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**Anton Sterbling**

**The Danube Region – Cooperation and Competition**

The contribution first proposes a paradigm shift from a perspective focusing on individual nation states to a regional view as a more suitable approach to analyzing the Danube Region. The subsequent specification of the terms “Danube Region” and “Central Europe” is followed by outlining the typical patterns of cooperative and competitive relations in the Danube Region as exemplified by extra-economic relationships between individual Danube Region countries. In conclusion, migration processes are addressed, in particular the massive east-west migration and its effects and ramifications concerning the transnationalization of the Danube Region.

**Gudrun Biffl**

**Growth Opportunities through Regional Specialization**

Enlargement of the European Union in 2004, 2007 and, most recently, in 2013 (Croatia) has expanded the EU’s economic and cultural spheres of action, building a bridge to the Black Sea Region, the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Now the EU is actively striving for economic convergence between the EU member states by means of the economically weaker regions receiving aid and benefits from structural funds to be able to catch up.

The contribution analyzes which economic measures have been taken to achieve this goal and finds that adjustment problems have occurred as a result. These should be overcome by establishing a learning society.

**Milan Pajević**

**Guiding Principles for Cooperation in the Danube Region**

As a Danube country, Serbia – like many others in the region – faces huge challenges: high unemployment, youth unemployment, long-term unemployment, and an economy that is starting to grow again but needs to be achieving a growth rate of 5–7% to create mass employment.

Like other countries, Serbia is embedding the Danube Strategy in its plans for EU and other funds through the programming process. We have had over 150 international assistance projects operational since 2007, which bring specific benefits to the Dan-
ube region in Serbia, including two initiatives focused solely on it. In addition, Serbia needs to ensure the trans-European corridors, realistically focus its tourism strategy on specific assets and build prosperity by channelling and coordinating investments into enterprise, innovation, education and skills in priority industries where it has comparative advantages: agri-food, automotive, ICT and energy.

**Friedrich Faulhammer**

**The Danube Region – Education and Science in a Macroregion**

Education and science are of great significance for the development of the European macroregions. In this context universities and colleges bear particular responsibility in that they expand their spheres of activity and turn their attention to capabilities within the traditional science system that have hitherto been hardly or only partly used. This applies in particular also to the Danube Region macroregion, which connects 14 countries with 115 million people and 17 official national languages.

**Danica Purg**

**Developing Management and Leadership for a Better World**

The Slovenian IEDC Bled School of Management was established 27 years ago as an International Executive Development Centre with focus on people in leading positions who want to develop themselves in this respect.

In 2012 IEDC was awarded for having one of the four most innovative MBAs in the world. One of the innovations receiving this award was the integration of “art as a metaphor” in the MBA program, where art is used to develop creative and inspirational leaders.

Via this plus CEEMAN, the Central and Eastern Europe Management Development Association established 20 years ago, IEDC Bled School of Management highly resonates with the United Nations Global Compact Principles for Responsible Management Education.

**Neven Žarković, Branimir Žarković, Tomislav Žarković**

**Experience with Education in Project Management as Foundation for Developing a Knowledge-Based Society**

Developing a knowledge-based society is commonly considered a crucial precondition for creating a modern society. Thus, even though it is often criticized for its complexity and insufficient beneficial effects for the career development of both academics and entrepreneurs, the Bologna Process may indeed be considered an important pillar of
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the European knowledge-based society vision. Aiming to solve this problem at least on the regional level, the College of Business and Administration Baltazar Adam Krčelić (BAK) has in collaboration with the Rudjer Bošković Institute (RBI) launched a master’s program in Project Management that trains students in both entrepreneurial and research skills. This innovative approach in higher education has facilitated the transition of BAK into a University of Applied Sciences and supported RBI’s attempts to combine basic research with the development of innovative research, participation in higher education and knowledge transfer to the economy, thus contributing to the development of Croatia into a knowledge-based society.

Erhard Busek

Diversity in the Danube Region

Due to its origin the European Union is built on cultural diversity, which is sometimes considered to threaten the unity of the nation – for instance when it comes to minorities. A delicate balance must therefore prevail between unity and diversity. With the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the European Union is establishing already the second macroregional strategy after the Baltic Sea Strategy. Based on better cooperation in a region, it is supposed to serve as a driving force behind the further development of the entire union within the framework of Cohesion Policy. Better integrating the region, developing its economy, protecting its environment and building prosperity for all citizens are of utmost priority in this context. The cooperation of all actors in the region creates an opportunity to solve transnational problems, which will also positively impact neighboring regions.

Ivan Leban

Universities along the River Danube and Joint Study Programs

It is a well-known historical fact that rivers play a unifying role in the everyday lives of the people living along them even though in the past borders and ideologies may have artificially separated these nations. Eventually, bridges were built not only to join the two banks but also to allow and encourage various forms of mutual collaboration. Additionally, modern ICT connections allow cooperation that was not possible in the past. In the article a few propositions will be put forward concerning the EUSDR pillar “Building prosperity”, perhaps to enhance the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.
Edita Stojić Karanović

The Role of Civil Society in the Implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (Possibilities and Limitations)

The Danube Region is very rich in natural and cultural resources. Their sustainable use demands local, micro-regional, national, cross-border and macro-regional cooperation. Sustainable development at all these levels, which requires regional and cross-border cooperation of states, could in addition be aided substantially through well-organized cross-level and regional cooperation among civil society organizations if they cooperated strongly among themselves.

