

DRC Newsletter July 2017

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**DRC**  
Danube Rectors' Conference

Dear subscribers to the DRC Newsletter! For the 14th time the DRC Summer School was held, this time at the University of Pécs. Further information about and news from our network can also be found in this edition. We would like to especially draw your attention to the JRC (point 3). We wish you a nice summer!

Feedback and comments are [welcome!](#)

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## 1. 14th DRC Summer School held at the University of Pécs



The 14th DRC Summer School was held at the University of Pécs, Hungary from 2. – 9. July 2017. This year's main topic was "New Borders Between Old Neighbours – Return of History in The Danube Region?"

The Summer School was opened by DRC honorary president Prof. Dr. Ferenc Hudecz and the keynote lecture was held by Dr. Erhard Busek, chairman of IDM. Thomas Diez from Eberhard Karls University in Tübingen also touched upon the theme of external borders of the European Union, which was followed by Georg Krauchenberg, Managing director of IDM, who talked about "The aims of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region". Dr. István Tarrósy (ID Research) and Dr. Viktor Glied (University of Pécs) held their presentations on the topics of university networks and the protest activities of green movements.

SeminarsSimulationsConsulting (SSC) Europe, a supporter of the summer school since 2012, was represented by two researchers: Sebastian Schäffer (IDM) and Michael Bauer (MEIA Research e.V.) in the themes of cross-border cooperation from the perspective of civil society, and the causes and challenges of migration. Zoltán Árokszállási from ERSTE Bank Group summarized the different approaches of Central Eastern European countries to economic challenges. The Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was represented by three colleagues – Viktor Varjú, Andrea Suvák, and Péter Balogh – who presented different aspects (tourism, spatial development and contemporary geopolitics) of cross-border cooperation in Hungary.

The variety of lectures and the interdisciplinary approach of the summer school was also reflected in the workshops, where the participants had the opportunity to present their research:

1. Schengen, Dublin, Idomeni? Security challenges at the EU's outskirts
2. Migration within and from outside of the Danube Region
3. Political, ideological and religious radicalisation
4. EUSDR: Economy and prosperity for the Danube Region through cross-border

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All Participants have not only fulfilled the requirements to receive their certificate, but what is more, inspired by the morning lecture topics – with the supervision of the organizers – they have prepared a policy recommendation paper for the European Union on migration which, which will be published together with the research papers of the summer school early 2018.

**We would like to thank all our supporters and we are looking forward to the 15<sup>th</sup> edition at the Danube University Krems from 1. – 8. July 2018:**

**“Modernizing Europe: Generating accountability”**

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## **2. Save the date: DRC Annual Meeting Zagreb 8.-10. November 2017**

Our next Annual Meeting with the title  
**"Responsibilities of Danube universities as promoters of EUSDR"**  
will be held 8.-10. November 2017 at the  
[University of Zagreb](#)

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## **3. The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) open its doors!**

DG Joint Research Centre is very happy to announce that we published on 26 June the call to open JRC scientific laboratories and facilities to external users from academia and research organisations, industry, SMEs, and more in general from the private and public sectors. Three of our 41 facilities with the NanoBiotechnology laboratory) with the potential of opening access to external users will open their doors on a pilot basis for research carried in the fields of:

- Safety and security of buildings (ELSA-Reaction Wall and ELSA-HopLab)
- Nanobiotechnologies (NanoBiotech Lab)

The remaining 38 facilities will gradually provide access as from 2018.

You will find all relevant information here: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/research-facility/open-access>.

Conditions and criteria for access

The JRC will offer access to its non-nuclear facilities to researchers and scientists from EU Member States, candidate countries and countries associated to the EU Research Programme Horizon 2020. For nuclear facilities, the JRC will open to EU

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Programme.

There will be two types of access to JRC research infrastructures:

The first (relevance-driven) is based on the scientific and socio-economic relevance of the proposed project and involves a peer-review selection process following a call for proposals. This type of access is mainly targeted at universities, research institution and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in areas linked to the strategic priorities of the JRC and EU priorities linked to standardisation, integration and cohesion, sustainable growth and competitiveness. Under this type of access, users are only required to cover any additional costs sustained by the JRC, while access to nuclear research facilities can be provided "free of charge".

