





COMMUNICATION GUIDE

for efficient implementation of communication activities

related to EUSDR Communication Strategy

December 2020









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Who is going to use this guide?



First and foremost, this Communication Guide is a working tool meant to help the relevant governance structures drive the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the EUSDR communication strategy and its subsequent plans.

It will be used by all actors involved in supporting the objectives of the EUSDR communication strategy, as

indicated in the EUSDR Communication Strategy, respectively the European Commission, the EUSDR Presidency, the National Coordinators, Priority Area Coordinators, Steering Group members, and Danube Strategy Point.







How to use this guide when

...updating the EUSDR webpage

The main EUSDR webpage is the first and primary source of information and communication of EUSDR providing news and informing on the implementation of the Strategy in the Danube states. From this main page, the priority areas individual websites may be accessed. Therefore, it should be:

- comprehensive (contains relevant information for all defined target groups);
- easy to use (its updating takes limited time and effort);
- alive (daily updated with latest information) and
- intuitive (easily accessible content and comprehensive menu).

The EUSDR website is the first place where external and also internal target groups look for EUSDR relevant information. To keep the website up to date, an annual evaluation of its performance is necessary. The evaluation needs to focus on analysing the behaviour of the (active) visitors on this website. It is important to understand what



Image source: Edo Prathama/www.unsplash.com

keywords (SEO¹) bring organic search traffic or other sources of traffic (referrals) and on which **pages** (sections) visitors spend most time and which are the pages that generate most bounce offs.

The first insights on the **keywords** could be used to understand what information the visitors search for and consequently use these outcomes to include these topics when generating

¹ Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the process of improving the quality and quantity of <u>website traffic</u> to a <u>website</u> or a <u>web page</u> from <u>search engines</u>. SEO targets unpaid traffic (known as "natural" or "<u>organic</u>" results) rather than <u>direct traffic</u> or <u>paid traffic</u>. Unpaid traffic may originate from different kinds of searches, including <u>image search</u>, <u>video search</u>, <u>academic search</u>, <u>lel</u> news search, and industry-specific <u>vertical search</u> engines.(source: <u>https://en.wikipedia.org/</u>)







new content, while the insights on **pages** could provide information about what pages need more attention (updating, adding new content to improve the search performance and accuracy of the content).

This analysis could also help establish whether the linkage of the pages is optimal (containing supporting content on a specific topic of interest for a particular target group) or they need to be grouped differently. In other words, the elements that should be considered are:

- navigation/searches that match what users (audiences) are looking for on the EUSDR website;
- information structured content wise following the most relevant topics. Provided key
 messages accorded with the most relevant topics would serve as matrix for structuring
 the website content also providing relevant examples;
- 3. generating **links** throughout the site to maintain the individual themes rather than doubling content, creating double posts and generating inaccurate analytics.

This analysis could consider that <u>external target groups having rather low awareness of or</u> <u>information about EUSDR</u> (e.g. journalists, teachers, potential project promoters) need to easily find the following:

- an introductory and self-explanatory page explaining the EUSDR in a simple and comprehensive manner, for example supported with an explanatory video;
- a dedicated section presenting successful strategic projects with high impact and visibility for the EUSDR, demonstrating the achievements in implementing the EUSDR and improving the communication on the EUSDR strategic focus;
- photo album of EUSDR representative projects posted on a dedicated section of the EUSDR website – one photo (mentioning photo credits) / project accompanied by a short description and a link to the project website, encouraging visitors to use these photos photo album of EUSDR strategic/ representative projects or events;
- press releases/ information for the most significant EUSDR events including the







outcomes.

Similarly, the <u>external target groups interested in information about cooperation and funding</u> <u>opportunities</u> (e.g. national line ministries, managing authorities, European Commission - DGs other than DG REGIO, project implementers, educational and research institutions, journalists, potential project promoters) should be able to find at least the following on the website:

- an updated event calendar, containing relevant EUSDR relevant events;
- EUSDR studies, technical events conclusions, prior consultations results (published under dedicated section and notifications sent to subscribers on updates);

Also, the EUSDR main website could provide un updated calendar consisting of internal meetings or events relevant for the internal target groups (EUSDR structures: Steering Group members (SGs), Priority area coordinators (PACs), National Coordinators (NCs), DG REGIO, WG leaders and members, EUSDR Presidencies (TRIO), Danube Strategy Point).

As working procedure for the annual analysis and update of the EUSDR and PAs websites, a working group consisting of one representatives of each PA, coordinated by the Danube Strategy Point should be constituted to evaluate the websites performance and to define the needed changes. After establishing the new directions, the structures responsible with the update of the websites shall implement the new measures.

Writing for the web²:

Introductory text: since people arrive on a page following a link or searching for keywords, they do not spend much time reading long texts on the home page. For this reason, the introduction on the home page has to be short and attractive, answering

² KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) principle: <u>https://www.socialmediatoday.com/news/the-content-marketing-kiss-principle-in-4-steps/557323/</u> When it comes to writing and content marketing, the K.I.S.S. principle breaks down into four parts: 1. Tell them what you're going to tell them, 2. Tell them what you told them you were going to tell them, 3. Tell them what you told them, 4. Tell them what to do next







the what and **the why** in as few words as possible. The same rule applies to the introductory text on interior pages.

- Points of entry: home pages and other top-level pages should be more appealing and catch visitors' attention with text that can be read quickly (like keywords), display copy (headlines and captions)/ headings/ subheads) and bullet lists.
- Cropped paragraphs: Brief paragraphs that contain just one idea are ideal for online readers, no longer than 2 or 3 lines.
- Key facts first: Employ the inverted-pyramid model of writing, based on journalistic style, in which the most important information is featured first, followed by decreasingly significant information. If content is too long, you can cut from the bottom rather than to delete passages throughout. This means that the most important information (answering to questions such as *who, what, when, where, how*) shall be in the first paragraph (no more than 4 5 lines). Other details can be developed in the next 2 or 3 paragraphs, which do not exceed 4 5 lines each. Then you can add a "more" button for those interested to read the entire article. Clicking on this button a new page will open and they will finish reading.
- Link in and out: Provide links to related material on your Web site and on others or on the social platforms you manage. If you routinely send your visitors good material, you create expectancy and they'll return.
- Say it straight: Avoid metaphors, promotional excess. Be literal in wording, write straight and you gain twice: people will trust you and you increase opportunity for search optimisation.
- Be passive: Use the passive voice so that key information appears up-front in sentences, when you want to point out certain messages.
- Write well: attract visitor by providing high-quality content, avoiding technical terminology, without explaining it.

