

# EU Strategy for the Danube Region

## Governance Architecture Paper



## Contents

1. Background.....	1
2. Governance scheme .....	2
2.1. The High Level Group (HLG) .....	2
2.2. The National Coordinators (NCs).....	3
2.3. The TRIO Presidency.....	4
2.4 The EUSDR Presidency.....	5
2.5 The Priority Area Coordinators (PACs) .....	6
2.6 The Steering Groups (SG) .....	7
2.7 The Working Groups (WG) <i>optional</i> .....	8
2.8 The European Commission (EC) .....	9
2.9 The Danube Strategy Point (DSP) .....	10
2.10 The Danube Youth Council (DYC) .....	10
3. Danube Region Programme (DRP) .....	12

## 1. Background

The governance of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) plays a strategic role for the implementation of its actions and the achievements of its objectives, targets and overall goals. EUSDR participating states and key stakeholders have made great efforts to build and ensure an effective and efficient governance for the EUSDR at all levels. However, a number of challenges within the EUSDR governance, and consequently within the implementation of the EUSDR, still provides room for improvement: appropriate participation in meetings, strong ownership and commitment, sufficient resources, high staff fluctuation, shortcomings in concrete implementation and follow-up of the agreed actions etc.<sup>1</sup>. Also, the *Reports from the Commission on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies and the Joint statements of the Ministers of the participating states of the EUSDR*<sup>2</sup>, apart from acknowledging a well-functioning EUSDR governance system, identify the above mentioned and other areas for further improvement of the EUSDR, which aim at simplifying the interplay between EUSDR key implementers and providing a clarification of their roles.

The Strategy seeks to make best use of what is available in the Region (funds, knowledge, capacities etc.), which means that all stakeholders must take responsibility. At this point, better governance must clarify what is essential for the success of our joint approach, including stronger responsibility by EUSDR participating states.

It appears that improvements are especially required in the field of a stronger political leadership and commitment, effective decision-making and greater clarity in the organisation of work. We should aim at a smarter use of existing resources, building on synergies in relevant existing processes, and understand that all governance levels are interrelated and interdependent in the way described in this document.

The main goal of this paper is to:

- improve coordination and cooperation in view of further enhancing the commitment to the Strategy and its effective implementation;
- support the development of the necessary administrative capacity to ensure that political commitment translates into effective implementation.

The key is to empower relevant stakeholders and implementers (NCs, PACs, SGs, DSP, DYC, etc.) and increase the ownership of the relevant line ministries on the national level. Such empowerment also improves mobilisation of regions, cities, agencies and institutions such as universities, private businesses and civil society, encouraging them to network, cooperate and participate in the implementation and development of the Strategy.

To achieve the above mentioned, a lean governance structure, effective decision making and clear competence distribution should be in focus.

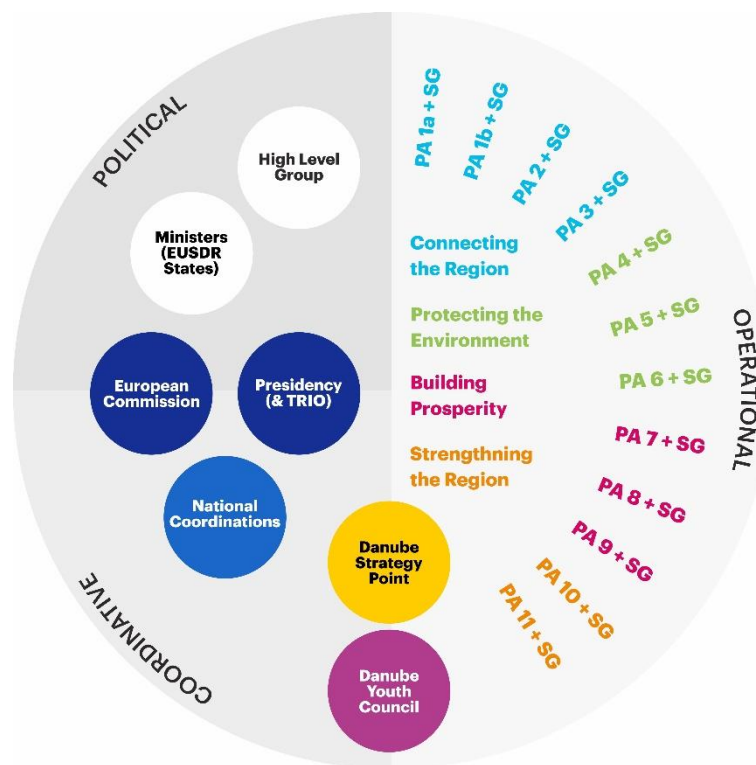
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<sup>1</sup> Further information in the EUSDR Operational Evaluation (2019) and the EUSDR Policy/Impact Evaluation (2022) is available [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Further information available [here](#).

