

Germany

PROGRESS REPORT¹

on recent developments regarding S&T cooperation in/with the WBC (June 2013 / Budva until December 2013 / Zagreb)

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.

On October 15, 2013 a meeting of the Ulm Follow up Working Group took place in the BMBF Bonn. Representatives of all Danube countries and relevant stakeholders of the EUSDR were invited. It was the fourth meeting in a row following the Ministerial Conference of July 2012 in Ulm/Germany on invitation of the German Federal Minister of Education and Research and with presence of Commissioner Hahn. During the WG meeting in October 2013 in Bonn, current projects and initiatives as well as future joint activities in the Danube region were discussed. Concrete steps in the cooperation are already being made by opening up the BMBF-call for the Danube region (see also 4.1) for a co-funding of the Danube partner

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 December 5, 2013.

countries; several countries expressed interest for a co-financing of multilateral projects. Also, German-Hungarian projects will be supported under a Hungarian call opened up for German co-funding.

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. After proposal submission and evaluation, the first of the 31 funded projects started in October 2013.

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>

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>.

A follow up of the Regional call is under preparation targeting support of preparatory projects for Horizon2020 and other European programmes.

4.3 SEE-ERA.NET PLUS

BMBF and its International Bureau (DLR) participated 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 implemented 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 were funded.

By 31 July 2013 SEE-ERA.NET PLUS has been completed. Currently the reporting to the European Commission is 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 June 2013 until December 2013, the activities of the German partners BMBF and its International Bureau (DLR) were twofold:

- as leaders of Work Package 2, a deliverable on a Workshop on commercialisation possibilities of research results achieved by selected JERPs of SEE-ERA.NET PLUS in the field of AgroFood on May 22 – 24, 2013 in Novi Sad (Serbia) was finalised
- furthermore, BMBF and DLR were engaged in the preparation of the four Task Force Meetings on innovation schemes, where adaptation schemes for innovation measures to the WBC were developed; these activities are based on the review meetings on innovation best practice examples (April 2012 in Tirana and April 2013 in Skopje). The Task Force Meetings took place on October 2 and 3, 2013 in Podgorica (strategic innovation), on November 21 and 22, 2013 in Zagreb (innovation voucher) and on December 3 and 4, 2013 (innovation officer) in Belgrade. The fourth meeting on soft landing platforms will be held in Tirana in the beginning of 2014.

5 Statistics - major changes / updates of relevant statistical data

Call for innovative R&D networks with partners in the Danube States
67 project outlines had been submitted by April 30, 2013 indicating a huge interest of the scientific community in this call and also the need for a funding measure targeting explicitly the Danube region as a whole. From the upstream countries Hungary was the most frequent partner in the proposals. Concerning the downstream countries Romania and Serbia were the two with the most partners in the consortia. The most prominent thematic fields were climate, environment and sustainability. Finally 31 proposals were selected for funding. The first projects started in October 2013.

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

(Optional personal opinion)

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