Any of the rules above may be disregarded if they don't reach a certain aim, but remember them and apply them when appropriate.







...using social media tools



Even if the EUSDR website remains the main online communication tool, the interaction between EUSDR and its target audiences cannot be limited to the website content and community.

The EUSDR social media platforms can be better connected with its main audiences if several basic rules are followed.

Image source: Freepik/www.flaticon.com

The social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

and YouTube) that EUSDR uses are integrated in the EUSDR website (they may be found on the EUSDR website home page, in the upper right corner). As regards their improvement opportunity, the focus should be the efficient engagement (intensively and extensively) of their audiences.

For instance, to increase the **Facebook** (<u>https://www.facebook.com/DanubeRegionStrategy</u>) engagement (likes, comments, shares, new followers) which will generate posts exposure to an extended network, there are few steps to follow:

- 1. the posts need to be informative or inspirational;
- 2. to create such post, one first needs to know who the audience is: for that, *Facebook insights³* can provide useful information about the EUSDR audience followers, likes, reach, page views, actions on page, posts, videos, stories, people and messages. The insight details are available for each administrator of a Facebook page. The reach refers to the number of people to which your posts are displayed on, the views for each section page, which will help you understand what areas are most popular, how your page posts are performing, and also offer insights on the best times to post and the types of most successful posts, the top performing videos, which are ranked by how many minutes they were viewed, your fans and follower demographics, including

³ DSP may provide detailed print screens/ statistics and explanations by requests.







location, gender, and language information etc.

- understanding your audience will allow you to create the content that responds to its needs;
- create and keep the messages short. Facebook analytics indicate that, on desktop devices, users spend an average of 2.5 seconds per content item, while on mobile devices only 1.7 seconds;
- best time of the day to post is early afternoon. Posts published on Facebook around
 13:00 are the most shared, around 15:00 the most liked.
- 6. as regards photos, you can use free stock photo sites or inspirational photos taken by the EUSDR team and project teams; (always provide credits of photo material posted!)
- 7. live videos are very powerful as well;
- interact with fans by asking questions or responding to their comments and private messages;
- include EUSDR Facebook page URL (<u>https://www.facebook.com/DanubeRegionStrategy</u>) on business cards, posters, giveaways, at events and other materials to generate new traffic;
- 10. engage with stakeholders and link or refer to others' relevant content
- 11. always credit the source when using links
- 12. remember data protection (General Data Protection Regulation e.g.: https://danube-region.eu/privacy-policy/)

Similarly, analytics on **LinkedIn** allows monitoring metrics and trends across specified time periods. This way you may study your visitors' demographics, the reach of each post and engagement, actions on each post, such as how many followers or profile visits you added, follower trends over periods of time, demographics about your followers, including domain and seniority data and you can benchmark audience growth by comparing followers with other similar pages. This information can be used to drive page engagement.

Tips for attracting more people on your LinkedIn page:

http://www.techcybers.com/blog/increase-linkedin-followers







The **Twitter** account's performance can be evaluated by using the analytics dashboard provided by Twitter monthly. It captures an overview of best performing content (top tweet, top follower and top mention), engagements and impressions on tweets over a selected period, audience's demographics and thematic interests. It can also offer a comparison of the audience to see how your followers vary from other users.

Very similar to the other channels, but a bit more complicated from the point of view of data analysis, **YouTube** provides powerful analytics that allows you to evaluate how your videos are performing and how you can further improve their content. This section can be accessed in Creator Studio (Analytics). Here you'll find data about video watch behaviour and the audience viewing your videos, audience retention (on average how long people are watching your videos), demographics (overview of the age, gender, and geographic location of your viewers), traffic sources (how and where your viewers found your video), devices used to play your videos, channel subscribers, likes and dislikes, channel sharing, etc.



As working procedure for the annual analysis and plan for the EUSDR social media channels, the proposed steps involve only those PA that developed a page on a social media platform. Once a year, together with DSP's communication officer they could establish a working group to evaluate EUSDR social media channels performance and to define the needed improvements, if any.

Tips for social media

A text-image post gets more reach than plain text, while a short video (under 1 minute) gets the best reach. User response significantly increases the number of post views.







- Statistics⁴ say the best days to post and become as visible as possible are Thursdays and Fridays, early afternoon.
- Digital PR experts⁵ believe that Twitter's success lies in the 140-character limit. It seems that the most successful posts on Facebook have less than 50 characters6. If they are accompanied by an image, album or video, the reach will be multiplied. According to Kissmetrics⁷, photos get 53% more likes, 104% more comments and 84% more click-throughs on links than text-based posts. Moreover, only photo posts get more engagement than links, accounting for 93% of the most engaging posts on Facebook.
- How often do you post? In this case, the rule is: less is sometimes more so that the contributions are not lost in the flood of many others.
- Tagging specific people or places, and linking to other Facebook pages and events is an important element in increasing the reach of your posts.

⁴ For further details, please check the following: <u>https://buffer.com/library/best-time-to-post-on-facebook,</u> <u>https://influencermarketinghub.com/best-times-to-post-on-facebook_or</u> https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-social-media

⁵ https://www.tieronepr.com/blog/the-guide-to-twitter-success-mastering-140-characters

⁶ <u>https://buffer.com/library/optimal-length-social-media</u>

⁷ <u>https://buffer.com/resources/best-time-to-tweet-post-to-facebook-send-emails-publish-blogposts</u>







...organising events

Events should be organised after having defined their <u>specific objectives</u>, which should be kept in mind all along event planning, execution and evaluation phases. These objectives influence the theme of the event, the audience, the speakers, the programme, event branding, etc.



Image source: Vectors Market/ www.flaticon.com To make events more successful, they should thus be created from the very beginning focusing on specific goals and based on clear <u>success measures</u>.

Therefore, during event implementation or immediately after, it is recommended to ask attendees to provide <u>feedback</u> about the overall event experience or various sessions included in it to allow the <u>measurement of event</u> <u>results</u> and define <u>areas for improvement</u>. This will enable

improvement for future events benefiting from these experiences.

