



Centre for Democracy Studies and Andrassy Forum for Western Balkan Studies
at the Andrassy University Budapest

CONFERENCE

EU Integration and Cohesion: The function of regional cooperation in the Danube Region

EU Integration und Zusammenhalt:
Die Funktion regionaler Kooperation im Donaauraum

VENUE: ANDRÁSSY UNIVERSITY BUDAPEST, ANDRÁSSY-HALL
DATE: THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2015, FROM 09.00 AM
ORAGANISATION: ELLEN BOS, CHRISTINA GRIESSLER
LANGUAGE: GERMAN / ENGLISH

Apart from the EU promoted macro-regional strategy for the Danube region (EUSDR), a number of other regional cooperation organisations exist in Central-, East-, and Southeast Europe. The participating states or regions perceive regional cooperation as an opportunity to overcome transnational challenges, to revitalise the economy in marginalised boarder areas, to construct an efficient infrastructure across national borders and to bring people with different nationalities together.

The rationale for the regional cooperation differs. The Visegrad Cooperation, for example, was initiated in 1991 by its member states to support each other in reaching their common goal to "return to Europe". Other forms of regional cooperation, especially in the Western Balkans, had the objective to create stability and security. And finally, the strategy for the Danube region attempts to harmonise the different development levels of its participating member states resp. regions and aims to strengthen cohesion within the region.

Furthermore, Europeanisation of EU and non-EU member states is an important function of the regional cooperation, as social learning processes are encouraged between the participating states. It is the assumption that Europeanisation leads to a rapprochement of (potential) candidate countries towards the EU and strengthens the cohesion of the EU-member states. Moreover, existing transnational social contacts and the identification of regional specifics and similarities can support the creation of a regional identity.

The main focus of the conference is to answer questions in relation to the motivations, aims and functions of regional cooperation in Central-, East- and Southeast Europe. These questions should be addressed in introductory presentations and comparative analyses of the presented case studies. The conference concludes with a round table discussion on the topic of regional identity.

09.00 – 09.30 OPENING AND WELCOME

09.30 – 11.00 PANEL 1

(IN GERMAN / DEUTSCH)

EU Strategies for the EU Macro-Regions: Function, Objectives, Challenges?

The first conference panel deals with the macro-regional strategies in general, which are currently promoted by the EU as a new innovative multi-level governance approach. This panel is to question the functions and the expected outcomes of these strategies. Is it possible to strengthen the cohesion of the EU member states by creating and implementing macro-regional strategies? Can current regional problems be more effectively solved by macro-regional cooperation? What are the main objectives, aims and functions of the macro-regional strategies? The aim of the panel is to critically question, if these demands and expectations can be achieved.

11.30 – 13.30 PANEL 2

(IN GERMAN / DEUTSCH)

EU Strategy for the Danube Region: Review, Next Steps, New Objectives

The second panel focuses on the EU-Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), which due to its rather large and diverse membership of participating states and regions, is confronted with a number of specific challenges facing the Danube region. The objectives of transnational cooperation in its four thematic areas (Connecting the Danube Region, Protecting the Environment, Building Prosperity and Strengthening the Danube Region) are the promotion of the regional cohesion and the harmonisation of the different development levels of the participating members. Since, the initiation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), which overlaps with the membership of the EUSDR, and due to the existence of other regional organisations – especially in the Western Balkan region – it seems that a necessity of a closer coordination in relation to the objectives of these organisations has emerged. This seems to be the only way to ensure an efficient use of administrative, financial and material resources and to avoid an overlap of competences, while implementing projects. The focus of this panel is to analyse current EUSDR activities, which challenges exists in their implementation and what is planned for the coming years.

