Effective co-operation between relevant law enforcement actors by 2015.  *A Letter of Recommendation has been issued for this project.* |
| **Next steps** | * Kick-off conference in Vienna (presentation of the Austrian system et al.) regional conferences in different Danube-neighbouring countries, final conference; * Set-up of an international workgroup consisting of experts from all Danube-neighbouring countries; * Identification of the current implementation status of RIS in the respective Danube-neighbouring countries; * Identification and evaluation of already existing or planned interfaces of the police- and customs authorities regarding RIS in all Danube-neighbouring countries; * Analysis of already existing international legal foundations for the cross-linked use of RIS by the police- and customs authorities of the Danube-neighbouring countries, thus considering the relevant Union law (Schengen Borders Code, Prüm Treaty, …) as well as bi- and multilateral treaties; * Set-up of the required legal framework for the trans-national exchange of personal data by the police- and customs authorities in the framework of RIS as well as for the operational implementation of joint operations of international police cooperation as regards the trans-national fight against crime and illegal migration as well as for the support of the cooperation at border controls on the waterway Danube; * Support of the police- and customs authorities of the Danube-neighbouring countries regarding the organisational and technical implementation of compatible connectivity to the RIS for the sake of trans-national information exchange as regards vessels, crews, passengers and transport of goods; |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Comprehensive assessment on the Danube** |
| **Action related** | Strengthening the law enforcement cooperation through contact centres. |
| **Countries involved** | All Danube neighbouring countries  Some of the countries will join Romania as co-beneficiary partners, others will contribute with their experts from police, customs and naval traffic control agencies and entities of the Danube-neighboring countries dealing with security-, criminal- and border police tasks |
| **Funding** | Total estimated value is 400.000 Euro. The activities of the project will be deployed within two years starting from the day of signature |
| **Stage of implementation** | Detailed proposal and budget under preparation |
| **Description** | The project goal is the realization of an overall assessment of the current situation in the countries along the Danube and the establishment of main directions at regional level to be decided, given the **major differences between the law enforcement approaches** of the states on the waterway Danube, differences of legislation, institutional development and technical equipment, as well as status (Schengen countries, EU but non-Schengen countries, third countries).  Based on the results of this assessment, a gap analysis on technical aspects will be realized in order to **establish the main directions** for making the Danube region a safer place to live and decrease the crime phenomenon.  The gap analysis will be drafted through working team efforts and presented to the PAC. Conclusions of the gap analysis will support PAC in structuring and accomplishing the goals of the strategy as well as establishing the main further directions at regional level. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Letter of recommendation issued by PAC on 19.06.2012 |
| **Next steps** | At present, because an eligible source of founding was not identified, the project is suspended. Intention was expressed by Romania to resume and continue the necessary procedures for implementing the project if in the future the Danube neighbouring-countries will want to join the project as partners and a financing line will be identified. |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Symposium “EU border management and security of travel documents in the Danube Region”**  **Based on the applicable EU acquis with a special focus on issues and problems of the Danube region** |
| **Action related** | To develop further well-functioningsystem of border control and document inspection management |
| **Countries involved** | Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, The Slovak Republic and Slovenia*,* as well as other countries such as Albania, Lithuania. |
| **Funding** | National funding |
| **Stage of implementation** | On-going |
| **Description** | The Symposium provided an opportunity for open exchange of views on security of travel documents, good practices of integrated border management, the efficiency of biometrics, the integration of the National Visa Systems into the European Visa System.  Topics of regional significance were also debated – the local border traffic in the context of the European neighbourhood policy.  Serious attention was paid on the latest developments to border management at EU level and their expected impact on the European citizens and the citizens of neighbouring countries – Schengen governance, the EU Smart Borders initiative and the electronic system for travel authorization (ESTA) for the EU. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | PACs, BG and GER initiated the project, organized and hosted the Symposium, chaired some of the panels. They took essential part in the discussions, facilitating the decisions and planning the steps for the way ahead. |
| **Next steps** | An e-ID symposium is to be held in Budapest in 2014 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 will be 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. |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **European Anti-Corruption Training (EACT)** |
| **Action related** | European Anti-corruption Training |
| **Countries involved** | Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia.  Moreover, the involvement and contributions of anti-corruption academics (as lecturers), as well as representatives from EU bodies (European Commission, OLAF) and international organisations (UNODC, GRECO, INTERPOL) is also of key importance to EACT. |
| **Funding** | EACT is carried out as a multinational project in the framework of the EU programme ISEC (Prevention of and Fight Against Crime). At the end of May 2012, the European Commission has proposed that EACT is financed through this programme. |
| **Stage of implementation** | Finalised |
| **Description** | The “European Anti-Corruption Training – EACT” was carried out under the slogan “Practice Meets Practice” and it takes an approach based on the presentation of examples of corruption cases, the exchange of practical experiences and the development of best practices concerning the fields of police investigation, prevention, prosecution and international cooperation. In order to achieve that aim, three working groups were established (Investigation and Prosecution, Prevention and International Cooperation).  Experts from anti-corruption agencies, police and public prosecution offices of the EU member states, the Schengen area, pre-accession countries as well as from the Western Balkans were the main target group of this project.  Thanks to the usage of the secure Europol Platform for Experts (EPE platform) the communication and exchange of information among the participants did not come to an end after each working group meeting but continued to grow.  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. All the exchange on practical experience in the field of anti-corruption was finally summarized in the EACT-Manual “Practice Meets Practice”.  The EACT final conference took place in Brdo pri Kranju (Slovenia) from 14 to 17 October 2013. More than 60 representatives of anti-corruption, police and law enforcement authorities from 17 European countries attended the conference organized by the Slovenian project partners. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | PACs, BG and GER fully support the project. The project is in line with the strategic goals of PA 11 Security, namely *Fight against corruption and Promotion of the Rule of Law.* It guarantees sustainability and is targeted to nearly all the EUSDR countries. Therefore the Steering Group recommends that endorsement to this project shall be granted and invites the funding sources to consider adequate financial support to the project.  *A Letter of Recommendation has been issued for this project.* |
| **Next steps** | A possible follow-up project was presented by the Austrian Federal Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAK) during the EACT final conference in October 2013. |