As to the current event you plan, only after having a clear understanding of its purpose and of the target audience, you can build an <u>appropriate event plan</u>, which can ensure you will deliver an effective event.

Also, when planning your event do not forget about <u>event results/outcomes</u>. Most people want and need to be engaged, to have the reassurance that their time is invested wisely. Therefore, having a call to action, a summary of the conclusions and next steps of the event shared with participants is very important and will engage your audience.

Among the events organised for the implementation and promotion of EUSDR, Steering Groups meetings are extremely important as they contribute to decision-making among stakeholders.

In order to support better organisation of such meetings, Danube Strategy Point elaborated a Needs Assessment paper on the engagement in EUSDR Steering Groups and the Annex III of this Needs Assessment can help stakeholders in the organisation of meetings, providing







among others a checklist for all stages of the meetings (pre-meeting, on-site meeting and follow-up meeting).

As working procedure for events (once you know the objectives and intended results), the proposed steps are:

- 1. choose the event team and assign clear roles;
- create your checklist put all the items into a template or make your own in Microsoft Excel, Google Docs;
- 3. set the event details (date and time, location, audience etc.);
- 4. decide the event budget;
- 5. establish and organise the procurement procedure;
- create the event design and materials (program, layout, theme, pick and choose venue, partners, speakers, translators etc.);
- plan the logistics (IT equipment, translator booths, necessary furniture no. of tables and chairs, catering etc.) & engage the providers;
- 8. map out the marketing plan (how the event is promoted online and offline);
- 9. define details and a plan B (what happens if the main event features like key speakers, partners etc. do not respond, as planned);
- 10. create a chart of event-day logistics;
- 11. plan evaluation (what, when, with what tools) and follow-up after the event;
- 12. debrief and make a post-event analysis with the whole team;
- 13. do the follow-up actions, as planned.







...storytelling

All materials edited for the external target groups should consider how heterogenous these groups are. Therefore, when you want to present them information about what you did/ do, you have to make sure that you:

- leave out the technical language that you are used to
- use a clear structure and purpose
 - → the story spine (Kenn Adams) Once upon a time there was [blank]. Every day, [blank]. One day [blank]. Because of that, [blank]. Until finally [bank].

THE STORY SPINE	STRUCTURE	FUNCTION
Once upon a time	Beginning	The world of the story is introduced and the main character's routine is
Every day		established.
But, one day	The Event	The main character breaks the routine .
Because of that	Middle	There are dire consequences for
Because of that		having broken the routine. It is unclear if the main character will
Because of that		come out alright in the end.
Until finally	The Climax	The main character embarks upon success or failure
And, ever since then	5.1	The main character succeeds or
	End	fails, and a new routine is established.

Published at aerogrammestudio.com, ©Kenn Adams

- → Why must you tell THIS story? What greater purpose does this serve? What does it teach? By writing a story that you are eager to tell because it serves a real purpose, your stories will have bigger impact on the world.
- identify a *character* and make *it* a hero that fights all odds or faces adversity.
- appeal to our deepest emotions (basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise) Recognise consciously various emotions in yourself and think about the "why": Why are you feeling a certain way? How might you be able to take





the "why" behind your emotions and tell a story?

Applied on EUSDR possible stories, there are few **questions** (*Charlélie Jourdan*, Creative Consultant @ Old-Continent) that may lead to the structure of the story to be delivered:

General problem (Once upon a time...):

What is the big problem that you are addressing? Think about the largest scale possible.

Ex: Climate change is accelerating at an unprecedented pace and some regions are gradually getting hard to live in.

Specific problem (Once upon a time...): How does this problem affects someone somewhere - describe how it affects that person, what pain it generates?

Ex: For the people living on the river bank of the Danube this means devastating floods every year, and this directly hit the weakest/ poorest who cannot invest in additional building protection.

Expectations (But one day...): Your solution is changing the game for these people what would be the ideal thing that could happen?

Ex: If we could measure the difference of flow in the Danube and forecast the next floods, we could invest in protections where it is the most needed, and evacuate people on time.

How it works (Because of that...) Our project is helping people by ...

Detail 3 ways maximum on how the project helps people affected by the problem. Example:

a) 1st big feature of the idea: by mapping the Danube movement, we manage to forecast when and where it will go out of the river bed

b) 2nd big feature of the idea: and thanks to a system of alert triggered in 7 countries, we could warn people downstream and give them up to 75 minutes of time to evacuate or prepare for the flood

c) 3rd big feature of the idea: with additional partnerships with the local radio stations and TV, and helping them write alert messages, we could touch 95% of all inhabitants of the affected areas without spreading panic or add onto fears.

How you can prove our project works? (Until finally...) A checklist of things done through the project that prove it works

Example:

- a) Great number of users
- b) Increase of users year-on-year
- c) Decrease of problems since project
- d) Decrease of deaths / disease / wounded
- e) Number of media press clips
- f) VIPs / Politicians who talk about it
- g) International institutions who talk about it







- h) Decrease of time needed to do the same thing
- i) More efficient use of time / money
- j) Decrease of money needed to do the same thing
- k) Satisfaction surveys of users
- I) New law / regulation thanks to our project
- m) Brand awareness / recognition
- n) Number of events / seminars / workshops
- o) Other
 - Vision (And ever since then...): Thanks to the results of your project, what are we striving to accomplish on Earth? Think about the best thing that could happen if your project was accomplishing his mission

Ex. We are working to create a safer Danube and a safer planet - one river at a time.

Storytelling technique will help also to illustrate key messages for the EUSDR target groups and in accordance to the EUSDR narrative.

EUSDR narrative

Europe and its regions are in a time of transition. The Danube Region, like other EU macro-regions, faces challenges beyond borders – pollution, climate change, unemployment or lack of connectivity – that affect the lives of over 115 million people.

Strategic areas as connectivity, digital transition, demographic changes or sound and democratic local and regional administrations need to be coordinated across the borders, jointly and with mutual interest to unlock the full potential of the Danube Region.

To this end, the countries in the Danube basin came together and established the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), identifying common needs, challenges and opportunities that can be fully exploited only in cooperation to boost regional cohesion.