Therefore, the Council of the European Union has asked all interested international, national and regional organisations as well as regional and local communities to respect civil society initiatives. Stronger civil society participation can improve public services and strengthen public trust in these services. It also facilitates commonly agreed solutions through regular dialogue. The inclusion of civil society and civil stakeholders in the implementation process is crucial to the success of the Strategy.

Benedikt Mandl

ICPDR and the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

A healthy, ecologically balanced river Danube forms the basis of any sustainable development: economy, society and culture rest on this foundation. The Danube connects numerous different ecosystems, and its course from the Black Forest to the Black Sea is above all characterized by great diversity – not only ecologically. The network of rivers draining into the Danube extends to some of the world’s highest-developed regions but also some of the poorest areas of Europe. Between them, the water of the Danube is a uniting, integrative element.

In 1994 the countries of the Danube Region signed the Danube River Protection Convention. To implement the convention, in 1998 the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) set to work. The contribution outlines in which areas the ICPDR is active to ensure protection of the Danube and sustainable development of the Danube Region.

Josef Kirchengast

Danube Country Compost

At the end of June 2014 more than 170 representatives of regions, towns, civil society and national ministries from the entire Danube Region convened in Austria for the up to then largest civil society conference of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.
“Without public spirit and participation, a Europe of the 28 will not grow together”, was said there. Politics and administration would have to “take the citizens along” and fulfil their obligation to open, regular and transparent dialogue with civil society.

The contribution introduces a number of initiatives and measures undertaken by dedicated actors in the Danube Region to improve cooperation, for only if the EU Strategy for the Danube Region reaches people’s everyday lives and hearts can it become the new boost to integration that Europe so urgently needs.

**Verena Winiwarter**

**Bridges across Divides: Prerequisites for a Sustainable Future of the Danube Region**

This paper introduces two prerequisites for sustainable development, the bridging of national and that of disciplinary divides. The immaterial cultural heritage of the history of the Balkans has to be considered for bridging national divides. Given the long-term legacies of past pollution and consequential interventions into the environment, long-term interdisciplinary research is necessary to provide a basis for future sustainable development. The narrative of sustainability could be beneficial for the region beyond mere environmental reasons. Sustainable development as a common goal might offer a unique potential to fill the Danube Declaration with life and use it as an inclusive narrative, a springboard for a positive vision of a joint future. Sustainable development might therefore not just benefit from the crossing of divides; it might actually provide a joint, yet identity-bearing narrative as the means to cross them. The EUSDR Danube:Future flagship project promotes networking to achieve these goals.

**Christian Hanus**

**Research Partnerships in the Danube Region to Boost European Integration**

The initiative to get the Danube Limes, which runs along the Danube from Eining near Regensburg to the Danube delta at the Black Sea, listed as UNESCO World Heritage is one of the currently most ambitious transnational projects in the Danube Region. The entire river section measures more than 2,400 kilometers and runs through or along ten countries. In the context of the “Danube Limes Brand” project a cooperation spanning all Danube countries was set up to review the essentials of the nomination, generate a marketing strategy for the world heritage site, work out a cross-national management plan, establish a cultural tourism brand and develop concepts for the operation and protection of the Limes sites.
Sebastian Schäffer

Challenges and Opportunities of the EUSDR in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine from an Applied Perspective

The war in Ukraine casts doubt not only on the security architecture of the European Union but also on its fundamental values. This inevitably raises the question if a macroregional initiative which according to the provisions from Brussels is supposed to make do without additional financing, structures and legislation can create true added value for the target states of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

The contribution examines how the European Union attempts – through various strategies (EUSDR, Black Sea Synergy, Eastern Partnership) – to facilitate peace and stability in its immediate and farther neighborhood and reviews the related opportunities and challenges. Practical examples in the field of education and training in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova illustrate that – through measures such as exchange and support in the recognition of qualifications while simultaneously ensuring educational quality – especially the EUSDR has the potential to contribute effectively to better education and greater prosperity in the entire Danube Region.

Barbara Weitgruber

Research Cooperation as Contribution to Developing a Knowledge Society in the Danube Region

After briefly outlining the traditionally strong cooperation in higher education, science and research between Austria and the partner countries in the Danube Region, the contribution exemplarily depicts how within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region added value shall be created for science and research through specific forms of cooperation, support and coordination.

Hubert Dürrstein, Regina Aichner, Ursula Panuschka

Research and Education as Catalyst in the EUSDR

Cross-border cooperation in science and education in the Danube Region does not need to be reinvented. It already has a long tradition and is alive and well, as statistics, facts and figures of the Austrian Exchange Service (OeAD) impressively substantiate. However, within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, clear emphasis must be put on certain aspects. For instance, project cooperation in the field of education is very important as public education structures in the EUSDR countries vary immensely, in particular concerning early childhood education, vocational training or also job market opportunities with an academic education. OeAD-GmbH offers an array of programs to promote exchange and cooperation in the Danube Region.