## 2. Governance scheme

This chapter defines the roles and responsibilities of the High Level Group on macro-regional strategies, the National Coordinators, the TRIO Presidency, the EUSDR Presidency, the Priority Area Coordinators, the Steering Groups, the Working Groups, the European Commission, the Danube Strategy Point and the Danube Youth Council in implementing the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.



EUSDR governance structure (source: <https://danube-region.eu/about/governance/>)

### 2.1. The High Level Group (HLG)

The High Level Group (HLG) on macro-regional strategies (MRS) advises the European Commission (EC) on the coordination and monitoring of macro-regional strategies. It is made up of official representatives from all EU Member States and the non-EU states participating in the MRS. The HLG ensures coordination and monitoring across all MRS, assesses progress made in their implementation and may provide policy orientation and strategic guidance. It is the overarching forum where the approaches and practices in each MRS are compared to maximise the leverage and impact<sup>3</sup>.

The Commission's biennial report on the implementation of macro-regional strategies and the annual HLG meetings (usually in the framework of the EC's EU MRS Week) provide important overall strategic guidance also for the individual MRS.

<sup>3</sup> Further information on the High Level Group is available [here](#).

## 2.2. The National Coordinators (NCs)

The NCs are the focal point on the national level and they form the decision-making body of the Strategy. They are the core strategic decision-makers within the governance structure of the EUSDR. They also have a strategic coordination function of the Strategy within their state.

NCs are appointed, and recalled, in written form by their government / respective institution (e.g. line ministry). Each participating state has to officially nominate a NC and / or one or more deputies. They constantly keep the incumbent EUSDR Presidency and the European Commission updated as soon as changes occur.

As the participating states are governing the EUSDR and they are the sole owners of the Strategy, the key role of NCs, with support of the Danube Strategy Point (DSP) upon request, is to coordinate, guide and monitor the participation of their state in the implementation of the EUSDR including all 12 Priority Areas (considering SG and PAC meetings, etc.), and to liaise with their national line ministries and other relevant organisations to motivate them to consider and implement the EUSDR in their policy field. Hence, they strive for monitoring the progress of the Strategy at macro-regional / national / regional / local level and for contributing to the Strategy's progress by identifying national and transnational needs and putting common solutions on the agenda, bearing in mind the national specificity of each participating state. To enable this monitoring, NCs should be provided with all available reports on the functioning of the Strategy, in particular those of the DRP and the EC. They can request specific reports from the DSP or external expertise. NCs facilitate coordination, consultation and implementation in each state, by identifying relevant contacts, and above all, by advancing practical aspects of the work.

NCs also promote the EUSDR and its visibility and pursue continuous dialogue with relevant macro-regional / national / regional / local stakeholders of key developments and ongoing initiatives, aiming also at facilitating the involvement of relevant stakeholders.

NCs encourage the mutual exchange with relevant programmes (in particular their managing authorities) / financial instruments, aiming at better alignment of policies, resources and funding at national and macro-regional level. This also comprises keeping close contact with the political level in order to secure reciprocal feedback and adjustment, for instance with relevant ministers.

NCs and PACs are in a systematic two-way exchange between the national and the EUSDR level in the MLG system, the nominations of SG members and the general information about the exchange with/involvement of SG members at national level. This applies both to NC-PAC exchanges within a state or region as well as to exchanges between NCs and PACs from other states in the Danube Region. NCs meet at least twice per year including one joint meeting between NCs and PACs. The meetings are organised and chaired by the state holding the rotating EUSDR Presidency, with the support of the TRIO Presidency and the DSP, in cooperation with the EC, and invitation of the DYC. NCs define Rules of Procedure for their meetings.