All together, we need to protect our nature and people, to build a prosperous region with a healthy environment, equal societies and high living standards. We need to create sustainable jobs and open up fair opportunities – all the way between the Black Forrest and the Black Sea. Environment protection, sustainable transport, faster ITC connectivity, competitiveness of European businesses, security in the region need to be backed by sustainability, supporting circular economy and led by knowledge-based and information society.

Our aim is to make our Danube Region stronger, more resilient and attractive to live in!

EUSDR provides orientation for cooperation by offering an agile and strategic framework: platforms of exchange, guidance and networking, coordination of policies and joint actions far beyond physical and psychological borders.

In the Danube region people work together and jointly define ways to shape joint future, in cooperation, on the ground for the sake of our citizens.







Example:

Target group: Regional politicians (for example, city councils or boards)

<u>Key message:</u> "EUSDR strengthens Danube Region's capacity to increase prosperity, safety and environment protection"

Story supporting the key message (illustrating a project and its results)

General problem: In the EU, 8.3 million males and 4.1 million females, aged 15-64, are estimated to have tried amphetamines during their lives.

According to the European Drug Report issued in 2019 by European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), starting 2013, synthetic drugs trafficking and production within Europe have grown in importance, causing great harm to the physical environment, institutional structures and the quality of life attainable for citizens in the countries affected, including public health.

The analysis of wastewater residues and seizure data suggest the drug has been slowly increasing and spreading geographically. Lab detections also point to some scaling-up of production also for non-EU markets.

Specific problem: Methamphetamine (meth) is a strong stimulant causing significant health risks for its users. Its use, generally low and historically concentrated in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, now appears to be present also in Cyprus, the east of Germany, Spain and northern Europe. Methamphetamine seized in Europe is mainly produced in the Czech Republic and the border areas of neighbouring countries. In 2017, of the 298 illegal methamphetamine laboratories reported in the European Union, 264 were located in Czechia.

Expectations: Considering the global dimension of synthetic drugs production and trafficking, countries by themselves are not able to deal with this challenge individually. This issue needs to be addressed transnationally and a common framework is necessary to facilitate fluent flow of operational information and intelligence exchange.

Police from the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Serbia started collaboration for dismantling drugs distribution and illicit labs with the aim of strengthening the cooperation of law enforcement agencies in fight against international organized drug crime.

How it works: The focus of the project is directed towards the production and distribution of meth and precursors trafficking used for its production, with the main goals of reducing the organized crime groups, dismantling clan labs and arresting perpetrators.

For the success of such initiative, as many countries as possible need to get involved. For this reason, the five riparian countries are supported by the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the US.

The key role in this approach plays the national but mainly international cooperation between the law enforcement agencies. Taking on board INTERPOL and EUROPOL the initiative benefits from a wide range of efficient instruments to fight against international organized crime.







Fluent flow of operational information and intelligence exchange are facilitated between police staff from all participating countries. Cooperation proves efficiency in relation to a quick share of information and analysis in order to identify the clear links between individual cases and to organize joint field actions.

Experts were sharing practical experience and good practice in the area of dismantling illicit labs for the production of meth, presentation of successfully closed criminal cases, creation of the network of experts in the area of fight against organized drug crime following the meth production and distribution and building stronger personal contacts for the coming cooperation.

How you can prove this works: By identifying and destroying illegal meth labs, the police structures will reach several objectives followed at European level – reduce the number of organized crime groups, reduce the quantity of trafficked meth, reduce the number of addictive people. Indirect, police actions contribute the decrease of people infected with viral diseases by injecting drugs (ex. hepatitis), contributing also to the increase of public health, reduce the number of drug overdose deaths.

Vision: All these actions will contribute to ensuring a better, safer life in the macro-regions, paying attention both to people and environment safety.







...writing informative materials such as newsletters (electronic or in printed format)

A newsletter is a perfect vehicle to connect with audiences that interact with EUSDR in various situations (i.e. during events) and to provide more detailed information or to draw attention to some news published online (i.e. on the website).

Defining the profile of the newsletter readers is important to start with. Based on the readers' profile, the summary and content, the format and the frequency can then be defined.

As regards the <u>format</u>, the e-newsletters must be preferred, in line with the environmentfriendly approach. Only in particular cases, newsletters could be also produced in printed format, in limited quantities, to be distributed during the main events, saving distribution costs. The EUSDR website includes the possibility to send online newsletters, possible by registration (the EUSDR website <u>www.danube-region.eu</u> offers the possibility for the interested people to register on the home page NEWSLETTER fields in order to receive them).

Regarding the <u>content</u>, this depends on the targeted audiences and the expected reaction. For instance, the list of EUSDR newsletters could include:

- a newsletter dedicated to <u>public institutions</u> concise info packs as an annual End of the Year e-newsletter (fact-based, impact-driven, well written and illustrated), including themes like a short video about EUSDR, very brief updates on EUSDR state of play and EU Council conclusions on the implementation of macro-regional strategies, joint statements of ministers from EUSDR countries and most important, some success stories. It can be sent to contacts from the European Commission, European Parliament, managing authorities, national line ministries in EUSDR countries to advocate for EUSDR;
- a newsletter dedicated to the <u>civil society</u> (project representatives, educational and research institutions and journalists) which might contain:
 - summary of specific EUSDR studies, technical events conclusions, prior consultations results published on the EUSDR website under dedicated







section;

- programmes and priorities of the incumbent EUSDR Presidency;
- conclusions of the annual events/fora;
- EUSDR testimonials on various events;
- success stories;
- information on upcoming events and upcoming calls for proposals/ other financing opportunities published on the EUSDR websites under dedicated section.

As regards the <u>frequency</u>, at least two or three newsletters per year would be encouraging for your audience; the frequency depends also on the available information. Shorter electronic/ e-mail newsflashes (containing only one piece of news) can be also additionally produced to announce important events, for example.

