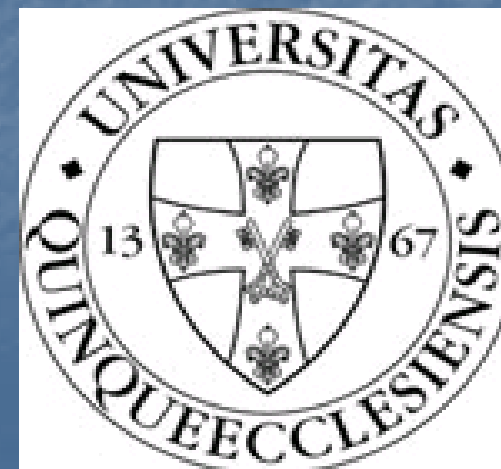


STRENGTHENING *UNIVERSITY* COOPERATION *OSIJEK – PÉCS*

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**Danube Strategy and Cross-Border
Region Hungary - Croatia: Protecting the
Environment and Building Prosperity in
the Danube Region**

CONTEMPORARY LEGAL CHALLENGES:

EU – HUNGARY – CROATIA

Osijek, 16 – 18 february 2012

Danube Strategy and Cross-Border Region Hungary - Croatia: Protecting the Environment and Building Prosperity in the Danube Region

- The Pillar C, building prosperity in the Danube Region, as a part of the EUSDR, includes various aspects focused towards the development of the knowledge society, research, education, information technologies, the support to the competitiveness of enterprises and the investment in people and skills.
- Its focus covers three Priority Areas:
 - (1) To develop the knowledge society through research, education and information technologies;
 - (2) To support the competitiveness of enterprises including cluster development; and
 - (3) To invest in people and skills (education and training, labour market and marginalized communities).

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- The Priority Area 7, within the Pillar C, building prosperity in the region, relies in the first line on the development of knowledge society, where research, education and information technologies play a decisive role. A society's ability to create and exploit knowledge is a key factor for progress and growth
- The application of information and communication technology may particularly advance growth in the Danube region
- Centres of excellence were presented on the first meeting of Priority area 7 coordinators, while exchange of PhD students and promoting the efficient use of existing research infrastructure should be used for set up of a network to serve that purpose

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- A better coordination of national and regional funds is needed to stimulate research and development in the Region and to benefit fully from the European Research Area.
- The use of cross border and international networks should be advantageous for such objectives. These networks can be borrowed from various programs and projects that have been already implemented in order to achieve different goals

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- The Priority Area 8 within the Pillar C, building prosperity in the region covers the support to competitiveness of enterprises, in particular integration of SMEs through cluster development. This because the integration of SMEs is the precondition to become receptive to transfer of technologies and organizational models developed by Academia and large enterprises.
- The development of clusters and centres of excellence should be fostered and cluster cooperation across borders and across sectors should be facilitated
- Through centres of excellence and clusters the links to education and research policy should be established.
- Existing cluster mapping studies conducted in the Danube region through numerous other European initiatives should be exploited and built on

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- Through Pillar C, Priority Area 9, investment into better use of its human capital, the Danube region can progress and grow in a smart and inclusive way. To make use of the full potential of the labour force and to fight poverty, the Danube region's labour market also needs to be more inclusive. Regarding equal opportunities between men and women, inequalities are more pronounced in upper parts of the Region than in lower parts
- This analysis calls for actions across a whole range of fields, education, labour market, integration, research and innovation should be mutually reinforcing.

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- Hungary has not put the focus on Pillar C priority related to the EUSDR, but towards the water management and infrastructural issues. However, in its contribution to the EUSDR as one of its strategic priorities Hungary has mentioned the sustainable economic development of the region, which includes sustainable development of tourism and improving the industrial conditions
- Further, the development of knowledge based society, competitive economy and investment into skills is key instrument for rural development, rendering assistance to the economy through local power sources and by the establishment of a creative economy
- It also mentions scientific clusters and research field cooperation.

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- Croatia is one of coordinators of Priority Area 8, to support the competitiveness of enterprises including cluster development
- Among the projects proposed by Croatia, to pillar C are contributing clusterization and export incentives (Priority Area 8), projects for the transfer of know-how and technology and new technological solutions that are to contribute to the specialisation, clusterisation and creation of the climate conducive to foreign investment (Priority Area 8) and strengthening of the network of universities and colleges (Priority Area 7)
- On the Zagreb Conference in December 2011, the debate stressed the relevance of the human capital and exchange of good practices and knowledge in implementation of the EUSDR

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