*NCs functions include:*

- Coordinating and keeping an overview of the active participation of their state in the implementation of the Strategy;
- Acting as interface and link between the operational / management level (PACs, SG, etc.) and the political / ministerial level;

- Reviewing and appropriately comply with recommendations and requests for support coming from the PACs and the Steering Groups;
- Addressing, whenever required and upon request from PACs, national line Ministries for reengaging the role of the SG members with support of the EC (e.g. supportive letter);
- Informing and involving the ministerial level, as appropriate;
- Ensuring coordination with existing national, regional and local cooperation organisations, as appropriate;
- Raising awareness for the EUSDR and the Danube Region within relevant ministries, for possible stakeholders, as well as the broader public;
- Agreeing to the annual work programme of a rotating EUSDR Presidency, incl. the thematic priorities of major events;
- Proposing possible revisions of the Strategy and / or the EUSDR Action Plan;
- Facilitating linkages between PAs (together with PACs);
- Guiding communication, information and publicity about the Strategy;
- Upon request and agreement, providing support and guidelines for the orientation of the EUSDR Annual Forum (e.g. setting the agenda);
- Supporting a sound monitoring and evaluation;
- Providing leadership for and ownership of the DSP (taking into account the specific requirements following the fact that the DSP is implemented as a DRP project);
- Reporting (via EUSDR Presidency) to the HLG on MRS and the EUSDR;
- Being the guardian of the proper functioning of the governance of the EUSDR, any non-compliance with the principles in this document, affecting the proper functioning of the Strategy, shall be discussed by the NCs.

## 2.3. The TRIO Presidency

For securing coherency, ensuring strategic stability and greater continuity of the work between EUSDR Presidency cycles, regular coordination between the incumbent Presidency, the past and the future Presidency is proactively pursued.

The TRIO Presidency has a clear supportive role for the incumbent EUSDR Presidency. Regular exchange on strategic and coordinative issues has to be secured and TRIO meetings are held back-to-back with NC meetings and joint NC and PAC meetings.

EC and DSP are invited to participate in the TRIO Presidency meetings.

The incumbent EUSDR Presidency, after consultation within the TRIO Presidency, prepares all major meetings and documents.

If so agreed by the NCs, the TRIO Presidency (via incumbent Presidency) represents the NCs vis-à-vis the European political level (e.g. addressing jointly agreed letters on behalf of all NCs to the European Parliament, etc.).

The DSP serves as an institutional memory and support to the TRIO Presidencies to maintain a high information flow and a continuity of the Strategy (long-term) priorities.

## 2.4 The EUSDR Presidency

Pursuing a rotation principle, the EUSDR Presidency is taken over by an EUSDR participating state for a one-year period. The EUSDR Presidency via rotation principle follows the alphabetical order of the participating states with their official English name<sup>4</sup>.

The incumbent EUSDR Presidency proactively performs the coordination among NCs and PACs, supported by DSP and in cooperation with the EC and strives to facilitate decision-making and cooperation. Each EUSDR Presidency may closely collaborate with the Danube Youth Council (DYC), e.g. by inviting the DYC to EUSDR Presidency-related events, giving the DYC an active role in such events, collecting DYC inputs on EUSDR Presidency papers/declarations and actively involving the DYC in the EUSDR Annual Forum.

The EUSDR Presidency will organise and chair at least one meeting of NCs, one meeting of PACs and one joint meeting of NCs and PACs, with the support of the TRIO Presidency and the DSP, in cooperation with the EC and invitation of the DYC.

The incumbent EUSDR Presidency is in charge of hosting the EUSDR Annual Forum, ideally back-to-back with a ministerial meeting where a ministerial declaration should be adopted in order to raise the political profile of the EUSDR, in cooperation with the EC and with the support of DSP.

The main purpose of such a ministerial meeting, convening ministers from all 14 Danube Region states, in charge of an EUSDR or a specific sectoral policy, is to give strategic guidance and secure political commitment both at national and European level. The adopted ministerial declaration should have an impact on the objectives to be reached and the way the related public (sector) policy is being implemented in the Danube Region.