As working procedure for any newsletter, the main steps are:

- choose the editorial/ production team and assign clear roles (have one responsible per each newsletter);
- 2. decide on each newsletter summary, depending on the targeted audience;
- ask all potential contributors to forward the worthwhile information to the editorial team/ person in charge;
- create each newsletter or newsflash with short titles, many visuals and short texts keeping the format;
- 5. decide when newsletters are planned to be sent out for the upcoming year;
- pre-test the content: ask someone outside the editorial team to read the result to make sure the language is not too technical;
- 7. invite people visiting the website to subscribe to EUSDR newsletters through the







online form available on the website;

- after having the agreement of participants in events, you may use the attendance list to import their emails and use them to send the online newsletters that EUSDR produces;
- set contact lists in the newsletter programme to ease handling different newsletter target groups;
- 10. do not use attachments via email in the newsletter, place and link any attachments on the website and insert the link to them in the newsletter, because it decreases the traffic load, drives audiences to the website and generate more traffic on your website. IMPORTANT! If the newsletter as a whole is a picture (.png, .jpg etc.) the links inserted within are not active (not recommended to use);
- 11. use the HTML link to the newsletter produced by website. The newsletters sent needs to be linked to the website because they will provide further information, they will drive audiences to the website and will generate more traffic on your site;
- 12. track, analyse and follow up the responses via websites analysis tool.







...working with press, journalists and media

Basically, the interactions with media channels and journalists most likely occur during EUSDR events, when media is invited, through press releases, when important news are communicated and you would like media to cover them, and when journalists are interested in a particular topic, they ask for additional information.

The first situation: when you invite media to an EUSDR event addressed to external audiences you need to consider:

- Write a catchy invitation for the media channels; for example, you need to sell your event to make the subject appealing (does the event have a story? do you present the results of some research? do you have experts or politicians present?) and to draw editor-in-chief's attention, as this is the person that decides what to write about.
- Prepare a *press kit* including briefly background information about the event and other useful materials that can help journalists understand and reflect your event (i.e. press release covering the event, data from the research reports and a short presentation of the main speakers). This should be complemented by event visuals delivered to the journalists after the event.
- Establish a person as a contact point. This person will introduce them to experts or speakers they can interview, will offer details about the event, will help them with technical information;
- Remember that press conferences are only for big news. One-on-one meetings with journalists in smaller events are just fine.



Image source: Markus Winkler/www.unsplash.com

The second situation: when you need to write a press release or information on EUSDR topics you would like media to cover, you need to pay attention to the following:

- to write a good press release you need to identify and focus on an aspect of your topics that







will engage a specific target audience. In principle, this is what journalists do when they select "pieces of news": they are seeking ways to describe these to make them significant and attractive to their target audience. In this way, the topics you propose become newsworthy.

- When receiving news releases, journalists' first questions are: "why is this topic important? why need my readers care?" You should ask the same questions when starting to write for the press and include the most relevant information so that people care and read.
- In most cases, the topics promoted under the EUSDR framework are extremely technical and yet important. Therefore, the big challenge is to explain them clearly to make the information newsworthy.
- The key to success is to offer information that answers questions like: how many people are positively impacted by your activity? how would their lives be improved? how much time would it take before the improvements are visible? how much do this cost?
- In general, making news for general public means writing about <u>people</u> rather than <u>ideas, projects, activities, things</u>, and about <u>specific events and results</u> rather than <u>abstract concepts</u>.
- It is important how a topic is presented. The most attractive news is the <u>big news</u>, referring to a change that people need to get through; in other words, all news is about *what has changed or will be changed*, therefore you need to concentrate on *novelty* and *change*, on how your subject will touch people lives and you need to inform them about the decisions they need to make. In the EUSDR case, this perspective of an imminent change is embedded in all success stories, in the results of studies etc.;
- the second type of attractive news are affecting people <u>emotionally</u> and finding the right storyteller may ensure success to your topic. For example, a fisherman who has been living all his life with his family on the Danube shore could describe how a project improved his life. A good story about cultural heritage or tourism released during the







summer when journalists are looking for news about holidays could also become newsworthy.

- Therefore, technical topics understandable only for a small target group could be transformed in newsworthy information addressed to larger groups of people by using clear examples covered by attractive stories. The stories must be presented from people and community perspective *How does it involve people? How does it change the community life?* etc.
- Once your topic was covered in the media, evaluate the media coverage (how many publications wrote about it? what type of audience do they have? etc.) to learn from this experience.

The third situation: when journalists are interested in a particular topic and ask for additional information, the first step is to create a picture of the media channels in each EUSDR country, considering the following:

- Europe is home to a large number and variety of media channels, with different audiences and particular standards. It is not possible or appropriate to target all of them or to imagine that you can handle all of them.
- Each National Coordinator team should consider several factors when deciding which media to target:

1) Which media do your own national target audiences pay most attention to?

2) Which media will consider your messages newsworthy in your country?

3) Is there in your NC team a person who can be trained and able to manage media relations activities at national level?

Most likely, the answers to the first two questions will normally be the same: the same media channels that are interested in EUSDR and participate in EUSDR events are the ones to send information and press releases to, because media define news as information that their own audiences want to know. These answers also provide a list of media channels in each EUSDR country.







- the answer to the third question can be a challenge because working with media is not always easy, but training and practice could help people overcome this barrier.
- The second step refers to the process of sending the information promoting EUSDR subjects in media in each country:
 - it is essential to have a person from each EUSDR country who can be trained and able to manage media relations activities at national level; this is also important as the media in each country should be addressed in the national language;
 - it is important to answer the question why your information is important to that specific country (national, regional, local relevance)? However, do not forget to give the activity wider significance, for example in the context of collaboration/ cooperation between EUSDR countries;
 - media materials must respect the format⁸ and language of the country's media;
 - media materials need to be adapted to each country (by providing new examples relevant for certain state, region, etc.);
 - o be prepared to react immediately with facts, statistics, images, speakers etc.;
 - photos of events and pre-recorded TV footage can broaden the coverage;
 - build media coverage by using one country as a vehicle for getting it in another one (journalists are reading each other, so use the snowball effect);
 - place EUSDR in context by explaining its ties with the European Union, financing programs/ sources and other macro regional strategies.