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Rule of law. Implementing a comprehensive and integrated approach to preventing and fighting against corruption** |
| **Action related** | Rule of law. Implementing a comprehensive and integrated approach in prevention and fight against corruption. |
| **Countries involved** | Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia |
| **Funding** | For the year 2012  - Konrad Adenauer Foundation (39 000 euro)  - BG national Co-financing (20 000 euro)  For the year 2013  - Konrad Adenauer Foundation (30 800 euro) |
| **Stage of implementation** | Finalised |
| **Description** | The project aims at 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. The specific thematic focus areas, in which internationally and regionally agreed development goals should be addressed and achieved, include: 1) conflict of interest prevention, 2) criminal and civil asset forfeiture and 3) addressing organized crime-corruption nexus. Discussions in this areas were held during the organised relevant international seminars as follows:  - Seminar on Prevention of Conflict of Interest ( 28-29 June 2012 in Sofia, Bulgaria)  - Seminar on Criminal and Civil Asset Forfeiture (3-6 October, Fischbachau, Bavaria)  - Seminar on Addressing Organized Crime – Corruption Nexus (27 Feb – 1 March 2013, Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria)  Final conference on the project was held in November 2013. The closing of the project was 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 outlined the best practices. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Strong involvement of the PACs, BG and GER being leading countries of the project. Close supervision of the implementation. |
| **Next steps** | Continuation of established level in enhancing trans-border cooperation through the planned project of Moldova - *Combating corruption in cooperation with Danube region states* |