Based on previous experience, each EUSDR Presidency shall consider to prepare, together with DSP, a work plan on how to improve the involvement of civil society, business, academia, social partners and the local level in the implementation of the EUSDR. Depending on its programmatic focus, this goal should be included in the agenda of at least one of the EUSDR governance meetings (NC, PAC, NC-PAC) and the EUSDR Annual Forum. This plan shall be duly coordinated and distributed together with the EUSDR communication plan to ensure coherence of messaging while engaging with the public.

The EUSDR Presidency's priorities shall also ensure a good level of continuity from the past Presidencies as well as a response to the emerging challenges also securing the involvement of the future EUSDR Presidencies (TRIO Presidency). The EUSDR Presidencies are invited to focus on one political priority which should be well-promoted, communicated and implemented.

Each EUSDR Presidency is invited to organise Annual Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Danube Region during its term, to increase the outreach of the EUSDR on the level of Parliaments / National assemblies.

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<sup>4</sup> Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany (incl. Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria), Hungary, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Ukraine.

## 2.5 The Priority Area Coordinators (PACs)

Twelve Priority Areas (PAs) represent the Danube Strategy's fields of action in which the Strategy is contributing to improvements (either through tackling the main challenges or through seizing the main opportunities). The twelve PAs are grouped into four Pillars.

The PAs represent the most important and vital components of the Strategy. PACs and the SG members represent the expertise in the respective sector and drive forward the overall process, identifying key sectors for action and adopting the most suitable goals to implement actions. Having the overview of the sector, they can identify key processes leading to fulfilment of the Strategy's goals through different actions and through selecting how to best implement solutions.

Each Priority Area is managed by two or more PACs coming from different Danube Region states. Each participating state should be authorised as Coordinator of a Priority Area, if willing and able to do so. PACs are appointed and recalled in written form by their government and should have sufficient capability, mandate and resources to fulfil their tasks for the Strategy. The list of PACs needs to be approved by the NCs. PACs keep the incumbent EUSDR Presidency, the EC and the DSP updated in case changes occur.

The PACs are key facilitators of the Strategy and serve as a strong liaison between their PA's groups of actors by offering a platform for exchanging and coordinating initiatives, stakeholders, policy processes and information. They work on the implementation of related PA actions, in close contact with the EC and relevant EU agencies, together with relevant stakeholders at different territorial level (EU, international, national, regional, local) and of different background (inter-governmental, non-governmental, experts, academia, multipliers, civil society, financial instruments etc.).

Identifying key processes leading to fulfilment of the Strategy's goals, PACs have an interface and mediating function: they are in charge of coordination, implementation and communication in their specific PA. Their work is purely transnational, inter-sectorial and inter-institutional. PACs act on behalf of all participating states.

PACs with the support of SG members should assess the situation of each policy area to identify which drivers could be better used, and which barriers must be overcome, if need be. They may then make recommendations to NCs on possible ways to tackle the identified problems, where appropriate. NCs are encouraged to review and appropriately comply with recommendations and requests for support coming from the PACs and the Steering Group. Regular participation of the EC (DG REGIO and other DGs) and DYC representatives should be sought in the meetings of the SGs. PACs and NCs are in a systematic two-way exchange between the national and the EUSDR level in the MLG system, the nominations of SG members and the general information about the exchange with/involvement of SG members at national level. This applies both to PAC-NC exchanges within a state or region as well as to exchanges between PACs and NCs from other states in the Danube Region.

The PACs have to monitor and report, as well as communicate their activities to a wider public. For the communication, they should review and update their websites and strive for a consistent "branding" of the EUSDR with the support of the DSP.



PACs may issue Letters of Recommendation for projects in line with their relevant actions and are to select and/or update yearly the Danube Strategy Flagships<sup>5</sup> based on the decision of the Steering Group.

PACs define Rules of Procedure for their meetings.

## 2.6 The Steering Groups (SG)

SGs are the central executive and decision-making bodies at PA level regarding objectives, formats and emphases of cooperation and future developments. SG members are ‘the expert drivers of the day-to-day implementation’, who decide on the joint work within the PA together with the PACs and who provide advice and assistance.

