

European Initiative – Danube Region on the eSilk&eAmber Roads

Intervention of Mr. GORDOS Árpád - national contact point of Hungary for the EU Danube region strategy, Brussels, 1st June 2010.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear Colleagues,

Let me allow expressing my gratitude for the organisers to convene this conference aiming at furthering the cross-border eRegion development in the Danube macro region. In this context I may add to the cross-border development that it is inter-regional and transnational as well.

In my capacity of being the Hungarian national contact point for the EU Danube region strategy I would make only some remarks. The **key words sent for us will navigate me** even if I travelled by air and I were much more glad if I could have come with TGV from Budapest.

1. I welcome the Commission for shaping our **vision on the Danube region** saying that it would be **smart, sustainable and inclusive**. Smart is matching fully with the purpose of our today's meeting here.
2. I remind you that Hungary in its first non-paper suggested as **fourth horizontal strategic objective** “promoting R+D+I”.
3. My country shared with the Commission her suggestions on 11 intervention measures by the end of April even if it is a draft.

The title and the subject of the proposed **7th measure** is “. Danube Science - Danubian Scientific cluster and research field. The knick name or slogan is self saying – “Science –work network”.

The description of this ten pages long initiative is available on the web-site of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary.

It wouldn't be wise to explain it here but I feel unavoidable to refer on the fact that the **Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC)** was established by the University of Ulm, the University of Linz and Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (of Budapest) in Vienna in **1983**. Currently the network has 51 member institutions from 13 countries. The general objective of the DRC is to develop education and research in the region by building up bilateral and multilateral relations between the member universities. The Danube Scientific Cluster develops cooperation in the field of education and research in order to harmonise the supply in training, and the research fields.

The objective of the programme is to strengthen and broaden **cooperation between major universities** of the region in the field of education and research, in order to improve the competitiveness and the innovation potential of universities, and also increase the level of contribution of universities to the renewal of the economic development of the region. We are quite familiar with the fact that the cooperation of some 50 university led to the recent approval of the “**Novisad Declaration**”.

Under the Hungarian “**Danube Science**” **cooperation** proposal four sub-programs were defined such as:

- Broadening of the inter-university co operations of the Danube Rectors Conference concerning the topics PhD studies, lecturer and student mobility, climate change and world heritage, in order to improve higher education services.
 - Determination of the framework of the Danube Region Common Research Programme (ERANET), and the implementation of the programme.
 - Setting up the Danube valley knowledge base and regional scientific cooperation
 - Setting up a common inland waterway centre, and the implementation of educational and training programmes on this basis, in the field of river navigation, forwarding and logistics.
4. As regards other topics indicated under the **key words** I would bring here the question of **innovative SME**. I was not surprised that the vice-president of the EIB pointed out at the second Danube region stake-holder conference in Budapest last February that the money devoted to the small enterprises does not arrive to the targeted final beneficiaries due to the **inertia of the local banks**. Thus the quality of the **financial connection** lags behind the optimum.

Based on some studies of Swiss banks I find useful to repeat their question namely **weather Europe** even the whole continent is **competitive with the US banks’ capacity in providing services for innovation, seed capital or capital risk management?**

From the point of view **of State subsidies to the banks** is the position of a European based bank similar to that of an overseas one?

5. Thus in this respect as well it seems to me that while **analyzing the Danube region’s situation we have to consider the broader context like the Strategy Europe 2020** and the issues dealt with thereby by **with courage and loudly**.

This same will to be courageous pushes me to emphasize that a fundamental **particularity** of this Danube region as a segment of the EU single market is its **post-enlargement character**. Thus the **unity of the Single Market** is to be improved! **Without a comparable level of transport and financial services, including the physical and IT infrastructure the unity of the single market, the equal chances of the undertakings remain a dream.**

Thanks for your kind attention.

Gordos Á.