***TAF II CALL APPROVED PROJECTS***

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Cooperation in the area of booby-trap explosive systems and disposal of discarded ammunition** |
| **Action related:** | To support the Danube states in the cooperation and improvement of qualifications of law enforcement, judicial authorities and other services” |
| **Countries involved** | Project leader is Police of the Czech Republic, EOD Department. Preliminary the partnerships with Slovak Republic and Hungary have been agreed. |
| **Funding** | Total Budget Approx. € 1,210,000  It is desired that the project receives funding under the EU Internal Security Fund which will soon replace the Commission’s “Prevention of and Fight Against Crime” Programme (ISEC). Co-financing will be provided from the state budget of the Czech Republic and possible partners.  Opportunities to be explored following the consultancy which the project is receiving under TAF |
| **Stage of implementation** | Planned project. To be implemented in 2015-2019. |
| **Description** | The use of improvised explosive system when committing a crime is a permanent security threat in the whole Danube Region. The offenders improve the process of production and use of improvised explosive systems. As the example of internationally committed crime by improvised explosive devices we can mention attacks in IKEA stores in 2011.  A similar serious jeopardy on health, life and citizen´s property is presented by air bombs with the chemical fuses which come from the WW 2 (mainly US and GB made). We still can find them on the territory of Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and other countries in the Central Europe. A disposal of these bombs is risky job because the bomb fuse can cause an early explosion as it happened in Göttingen / Germany in June 2010 when three pyrotechnics died.  Likewise, the ammunition from former Yugoslavia regularly appears due to illegal trade on the market in the Central and Eastern European countries since the 90th. It presents significant security risk especially when it is used for committing crimes. Similarly, discarded ammunition which comes from the World War 2 presents a risk to civilian population. The improper manipulation with these ammunition leads very often to accidents resulting in serious injuries or deaths. |
|  | Since all of the above mentioned issues have their international dimension it’s desired to tackle them on international level, such as under the umbrella of the Danube Strategy cooperation.  The idea is to thematically divide the project into 5 blocks:  (1) cooperation in the area of tactic reaction in criminal cases while using improvised explosive system, (2) introduction of particular types of improvised explosive means used in the different countries of the Danube Region, (3) cooperation in the area of ensuring the possibilities of the progress of an air bomb fuse disposal, (4) cooperation in the area of protection from war ammunition coming from former Yugoslavia, (5) increase erudition of pyrotechnics as well as increase security in areas with high incidence of unexploded ammunition coming from the World War 2.  The target of the first thematic block is to exchange information among EOD Departments of the Danube region in the field of new tactical procedures and to build up new technical procedures usable while disposing improvised explosive system. The aim of the block 2 is to introduce to pyrotechnic experts concrete types of improvised explosive system used in particular countries of Danube region in the form of study visits. The improvement of awareness will lead to higher efficiency and security while disposing of these explosive and their successive forensics expertise as well as to higher efficiency in investigating criminal and terrorist offences. The third thematic block is focuses on introduction to pyrotechnics the issue of air bomb with chemical fuses, to try new procedures and technical means of disposing these bombs, to exchange information and to promote safety awareness. The aim of the fourth block is to introduce to pyrotechnics with construction and effects of ammunition of Yugoslavian origin. Main target of the block 5 is to deepen erudition of pyrotechnic experts in the area of searching, removal and disposal of unexploded ammunition which will lead to minimizing the threats in areas with high incidence of unexploded ammunition. Consequently this will positively affect the security of civilian population. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Letter of support issued by PACs. |
| **Next steps** | Exploring funding opportunities and possible involvement of other Danube Region countries. |

***TAF II CALL APPROVED PROJECTS***

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Combating corruption in cooperation with Danube region states** |
| **Action related:** | Combating corruption in cooperation with Danube region states |
| **Countries involved** | Project leader  Republic of Moldova,  Project partners  National Integrity Centre – Romania  Centre for the Study of Democracy - Bulgaria |
| **Funding** | Total Budget Approx. € 756,000  Opportunities to be explored following the consultancy which the project is receiving under TAF |
| **Stage of implementation** | Planned project. To be implemented in April 2015 - November 2019. |
| **Description** | Despite the fact that Republic of Moldova has a small 430 m exit to the Danube river it is considered a riverside state neighbouring with the EU, interested in political and economic development of the Danube region. The provisions of the Danube Strategy are reflected in the objectives set by Government Decision No. 694 from 4 august 2010, namely: to enact and promote European values and standards in all areas; deepen bilateral cooperation with the EU member states and countries from the Danube Region; ensuring security through different EU instruments, including instruments provided by EU Schengen Catalogue.  The EU Strategy of the Danube Region (EUSDR) namely Priority 11 approaches fight against corruption, and practical cooperation in the field of combating corruption at the state border of the Danube region. Corruption represents a threat that challenges the internal security of any state, therefore the problems associated with corruption cannot be adequately solved by the state alone. There is a need for actions at EU, national and regional level.  For the Republic of Moldova the Danube port complex, represents a major importance due to its geographical location, it is situated in 7-th Pan-European corridor, also TRACECA corridor, it can be used for passengers and goods transportation, also for goods import/export, in/from the Republic of Moldova and their transit in/from European Union. The acceleration of economic integration and trade increasing represents a high risk for organized crime growth in the region, illegal migration, human trafficking, goods smuggling and black market development, which implies also corruption growth. |
|  | Having common borders with other states, there is a high risk for penetration of the state border by criminal entities, thus creating conditions for corruption acts. Although RM continues its fight against corruption element, not all the methods are sufficiently effective.  Feasibility studies carried out till present by national and international experts within projects financed by the EU and USA, denotes the poor endowment of the border crossing points infrastructure, mainly related to video/audio surveillance, which poses a threat to the EU internal security, and creates preconditions for corruption acts to appear. Thus the support of the EU donors is appropriate and complementary to the efforts undertaken by the RM.  In order to combat and prevent corruption, and to promote the rule of law, these actions imply enhanced security and EU cooperation in the Danube region, having as priority: 1 – corruption and conflict of interest prevention, 2 – implementation of the best EU practices on corruption prevention and state border surveillance, (through studying best practices of the Danube region countries and other EU states, also through development of a behavior guide.).  Finally, the Border Police Department is working on the final version of the Border Police Department Strategic Development Program (SDP) for 2014 – 2016. A whole objective of the SDP is dedicated to enforcing the legislation and regulations in view of increasing staff’s legality, integrity and institutional transparency. Many activities planned under this objective, such as anti-corruption opinion polls and surveys, anti-corruption campaigns and information systems collecting citizens anti-corruption complaints are not covered by the institution’s budget. Therefore, this project is the perfect opportunity to cover all those costs. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Letter of support issued by PACs. |
| **Next steps** | Exploring funding opportunities and possible involvement of other Danube Region countries. |