The SG represents the key national authorities in the relevant field. As a general principle, PACs aim at securing transparency towards SG members. The work of the SGs is both transnational, inter-sectorial, inter-institutional and aiming at an effective embedding into the various national contexts. SG members thus have a dual function: on the one hand, they ensure the transfer of EUSDR topics from the PAs to the national level/line ministries and, on the other hand, they bring national topics from the line ministries to the EUSDR level with regard to the needs of the PAs. SG members are appointed and recalled in written form by their government, represented by the respective NC and should in any case reflect the mandate to have sufficient capability and resources to fulfil their tasks for the Strategy (e.g. to express national positions, to take decisions and to vote in a SG meeting). SG members should also have a good knowledge and awareness of their assigned tasks, especially those of their dual function as described above. NCs shall ensure that SG members are aware of their role and in the same way this shall be communicated by PACs to SG members.

The NCs are to inform the PACs in written about the nominations of new SG members and to keep the DSP informed within this process to maintain the contact lists. The PACs update the NCs of the respective participating state and the DSP as soon as changes occur if communicated directly by the respective SG line ministries.

Non-ministerial / governmental key implementers and others may also attend the SG meetings as observers upon invitation. Non-ministerial key implementers make significant contributions acting also as a link to other networks, such as international organisations (e.g. WTO, ICPDR, Carpathian Convention), NGOs, trade unions, chambers of commerce, universities and local authorities, thus helping to bring the Strategy ‘closer to the people’.

SG members, including observers, also support the PACs in reporting and evaluation of the EUSDR – they identify progress related to the improvements of the actions and projects and achievement of targets. They also regularly provide information/reports on their work to their state’s NC and the line ministers responsible for PA issues, ensuring a permanent communication flow at the political and operational levels of the Strategy.

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<sup>5</sup> Further information on the Danube Strategy Flagships is available [here](#).

Each SG shall define Rules of Procedure for its meetings.

*SG functions include:*

- Making appropriate and realistic efforts to contribute to the implementation of the formulated PA targets;
- Identifying actions / projects to be included in the Action Plan, ensuring that they comply with the Pillars' objectives and PA needs, including crosscutting and horizontal aspects and ensuring their implementation;
- Preparing and regularly updating the Roadmap of Actions of the Priority Area (e.g. detailing commonly agreed milestones, setting their deadlines, linking with related projects, tracking status of achievement etc.) where applicable and based on the PA needs;
- Identifying relevant funding sources for the actions/projects/processes selected and facilitating and following up implementation of actions/projects, including monitoring and evaluation on EUSDR level;
- Ensuring linkages with the other PA Steering Groups whenever appropriate and based on the PA needs;
- Liaising with managing and programming authorities/ National IPA or NDICI Coordinators of EU programmes in EU and accession countries whenever appropriate and based on the PA needs;
- With the support of the EC, liaising with: relevant EU programmes managed directly by the Commission; international financial institutions, regional cooperation organisations, etc. whenever appropriate and based on the PA needs;
- Submitting to the NCs policy proposals and recommendations for revisions of the Action Plan;
- Updating targets, references etc. which do not change the Action Plan substantially, in close dialogue with the EC (substantial changes remain the sole competence of the NCs) and based on the PA needs;
- Support the reporting and evaluation of the Strategy – they identify progress related to the progress in actions and projects and achievement of targets;
- Reporting on PA progress towards the DRP, EC and DSP (EUSDR) will be done by PACs.

## 2.7 The Working Groups (WG) *optional*

PACs are in charge of setting up appropriate operational working structures, best suited to implement the actions, to agree on a work programme between the stakeholders involved and to trace progress achieved. For these tasks, PA sub-groups can be installed, such as working groups, task forces or advisory bodies around sub-themes.