The second type of access (market-driven) is mainly targeted at industry and for-profit institutions, and foresees the payment of the full costs of access

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#### **4. Workshop on Proof of Concept (PoC) in South Eastern Europe - 21st and 22nd September 2017 - Trieste, Italy**

**The European Commission is organising on 21-22 September 2017 in Trieste, Italy the Workshop on Proof of Concept (PoC) in South Eastern Europe**  
*Best Practices, Challenges and Opportunities for Promoting Technology Transfer and Innovation*

Proof of Concept financing (PoC) can facilitate the validation (prototype, demonstrator, proof of market, etc.) and assessment of commercialisation options for technologies developed within Public Research Organisations (PROs) and micro-enterprises/SMEs in South Eastern Europe. The objective of providing PoC financing is to provide financial support to researchers to help them in successfully converting good research into good business. PoC funding is currently at a modest stage of development in South Eastern Europe and, in particular, in the Western Balkans. Technology Transfer and the commercialisation of the results of publicly funded research for the benefit of the economy and of society is now an established objective for developed economies, including the EU. However, support for technology transfer activities – and proof of concept in particular – remains limited in South Eastern Europe. This is for several reasons including culture, tradition and framework conditions. However, it is also linked to a lack of funding and capacity to addresses the critical gap between public research funding for frontier and applied research and early stage private sector funding, often available via business angels or via innovation vouchers (grants).

The diagram below illustrates the typical funding cycle for research commercialisation projects. While this varies depending on the particular sector (ITC, Life Sciences etc.) for the majority of technology transfer deals the most crucial

and it is difficult to evaluate its commercial potential. In addition, transaction costs are high. All these challenges make investment at the PoC level unattractive for private investors and create a gap and market failure that can be addressed through intelligent deployment of public funds, such as grants.

### **Specific Objectives of PoC financing:**

1. To provide support for a range of ancillary activities that can advance Technology Readiness Levels and accelerate technologies to a point where they are 'Investment Ready';
2. To provide early stage financial support to address, in particular, the 'gap' between Technology Readiness Levels 3 and 4: Proof of Concept and Laboratory Validation;
3. To increase the capacity of researchers and intermediaries to identify robust routes to market and build strong commercialisation strategies;
4. To encourage knowledge exchange and technology transfer across and beyond the region.

### **Content/Objectives**

This workshop intends to explore best practices in the creation and management of PoC support programmes and to consider possibilities for the creation of additional PoC support schemes in the region. PoC support schemes would address the earliest and most risky element of the technology transfer funding cycle and enable researchers and PROs to validate discoveries and ease the process of maturing technologies to a point where alternative sources of investment (including private) become available.

The conclusions of this meeting are also expected to feed into broader political developments, in particular in relation to the Berlin process.

Participants will include the European Investment Bank (along with the Fund) that plays a major role in the region through, among others, the Western Balkans Enterprise Development & Innovation Facility (WB EDIF).

The JRC and, in particular, its Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer Unit, are in possession of operational and technical expertise in the domains of Technology and Knowledge Transfer. JRC flagship activities and tools (training, capacity building, studies) are highly relevant to the harmonisation and development of RDI in South Eastern Europe.

### **Counterparties / Co-organisers and Location**

Trieste has been selected to host this workshop, as an area with one of the greatest concentrations of research centres in Italy. It also lies at the crossroads of three macro-regions: the Adriatic-Ionian Region, the Alpine Region and the Danube Region. AREA Science Park, that will host this event, sits at the centre of a dynamic innovation-based eco-system and has an extensive track record of supporting technology transfer and high-technology based business creation in the region.

### **Participants**

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Member States, enlargement and neighbourhood countries covered by the Adriatic-Ionian, the Alpine and the Danube macro-regional strategies.

Participants are likely to include: innovation and entrepreneurship policy-makers, fund managers, representatives of academia and technology transfer offices early stage and venture capital investors. The number of participants is estimated at around 60-80, while the number of speakers will be in the region of 10-15.

### Apply to participate

If you would like to attend you will need to submit an expression of interest. You can find additional information on the event and the necessary application form [here](#).

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## 5. EUA Affiliate Status and EUA Newsletter

We are continuously strengthening and expanding our network. Since November 2015, the DRC is affiliate member of the [European University Association](#).