14.30 – 16.30 PANEL 3

(IN ENGLISH)

Forms of regional cooperation in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe (Western Balkan)

A variety of cooperation initiatives exist in the region of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, which either aim to foster functional cooperation in specific areas or act as political consultative platforms. The aim and the historical background of these regional cooperation organisations are not always known, although these are or might generate positive effects for the region in future. It is the aim of this panel to introduce the organisations of regional cooperation in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, their objectives and their activities. What has been achieved so far and what is envisaged for the coming years?

17.00 – 18.30 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

(IN ENGLISH)

Regional Identity: Does regional cooperation generate a regional identity? Does a Visegrad-Identity, a Western Balkan-Identity or a Danube Region Identity exist?

The guiding question of this panel is, if regional cooperation acts as basis for regional identities. Although, identity is still strongly connected with the concept of a nation, the aim of regional cooperation is to overcome the national boundaries and to bring people from various national backgrounds together. We presume that these social contacts and transnational cooperation have an impact on social learning processes and eventually might lead to an advent of a regional identity. Furthermore, the workshop will identify the characteristics and specifics, which defines certain regions.

Programme

09.00 – 09.30 **OPENING AND WELCOME**

09.30 – 11.00 **PANEL 1** **(IN GERMAN)**

EU Strategies for the EU Macro-Regions: Function, Objectives, Challenges?

Chair: Christina Griessler

Ellen Bos (AUB)

Mehrwert und Potenziale makroregionaler Strategien im Kontext europäischer Krisen

Stefan GÄNZLE (Universität Agder)

Die makroregionalen Strategien der EU als ‚neues‘ Element der europäischer Regionalpolitik

Michael VOLGGER (EURAC, Bozen)

Governance und Zusammenarbeit im alpinen Raum: Erfahrungen aus dem Tourismus und EUSALP (AutorInnen: Michael Volgger/Harald Pechlaner/Elisabeth Alber/Alice Engl/Carolin Zwilling)

11.00 – 11.30 **COFFEE BREAK**

11.30 – 13.00 **PANEL 2** **(IN GERMAN)**

EU Strategy for the Danube Region: Review, Next Steps, New Objectives

Chair: Ellen Bos

Florian H. SETZEN (Europa-Zentrum, Baden-Württemberg)

Status Quo, Nutzen und mögliche zukünftige Ausgestaltung einer Öffentlichkeitsarbeit der EU-Donauraumstrategie

Eckhart D. STRATENSCHULTE (Europäische Akademie Berlin)

Die Illusion von Gemeinsamkeit und die Annahme von Mehrwert: Die Donauraumstrategie als Fall von Hydropolitics

Margot BONNAFOUS (Euro-Institut, Kehl)

Capacity Building im Donauraum – das Projekt START-DANTE4PA

István PERGER (EU Commission Budapest)

EUSDR: Aktuelle Entwicklungen

13.30 – 14.30 **MIDDAY BREAK**

14.30 – 16.30

PANEL 3

(IN ENGLISH)

Forms of regional cooperation in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe (Western Balkan)

Chair: Michal Vít

Dane TALESKI (Visiting Fellow, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz)
Culture of Regional Cooperation in Southeastern Europe

Višnja SAMARDŽIJA (Institute for Development and International Relations, Zagreb)
Regional cooperation initiatives in South Eastern Europe – political context and practical achievements

Ešref Kenan RAŠIDAGIĆ (Burch University / University of Sarajevo)
Regional Groupings: Vehicles or Obstacles for further Integrations in the EU

Christopher WALSCH (Corvinus University)
Visegrad Four in Bosnia-Herzegovina: External governance and EU approximation from a Central European perspective

16.30 – 17.00

COFFEE BREAK

17.00 – 18.30

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Regional Identity: Does regional cooperation generate a regional identity? Does a Visegrad-Identity, a Western Balkan-Identity or a Danube Region Identity exist?

Chair: Christina Griessler

Nemanja DŽUVEROVIĆ (University Belgrade)

Hana SEMANIĆ (Central European University)

Michal Vít (EUROPEUM, Prague)

Christopher WALSCH (Corvinus University)

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