⁸ See the annexes 1 to 4







As working procedure for media relations, the main steps are:

- choose the media relations team (with one member from each country) and assign clear roles, if possible;
- 2. train the whole team on how to work with the media;
- prepare a standard media toolkit the team could customize for each event (template of event invitations, templates of press releases, templates of media folders with background information, photo gallery with success stories, list of contacts for each significant project, check list for events involving media, template for media coverage report etc.);
- 4. set the target indicators by involving the whole media team (e.g. what events media should be invited, how many persons should be invited and confirmed at the press event, how many articles/ interviews are targeted to be published post-event;
- 5. define the monitoring & evaluation plan for each media activity (events, press releases, answering media queries). This should include an evaluation form delivered at each event and a media monitoring report for media coverage after events and/ or press releases disseminated.
- 6. the media relation officer/ person appointed from each country, who can be trained and able to manage media relations activities at national level, should prepare the national list of media channels and update it regularly (once per year);
- 7. the media relation team evaluates the media relations activity annually.







...facilitating internal communication

The recommended instruments for streamlining internal communication are:

- 1. mailing list, used whenever information needs to be disseminated or documents need endorsement or amendments,
- 2. running periodical meetings (face-to-face or online), to exchange information or perform different tasks,
- 3. an internal newsletter e.g. for major changes occurring within EUSDR governance
- 4. online meetings

The main goal of using such instruments is to make the governance team more aware of EUSDR activities (including its communication activities), enabling better internal



Image source: Hannah Busing/www.unsplash.com

understanding and enhancing the information flow for efficiency.

The main direct benefits of the mailing list are sharing information and keeping in touch with other members of the governance structure and communicating quickly and more efficiently with all members.







...organising online meetings

Sometimes the context may not be favourable to face-to-face meetings. Then, a good and easy to use channel for internal communication is represented by the online meetings. To organize such meetings, it is helpful to use (video) conference online platforms that allow communication between more than two persons. The most popular platforms of this kind are: https://www.gotomeeting.com, https://www.skype.com, <a href="https://www.sky

https://www.microsoft.com/en-US/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software

Most of these platforms provide certain features when they are free of charge:

- allow a certain number of participants (usually up to 100 participants) joining via audio and video channel on a device of their choice (desktop computer, laptop, mobile phone, tablet),
- maximum 40 minutes for each meeting in free version, but unlimited number of meetings,
- screen sharing,
- chat section in the meeting room and the possibility of saving the texts, also having the possibility to save an attendance list,
- meeting recording.

These platforms are useful when organising your next meeting (be it an SG meeting, specific meeting be request, technical meeting or any other EUSDR-related meeting).

Technical aspects you might want to consider:

• Upload your meeting documents to a central location such as a cloud where attendees can access the latest version of all meeting documents at any time. If your host institution's security measures prohibit this, make sure to keep your participants posted on document updates via e-mail. For example, Zoom offers the possibility to upload documents into the meeting room and via chat.

• Ask your presenters to test their technical setup in advance and to login 15 minutes prior







to the meeting in order to retest everything and secure a smooth exchange. You might also want to test all relevant platform features with them in advance.

- Record the meeting so stakeholders who missed it have the chance to catch up. Of course, this requires the permission of all attendees.
- Generate registered participants lists for meetings.
- Plan for backup software in case the meeting platform you use turns out to deliver bad audio and video quality.

Communication and interactive aspects you might want to consider:

• Communication is key, especially when interaction is reduced to the digital world. Make sure to thoroughly communicate to all registered participants when and under which link they should log in and in which way the agenda topics will be addressed. Some participants may lack experience in attending online meetings and making use of the meeting room features - they might need extra guidance.

• For those who are more in tune with the digital world and all its possibilities, you may promote your meeting on social media, encourage participants to share ongoing discussions via hashtags and broadcast meeting news as widely as possible.

• To avoid one-way communication and create a more interactive atmosphere, you may use the chat section of the meeting room for Q&A sessions or you might do live polls and quizzes by means of slack.

• To facilitate networking, you may set up separate meeting rooms for 1:1 exchange. For example, GoToMeeting allows hosting small groups meetings up to three persons.

• During the meeting, use moderation tools like "rising hand" to keep a clean and clear communication. As moderator use the "mute" to prevent background noises from other participants' devices.

• After the meeting provide PPTs, participant lists, recordings and other relevant documents via the platform or by e-mail/cloud services.







...using visual identity elements

Promoting EUSDR brand unitary, at national, regional and European level, is ensured by observing the rules regarding EUSDR visual identity and using the EUSDR logo.

The visual identity elements are available at the EUSDR website - <u>https://danube-region.eu/communication-tools/eusdr-visual-identity</u>, including the recommendations under the Visual Identity Quick Guide for the EUSDR logo - <u>https://danube-region.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Visual Identity Quick Guide.pdf</u>.

Specific requirements on the use of EUSDR visual identity:

Logo

The EUSDR logo, consisting of the isotype and slogan, shall be reliably used on the EUSDR outputs such as letters, reports, websites, presentations, give-aways, materials displayed at events, email signature etc. The slogan *Prosperity through Diversity* must be included in all communication materials (printed/ electronic) as part of the general EUSDR logo.

In addition to the general logo, there are defined logos for the Priority Areas, according to the EU Danube Region Strategy action plan, which are exemplified in the Visual Identity Quick Guide for EUSDR logo.

The PAs individual logos remain the same and the slogan will become an additional optional separate sentence combined with graphic elements (the symbol of the river, the bridge and the EU stars, using the correspondent pillar's colour, as appropriate) to be used as a footer in documents (letters, reports etc.) and presentations and on the bottom of any printed materials (give-aways like folders, agendas, notebooks, or informative materials - brochures, fliers, leaflets, maps etc.). Examples on how to use the EUSDR slogan on different documents are available on page 37-38, including also the mirrored version of the graphic elements and the slogan.









Logotype

Logotype is the most used, to refer to any graphic representation of a brand. It is distinctive and formed by letters, abbreviations, etc., specific to a company, brand or product. Its name comes from Latin and, consequently, logos = a word and typos = a sign, a mark or a set of characters of any language.

So, a logo is the visual representation of a brand based on a word or set of words. Only fonts.

The **EUSDR logo** is the single sign of recognition for the EUSDR, and the symbol and words are set in a specific font and relationship.