## 2.8 The European Commission (EC)

The overall role of the Commission is that of a strategic adviser, i.e. to play a key role in providing strategic coordination of the macro-regional strategies where its involvement brings a clear added value. EC also plays a leading role in the strategic coordination of the Strategy and promotes that it is taken in due account in all relevant EU policies and instruments; the EC has an essential role in all four EU macro-regional strategies through the Directorate General for Regional and Urban policy (DG REGIO), and upon invitation other DGs. EC strategically supports the implementation of the EUSDR in cooperation with the participating states, Council and European Parliament. With its institutional background, it helps comparing the functioning of MRS and gives a possibility to promote alignment mostly between MRS and transnational cooperation programmes (also known as Interreg B), but also in case of other EU programmes. DG REGIO is also a key adviser when it comes to prioritising policies and strategic frameworks.

DG REGIO actively pursues strategic coordination at policy level (Council, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee, other EC DGs, NCs) and seeks to better interlink and align the Strategy with programmes during programming and implementation (i.e. EU, national, regional, centrally managed funding instruments). DG REGIO actively promotes the embedding of the EUSDR both at the strategic document level (e.g. Partnership Agreements, Operational Programmes etc.) and at operational level (for instance through practical advice and good examples). This is done, inter alia, by promoting continuous dialogue between EC actors (DG REGIO/NEAR state desk officers, desk officers from other DGs) and programme bodies (managing/programming authorities, Joint Secretariats, intermediate bodies).

Furthermore, DG REGIO promotes and facilitates the dialogue and involvement of stakeholders within the Danube Region, within the EU (other DGs, programmes, platforms, and other stakeholders) and across macro-regional strategies – in thematic or procedural terms. This also comprises the exchange of information, good practices, lessons learned and solutions perceived for triggering learning effects and for contributing to the streamlining of processes.

As it is the case for all MRS, DG REGIO is in charge of reporting to the other EU institutions (Council, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee) on the progress made in implementing the EUSDR and the results achieved; including facilitating the bridging with relevant activities at EU-level, like e.g. by ESPON's MRS monitoring, etc.

For that purpose, every two years the EC publishes a report on the implementation of EU MRS to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, based on contributions given by the Strategies' key implementers (the first was published in 2016).

The EC attends the NC, PAC and – as far as feasible - SG meetings in its advisory and supportive role and supports participation / involvement of DGs in the PAs' work. The Commission supports and calls to commitment on the SG work with a one-time supportive letter inviting the respective states for support in the SG-nomination and work.

## 2.9 The Danube Strategy Point (DSP)

The Danube Strategy Point (DSP) is a strategic working unit and supportive body for the EUSDR, which supports the implementation, communication, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation of the EUSDR.

The DSP supports both the core strategic decision-makers (NCs) and the operational level (PACs) of the Strategy. Additionally, it enhances the connection of the Strategy to EU financial resources and to DG REGIO and supports technically and strategically the DYC. The DSP thus has a supporting function for the Strategy, easing the communication and coordination among the (TRIO) Presidency, the EC, NCs, PACs, further stakeholders and the wider public. Its primary role is to support the EUSDR implementation, communication, monitoring and evaluation and interlinking with DRP.

Furthermore, DSP offers technical support to PAs and supports the development of capacities of all actors involved, taking into account the multiple challenges posed by different fields, especially accession countries. Capacity building is also provided by DSP for newcomers to EUSDR through several tools (e.g. the '*Unfolding EUSDR Workshop*' series and the EUSDR Implementation Toolkit '*The ABC of Macro Regional Strategies*'<sup>6</sup>).

Through various activities in those areas, DSP also provides necessary information to the NCs, feedback and proposals for streamlining the operational and political decision-making processes.

DSP seeks to promote the EUSDR within the Danube Region, but also on European level by performing agreed communication activities.

DSP supports the alignment of the Strategy and funding instruments and collaboration with strategic actors and other MRS and their Support Units.

DSP should also carry out a cross-reference analysis of the work and projects made in the PAs.

One of the DSP's functions is to ensure the institutional memory of the EUSDR and contribute to the capacity building of its main actors.

DSP's day-to-day work is done in close contact with the incumbent EUSDR Presidency.

## 2.10 The Danube Youth Council (DYC)

The DYC is the platform for institutional involvement of young people (18-29 years<sup>7</sup>) in all EUSDR bodies to make ideas and viewpoints of young people heard and considered on a political level and to enable dynamic exchange and learning processes.