***TAF II CALL APPROVED PROJECTS***

**PROJECT APPROVED BY THE STEERING GROUP**

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| **Name of the project** | **Strengthening the naval transport protection capacities of Romanian Gendarmerie** |
| **Action related:** | Strengthening the naval transport protection capacities of Romanian Gendarmerie |
| **Countries involved** | Project leader: General Inspectorate of Romanian Gendarmerie  National partners:  National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control  General Inspectorate of Aviation from Ministry of Internal Affairs  General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations  International partners:  Law enforcement agencies from Bulgaria, Ukraine and Serbia. |
| **Funding** | Total Budget Approx. € 5,000,000  It is desired that the project receives funding under the European Structural and Investment Funds  Opportunities to be explored following the consultancy which the project is receiving under TAF |
| **Stage of implementation** | Planned project. |
| **Description** | According to the Action Plan, The Danube Region is one interrelated and interdependent ecosystem, incorporating a rich and unique flora and fauna. It is diverse, including not only the immediate river Danube, its tributaries, lowlands and the remarkable delta, but also the major part of the Carpathian Mountains, the Balkans and part of the Alps.  The pollution from contaminated sites or waste disposal in this region has major impact on water quality, flora and fauna.  Additionally, the Danube Basin Region is characterised by the presence of a high number of industrial risks sites which present a constant danger to the environment and citizens. Past examples of severe pollution have shown that accidents do happen, and that knowledge of the risk potential, preparedness as well as rapid response mechanisms is essential to prevent, be prepared or reduce damage.  One of the risks occurring lately, which could permanently damage the Danube River eco-system is the transport of hazardous products. Our country performs regularly transport of nuclear fuel spent resulting from atomic power plant at Kozloduy - Bulgaria in Ukraine and effective protection is provided by the Romanian Gendarmerie forces in cooperation with the National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control. |
|  | According to our national legislation, Romanian Gendarmerie is the competent authority, at national level, with exclusive attributions in ensuring security of naval transport of hazardous products, such as: weapons, ammunition, combat equipment, explosive materials, narcotic drugs, toxic substances or other nuclear, radioactive or hazardous materials and substances.  The project is beneficial to Romania, as protection guarantor of naval transport of products with special character on the Danube River area of competence. It helps to protect the Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian and Serbian population and counter the imminent threat of a security incident over the product transported, particularly due to some hostile actions.  Increasing the level of security of transported products with special character, accelerating the level of intervention in situations that would compromise the safety of transport and increasing mobility for intervention effectives, requires a pragmatic approach of the institution and becomes a huge responsibility taking into account the effects that might occur if there is an ineffective risk management. |
| **Involvement of the PACs** | Letter of support issued by PACs. |
| **Next steps** | Exploring funding opportunities and possible involvement of other Danube Region countries. |