The **isotype** is the real graphic representation of a symbol that exemplifies the brand without mentioning it, that is, a visual abstraction that represents its image. The isotype may be used on all materials promoting EUSDR brand. Please find below the isotype for **EUSDR logo**:

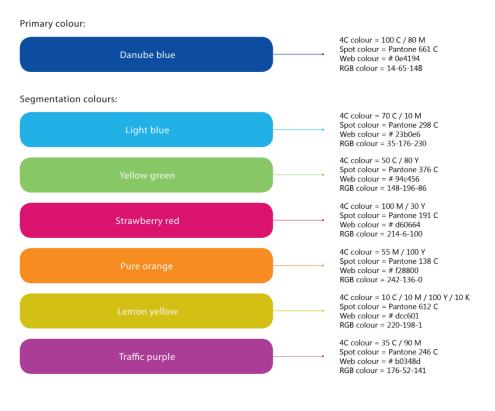








The colour Palette is also indicated in the Visual Identity Quick Guide for the EUSDR logo



Colour Palette

Forms and dimensions allowed to be used

Only the logos provided within this guide are to be used. The minimum dimension of the logo is of 25 mm. Small give-aways are exempted from this rule and the slogan shall not be included, as it is not readable (e.g. pens, pencils, USB sticks etc.). In this situation, the minimum dimension is 15 mm.









👻 Interreg 🖸

Clear space

For maximum impact and visibility, the logo does not need to be very big. Clear space is necessary to avoid visual competition between EUSDR logo and other logos or elements and to ensure that those are perceived as being part of the logo. The recommended area of non-interference (clear space) is of minimum two time the size of the EU stars on the side and one size of the EU Stars on top and bottom. Clear space of two time the size of the EU stars to the right and left of the logo is enough to individualize the graphic signature and to separate it from other elements around (page edge, other logos, graphic elements etc.). Clear space needs to observe the indications in the image below:









Application on a background



Incorrect logo usage



Don't strech verticaly



Don't use black version





Don't change colours



Don't use on vibrant colors





Don't use grey version



Don't use grey/black version

*Except when use online with hover effect that reveal original logo

Font

The main font for the EUSDR is *Calibri* and its use is recommended for all EUSDR outputs. Example:

Normal text:

European Strategy for the Danube Region

European Strategy for the Danube Region







European Strategy for the Danube Region

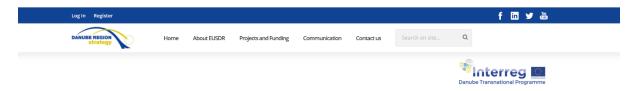
Headings:

European Strategy for the Danube Region

European Strategy for the Danube Region

Website header

The EUSDR website has the following header



Presentations, letters & documents

If drafting a letter or report in relation to the EUSDR, it is recommended you use the available templates where the EUSDR logo is visible. The EUSDR logo is displayed on the top, preferably in the top right corner. The inclusion of other pertinent logos is therefore possible, by respecting the free space rule.

Templates for all priority areas are available on the website, both for presentations (.ppt format) and for letters/ reports (.doc format). They may be downloaded from the following link: <u>https://danube-region.eu/communication-tools/eusdr-visual-identity/</u>

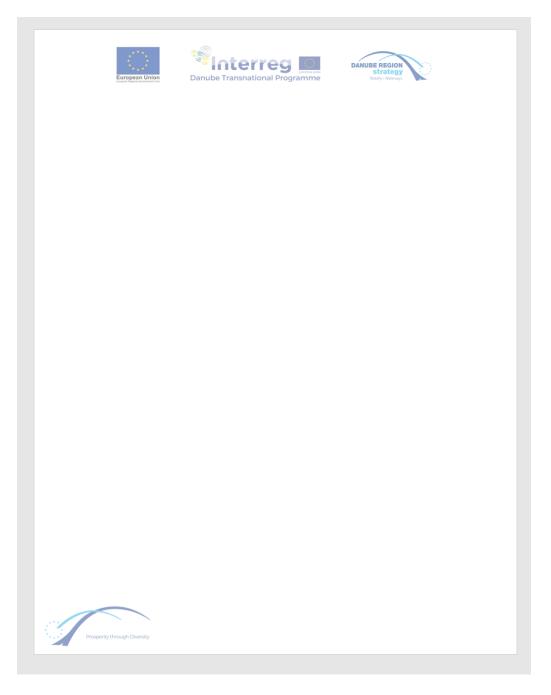
The presented templates include the minimum information, as related to EU and EUSDR. Any other logos may be added at the right of the EUSDR/ PA logo.







.doc model:









.ppt model:

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Email signature model:

Name SURNAME

position within EUSDR EUSDR structure (NC, PA, etc)

employer institution/ organisation Postal address (street no, zip code, city, country) Land phone no. Mobile phone no. Email address Website





<u>Note</u>: The EUSDR general logo will be used in the signature for all structures, for unity and coherence reasons.







Annexes (templates)

Annex 1

Media Event Checklist

Activity	Person responsible	Deadline (date)	Notes	Done
Develop (update) media list				
Make logistics arrangements for event venue				
Invite media				
Write press release				
Prepare and print press kit folder				
Prepare CD/flash drive with relevant EUSDR photos				
Prepare promotional giveaways for the event and evaluation form to be filled in by the participants and handed over at the registration desk when the event finishes				
Invite special guests (officials, experts) and confirm participation				
Assign roles in the team: who receives the guests and media, who registers them, who briefs the special guests, who answers to media questions and what are the recommended answers (based on the press release)				







(Just before the event) Check		
logistic arrangements: room		
arrangement, branding,		
equipment, event		
registration facilities		
(During the event) be sure all		
participants register on the		
presence sheets and		
compare their total number		
with the number of		
invitations		
(During the event) Collect		
business cards, information,		
requests from guests		
(During the event) Collect		
immediate feedback of the		
participants on evaluation		
forms		
(After the event) follow-up		
with attendees – special		
guests and media		
(After the event) collect		
statistics, feedback, media		
coverage for analysis		

What the press kit should contain:

- Press release
- Background information about EUSDR (i.e narrative, EUSDR main structure pillars, priority areas, targets & measures etc.)
- Brief presentation of the officials participating in the event (one paragraph per person)
- CD/ flash drive with relevant EUSDR photos
- List of contacts for significant/ relevant projects







Date: [insert date]

Media Invitation to

[insert the name of the event]

The [insert the name of the organiser] has the pleasure to invite media representatives from [insert the name of the country] to attend a [insert the name of the event: i.e. press conference or round table discussion or conference or debate etc.] on the subject [insert the main topic of the event].