If you are interested in their news and activities, please follow the [link](#).

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## 6. CASEE Newsletter July 2017

CASEE was founded in 2010 upon the initiative of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, and involves Life Science Universities in Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine and Austria. It aims to support the development of the EU Strategie for the Danube Region to strengthen research, education and University Development in this region and to develop joint research, educational and other projects. To open the newsletter of this month, click [here](#).

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## 7. New DRC Facebook Page



We are implementing a new Facebook page for the DRC. Please like us at the link





## 8. New website section: presidency news!

We have implemented a new section on our website. We will post regular updates about the activities of the DRC presidency here:

<https://www.drc-danube.org/structure/presidency/presidency-news/>

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## 9. The rural development in the context of European competitiveness

Distinguished Partners of *Spiru Haret* University,

We would like to proudly announce an upcoming event organized by *Spiru Haret* University of Bucharest via the *Center for International Relations and Academic Image* (CRIIA) and University of *Academy of Sciences of Moldova* in Chisinau. The International Conference “***The rural development in the context of European competitiveness***” (RDCEC) will take place in Bucharest, Romania, **28-29 April 2018**: [Conference Website](#).

The Conference Scientific Sections are:

- Ø *Demographic research studies and policies*
- Ø *Agro-food economy and rural development*
- Ø *Sustainability, economic mechanisms and biotechnologies*

The dates you have to keep in mind for this event are:

- v 25.02.2018: Registration to the conference.
  - v 31.03.2018: Sending the paper in extenso.
  - v 15.04.2018: Notification from the organizers about the acceptance or rejection of the paper.
  - v 18.04.2018: Sending the payment confirmation.
  - v 20.04.2018: Confirmation of participation to conference.
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We are glad to announce that EDU-LAB has been officially endorsed as an EUSDR Strategic Project.

The EUSDR is the European Commission's strategy for the Danube region. During the latest NCs (National Coordinators) meeting on 13 June 2017 in Budapest nine projects were chosen as having strategic importance for the Danube region and EDU-LAB was one of them!

EUSDR Strategic Projects are projects with high visibility for the EUSDR and are optimal for demonstrating the progress achieved in implementing it, as well as showing the way for future projects.

For more information about EUSDR Strategic Projects you can take a look at the [Concept Paper for EUSDR Strategic Projects](#) (PDF).

#### **11. 4th Danube:Future Interdisciplinary School held at the Danube University Krems**



Following the successful three previous editions in Gorizia (Italy), the fourth edition of the Danube:Future Interdisciplinary School was organized in Krems (A) by the Danube-University Krems. The School focused on the cultural and social implications of global change on the Danube River Basin and the core topics of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity.

The Danube:Future Interdisciplinary School is part of the Capacity Building Module of the Danube:Future project, a Flagship Project of the EUSDR - the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, in the Priority Area Knowledge Society. Danube:Future is a joint network project of the Alps-Adriatic Rector's Conference and the Danube Rector's Conference. It aims at capacity building in the Danube River Basin (DRB) and at providing networking to aid the development common



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Due to financial support by the Danube-University Krems and the Central European Initiative (Cooperation Fund 2016) 25 participants representing 17 Universities from 8 CEI Countries both EU (Austria – hosting Country, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy and Romania) and no-EU (Serbia), attended the School edition.

14 PhD students and 11 junior researchers had the opportunity to gain knowledge about the cultural, social, economic and ecological implication of global changes on the Danube River Basin. Following an introduction on the core topic of the Interdisciplinary School – global changes – and lectures on the natural heritage of the Danube river region as well as the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the School covered a wide range of subjects, such as tourism, cultural heritage, energy management and innovation as well as sustainability and governance. Two half-day excursions deepening the discussed topics offered a unique opportunity to deal with the challenges of the macro-region.

The second part of the school was dedicated to group work by students. Participants worked in groups with support of two facilitators and seven experts, identifying common ideas for a future project and writing proposal drafts. Group presentations with direct feedback by the international Jury were taking place at the end of the programme. The revised proposals as well as lecture and keynote papers are going to be included in the upcoming conference proceedings.

<https://www.danubefuture.eu/2017-edition>



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