

Germany

PROGRESS REPORT¹

on recent developments regarding S&T cooperation in/with the WBC (December 2012 / Belgrade till June 2013 / Budva)

1 Policy actions

- Ongoing implementation of the Initiative “Strengthening Germany’s role in the global knowledge society – Strategy of the Federal Government for the Internationalization of Science and Research” (launched in 2008). The text (in German and English) can be found under:
http://www.bmbf.de/pub/deutschlands_rolle_in_globaler_wissensgesellschaft_staerken_de_en.pdf
Goals and priorities for the fields of innovation are introduced by the High-Tech Strategy 2020 for Germany (<http://www.bmbf.de/en/6618.php>).
- Internet Platform for information on the German research system and landscape, “Research in Germany” (<http://www.research-in-germany.de/52/home.html>). The portal provides an overview of the research and funding opportunities (also for foreigners) in Germany. It also delivers the latest science and research news from Germany and upcoming events. Additionally, practical information supports foreign scientists and researchers in their decision to collaborate with German research organisations or to complete a research stay in Germany.

2 Legislative initiatives - development of the legal and strategic framework

3 Important events, meetings, training activities, etc.

The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is bringing forward the support of cooperation of the Danube countries by organising regular meetings of the Danube Working Group following up the Ministerial Conference of July 2012. Research Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the Danube Countries met on 9 July 2012 in Ulm, Germany and endorsed a Final Communiqué on “Enhanced Cooperation in Research and Innovation in the Danube Region“. As main points of the Communiqué, they agreed on steps to be taken as for instance “to establish a Danube Region Research and Innovation Fund (DRRIF) on the basis of a feasibility study as foreseen in the roadmap of Priority Area 7 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. These efforts can build on existing European network projects, such as

¹ The progress reports are collected in preparation of the meetings of the Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries and will be provided for download from the WBC-INCO.Net homepage (www.wbc-inco.net) about one week before the meeting takes place. Therefore please submit your report to office@wbc-inco.net until May 29, 2013.

the WBC-INCO.NET. The dialogue initiated in this network should be continued in the near future with the EU project INCO-NET Danube Region". They also agreed "to consider – as an immediate measure – the legal, administrative and financial pre-conditions for the setting-up of a Danube Research, Innovation and Networking Fund with contributions by national and EU sources with the aim of allocating at least 5 million € from each side." As topics in focus for cooperation for instance renewable energies were mentioned as particularly suited for cooperation.

4 Development of international cooperation and actions on integration into ERA

4.1 Call for innovative R&D networks with partners in the Danube States

The call entitled "Ideas competition for the establishment and development of innovative R&D networks with partners in the Danube States" was launched by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) on February 21, 2013 and closed on April 30, 2013. It is part of the Federal Governments Internationalisation Strategy and supports German universities, research institutions and companies to establish R&D networks with excellent researchers in the Danube States in order to develop joint cooperation strategies and projects. It encourages stronger links between the leading innovative regions upstream and the developing regions downstream, thereby contributing to the successful implementation of the Danube region strategy.

The electronic version of the call can be found in German under <http://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/21286.php> and in English under <http://www.bmbf.de/en/furtherance/21286.php>

Submitted project outlines are currently under evaluation.

4.2 Regional Call

The call entitled "International Cooperation in Education and Research - Central, Eastern and South Eastern European Region (Regional Call for Proposals)" launched by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is ongoing until December 31, 2013. It is part of the Federal Governments Internationalisation Strategy and supports research cooperation with partners from South East European countries. With this BMBF programme, funds are being made available for preparatory projects in the field of applied research, development and education in order to support project applications under current BMBF funding programmes, the preparation of projects under FP7 and other EU programmes that are relevant to research, and the Eurostars Programme. Another aim is to develop and support joint research bases that build on existing collaborations.

The electronic version of the call can be found in German under <http://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/14673.php> and in English under <http://www.bmbf.de/en/furtherance/14673.php>.

4.3 SEE-ERA.NET PLUS

BMBF and its International Bureau (DLR) participate in the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) project SEE-ERA.NET PLUS aiming at further integrating the WBC and their research communities into the European Research Area (ERA). Based on the results and experiences of the forerunner project SEE-ERA.NET (finished in August 2009), SEE-ERA.NET PLUS successfully launched and implemented a Joint Call for Joint European Research Projects (JERPs) with a total budget of 3 mio. € (national contributions topped up by funds from the

European Commission). The call was on the topics of AgroFood and ICT. The German partners drafted the concept of the joint call and implement the call management since the Call Secretariat is located at DLR. The call was launched in September 2009 and closed in November 2009. 23 projects are being funded.

By December 2012, the last of the 23 JERPs have been completed. Currently the supervision of the final reports of the JERPs is still ongoing.

4.4 WBC-INCO.NET: Coordination of Research Policies with the Western Balkan Countries (WBC)

WBC-INCO.NET is a network project for the bi-regional policy dialogue between the EU, the countries associated to the 7th Framework Programme and the Western Balkan Countries. It also supports the “Steering Platform on Research for the Western Balkan Countries“. The aim is to enhance the participation of researchers from the target region in European S&T projects by structural measures.

In the reporting period from December 2012 until June 2013, the activities of the German partners BMBF and its International Bureau (DLR) as leaders of Work Package 2 were focused on the preparation of activities in Task T2.6 which deals with the commercialisation possibilities of results of selected JERPs of SEE-ERA.NET PLUS in the field of AgroFood (see 4.2). A Workshop on this topic was held on May 22 – 24, 2013 in Novi Sad (Serbia). Furthermore, BMBF and DLR were engaged in the second review meeting on innovation best practice examples and the development of adaptation schemes which was held on April 23 and 24, 2013 in Skopje (FYR of Macedonia).

5 Statistics - major changes / updates of relevant statistical data

5.1 Call for innovative R&D networks with partners in the Danube States

A total of 67 outlines have been submitted by April 30, 2013 indicating the huge interest of the scientific community in this call and in doing so also the need for a funding measure targeting explicitly the Danube region as a whole.

5.2 SEE-ERA.NET PLUS

In five out of the 23 ongoing Joint European Research Projects (JERPs) German researchers are participating. In two of these five projects, the German partner coordinates the JERP. All Western Balkan countries are represented in project consortia.

6 Assessment of the developments and outlook on the next 6 months

(Optional personal opinion)

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