The DYC acts as an independent body, not affiliated to any political party or political organisation. It was created for the purpose of working with the different levels of the EUSDR governance and other institutions in the Danube Region and the European Union.

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<sup>6</sup> Further information on the tools are available [here](#).

<sup>7</sup> According to the definition of young people not being older than 29 years by Eurostat, see [here](#).

The DYC has been established as of October 2022 and is composed of 28 members, 2 members from each of the 14 Danube Region countries.

The yearly selection of candidates for a mandate period of one year is carried out by DSP by random sample, considering the diversity criteria. DYC members are entitled to extend their mandate once for another one-year period (1+1 rule). The DYC is represented by two elected DYC spokespersons. Modalities of the election of functions within the DYC, the attendance of DYC members in meetings, and other aspects, are laid out in the DYC Role and Mission document and the DYC Rules of Procedure<sup>8</sup>.

The DYC advises the NCs on all questions relating to youth and youth participation in the EUSDR and its member countries, supporting the mainstreaming of youth policies into the EUSDR governance and its member countries through provision of information, opinions and proposals.

DYC representatives are actively involved on a thematically oriented basis at meetings of relevant decision-making bodies (e.g. EUSDR Annual Forum, EUSDR related events), structurally contributing to the mainstreaming of youth policies in the EUSDR.

All DYC members meet at least twice a year, discuss and address topics for all relevant EUSDR meetings and prepare the EUSDR Youth Event as part of the EUSDR Annual Forum. Resulting recommendations, reports and other material are submitted in written to relevant EUSDR bodies via the DSP, which serves as facilitator.

*DYC functions include:*

- Providing a discussion platform for exchange of expertise and advice in areas related to youth issues and policies;
- Bringing ideas to the attention of high-level politicians from EUSDR states and regions;
- Participating in EUSDR events as well as international and EU related youth events.
- Providing information & opinions to NCs and/or PACs in areas related to youth policies and propose concrete actions and projects and suggest topics;
- Contributing to PAC activities and promoting and interlinking trans-sectoral issues;
- Recommending how best to plan and implement the embedding of youth policies in the governance of the EUSDR;
- Helping to raise support and funds for youth related projects in the EUSDR;
- Supporting the visibility of the EUSDR and its aims 'on the ground' and online (e.g. via social media), gathering input from/serving as link to other relevant institutions and organisations.
- Providing a youth focused link to cohesion, EU enlargement, EU neighbourhood and other EUSDR relevant policies on transnational, macro-regional, national, regional and local levels;
- Connecting EUSDR youth policies to EU/European organisations as well as other MRS;

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<sup>8</sup> Further information on the DYC is available [here](#).

### 3. Danube Region Programme (DRP)

The DRP is considered as key partner for implementing the EUSDR objectives (see relevant Interreg regulation)<sup>9</sup>. DRP projects have important functions in this respect.

The governance arrangement between DRP and the EUSDR has been specified during the DRP programming process 2021-2027.

Since the 2014-2020 period DRP has been providing financial support to the PACs, to the DSP, and to the EUSDR Annual Forum via the DSP. Therefore, it is an essential instrument for the implementation of the EUSDR. Furthermore, projects and activities funded by the DRP shall be fully aligned with the EUSDR. Moreover, studies like the territorial analysis carried out for the preparation of the DRP's programming of the 2021-2027 phase were deemed helpful for the EUSDR. DG REGIO and DSP support the linkages between DRP and EUSDR. Permanent collaboration between DRP and the EUSDR is enhanced by the regular attendance of DRP Managing Authority / Joint Secretariat in the NC and PAC meetings as well as at the EUSDR Annual Fora. Common meetings of the DRP Monitoring Committee (MC) and the EUSDR NCs and / or PACs are considered helpful, in particular during the preparation of a new funding period.

Prepared and endorsed under the Croatian EUSDR Presidency 2020 as of 22 July 2020.

Updated under the Slovenian EUSDR Presidency 2023 as of 6 November 2023.

DSP, 22 July 2020

DSP, 6 November 2023

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<sup>9</sup> Further information on the DRP is available [here](#).