What: [insert again the main topic of the event and other brief information like what novelty this event brings and who are the experts and / or high officials attending]

Date: [insert the date]

Time: [insert the time]

Venue: [insert the event's location, including full address, city, country]

For further information, please contact:

[insert the name of person who can offer details and his/her telephone and email]







Media Event Coverage Report

Title	
Venue	
Date	
Names of officials or experts present	
Nature of attendance ⁹	
Participation of media attendants ¹⁰	
Objectives	
Main results / outcomes ¹¹	
Media coverage	
- Type (radio, television, online, written press)	
- Number of articles / types	
 Number of articles with images 	
 Number of positive/ neutral/negative articles 	

Documents included as appendix to the report:

- Event program and CD/ flash drive with photos (if available)
- Guest/ participants list
- Attendance list
- All materials supporting the media coverage received by the event (links to electronic articles, articles print screens)

⁹ Mainly media or government or academic etc. Enclose as appendix the guest list and media list

¹⁰ Whether the media representatives had or not the possibility to interact with the speakers

¹¹ For example: participants expressed interest in further collaboration, potential policy impact, mentioned specific collaboration opportunities etc.







Press Release

[insert headline of the press release]

Date: [insert date of publish]

Contact: [insert press contact info: name, email, phone]

[insert the first paragraph of the press release: begin with a sentence that provides a quick overview of the news brought by your activity or event and explain why it is important; it should be easily readable and make the news sound accessible and interesting to external audiences. This sentence shall answer the following questions: who, what, when, where, how.]

[next, provide some background information on the activity / event: what changes did it make, why are these changes important and for whom, what are the benefits; this paragraph could contain quotes from the highest official present at the event or by an expert; avoid terminology which is not easily comprehensive by your target audience and the general public]

[the last paragraph could include some more detailed, yet relevant, information or data that could make the reader eager to find more, including links to the website]







Checklist for organising Steering Group meetings



- feedback/proposals for amendment
- make SG members feel valued







Event Concept Note Template

Insert Title of the Event

Insert date and place of the event

1. Implementing entity and partners (organisers)

Insert name of the organisers, including partners, submitting the concept note.

2. Background

Provide a short general overview of the event, including operational timeframe (start end end dates).

3. Project summary

3.1. Overall objective

Provide the overall general objective of the event.

3.2. Main theme discussed during the event

Theme 1

Theme 2

Theme 3

3.3. Draft agenda

Provide the draft agenda of the event.

3.4. Participants

Provide possible institutions and organisations where the participants may come from.

3.5. Date and venue

Clearly indicate the date and the venue, specifying the postal address of the place.

3.6. Contact information

Please provide the details (as applicable) below.

Name of organisation:

Mailing address:

Physical address (if different from mailing address):

Website (if applicable):

Primary contact person:

Title:

Email:

Telephone number:

Fax number (if applicable):







Project Concept Note Template

Insert Title of Proposed Project

Insert date of proposal

1. Implementing entity and partners

Insert name and short history of the organisation submitting the concept note.

2. Background

Provide a short general overview of the proposed project, including operational timeframe (start and end dates).

3. Project summary

a. Overall objective

Provide the overall general objective of the proposed project.

b. Expected outcomes

Provide the overall expected outcomes of the proposed project (approximately 1-3).

c. Indicators of achievement

Provide key indicators (1-2 per expected outcome) of how the expected outcomes will be measured. Clearly indicate the expected outcome(s) to which each indicator relates.

d. Main activities

List the main activities of the proposed project. Please clearly indicate the expected outcome(s) to which each activity relates.

e. Key target beneficiary population

Provide a detailed description of the key target beneficiary group, including key characteristics/demographics. Provide the rationale of why and how this target audience was chosen.

f. Summary budget

Provide a brief overview of the proposed budget for this project. Applicants chosen for further assessment will be required to submit a detailed budget.

g. Contact information

Please provide the details (as applicable) below.

Name of organisation: Mailing address:

Physical address (if different from mailing address):

Website (if applicable):

Primary contact person:

Title: Email:

Telephone number:

Fax number (if applicable):







Type/ name of meeting Month, year City, Country

List of Participants (LoP)

		First Name	Organisation	Country / Ref.	Consent (P	Please indicate	e with "X")	
	Last Name				Photo consent ¹	Audio recording ²	E-Mail list ³	Signature
1								
2								
3								







			Organisation	Country / Ref.	Consent (Please indicate with "X")			
	Last Name	First Name			Photo consent ¹	Audio recording ²	E-Mail list ³	Signature
4								

¹ PHOTO CONSENT

I grant permission to the organisers of this meeting (*Danube Strategy Point, EUSDR presidency*) for the use of photograph(s) and/or electronic images in any presentation of any and all kind whatsoever. I understand that I may revoke this authorisation at any time by notifying <u>office@eusdr-dsp.eu</u> in writing. The revocation will not affect any actions taken before the receipt of this written notification. Images will be stored in a secure location and only authorised staff will have access to them. They will be kept as long as they are relevant and after that time destroyed or archived.

² AUDIO RECORDING CONSENT

I agree that my contributions to the meetings will be recorded by the organisers of the meeting (*Danube Strategy Point, EUSDR presidency*). I understand and consent to the use and release of the recording to the organisers. I understand that the information and recording will only serve for transcription of the meetings to prepare the proceedings and will not be used for any other purposes. I relinquish any rights to the recording.

³ E-MAIL LIST CONSENT

In my function of a nominated National Coordinator (NC) / Priority Area Coordinator (PAC) for the EUSDR, as a NC or PAC team member or in my role as a further EUSDR stakeholder, I agree that my occupational E-Mail address is added to the EUSDR mailing list (*operated by Danube Strategy Point as well as the EUSDR presidency*). This mailing list can be set up as an open or non-hidden mailing list. I agree that my E-mail address may be included in this EUSDR mailing list, so that other persons belonging to the EUSDR mailing list can see that the respective message also was sent to me. I understand that I may revoke this authorisation at any time by notifying <u>office@eusdr-dsp.eu</u> in writing. The revocation will not affect any actions taken before the receipt of this written notification.



Danube Strategy Point 2020 https://danube-region.eu