

GERMANY

PROGRESS REPORT

on recent developments regarding research and innovation cooperation in/with the Western Balkans (Period: October 2017 – June 2018)¹

1 Policy actions and legislative initiatives (legal and strategic framework)

In September 2017 the Federal Government has published its position paper "Guidelines on the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation" with basic strategic statements on the orientation of the 9th EU Framework Program. Germany is committed to an excellence-oriented programme that ensures a high European added value and should thus be complementary to the national efforts of the Member States.

The text can be found in German at

https://www.bmbf.de/files/Bundesregierung_FP9_Leitlinienpapier_September_2017.pdf

and in English at

https://www.bmbf.de/files/Federal_government_FP9_guidelines_September_2017.pdf.

2 Development of international cooperation and actions on integration into ERA

2.1 BMBF call on the integration of the Central, Eastern and South Eastern European Region into the European Research Area: Bridge2ERA

On March 6, 2018 the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) launched the call "Integration of the Central, Eastern and South Eastern European Region into the European Research Area". The call is open until June 30, 2021 and addresses – among others – all Western Balkan countries. It provides funding for the preparation of project proposals under Horizon 2020 and other research related EU programmes as well as the Eurostars and Interreg programmes.

Information on the call can be found in German at

<https://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/bekanntmachung-1630.html> and in English at

https://www.bmbf.de/files_anncmnt/EN_B2E_Call_for_proposals_BMBF.pdf

¹ The last Steering Platform was held in Belgrade on September 27-28, 2017. All related information is also available online here: <https://wbc-rti.info/object/event/16372> (including links to the conclusions and minutes).



2.2 BMBF call for innovative R&D networks with partners in the Danube Region countries:

A total of 16 projects are currently funded under the 2nd German Danube call for proposals of the BMBF. This call was launched in 2015 and includes partners from the Western Balkan countries Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro. Hungary, Moldova and Serbia are co-financing partners.

2.3 Participation in Danube-INCO.NET and activities under the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

In 2017 BMBF co-chaired together with the Slovak Science Ministry the Danube Funding Coordination Network, a Working Group under Priority Area 7 (Knowledge Society) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

3 Important events, meetings, training activities, studies etc.

3.1 BMBF Workshop "Establishment and Expansion of R&D networks with partners from Danube countries"

The BMBF Workshop on November 20 and 21, 2017 was a core element in the evaluation process of the 2013 call for innovative R&D networks with partners in the Danube Region countries. At the same time, the workshop served as kick-off event for the projects of the 2015 call (see point 2.2). The BMBF invited the German project coordinators and their partner organisations from the Danube Region to discuss their project results and to share their experiences with the new projects.

3.2 BMBF Round Table "Cooperation with the Western Balkans"

The Round Table "Cooperation with the Western Balkans" has proven to be an efficient exchange and coordination format for German stakeholders involved in R&D cooperation with the Western Balkans. The second Round Table took place on January 30, 2018 with more than 30 representatives from German ministries, research and funding institutions, universities and intermediary organisations. New funding initiatives and the results of "Travelling Workshops on knowledge transfer and capacity building" in the Western Balkan Countries in 2017 were presented and discussed. This also included proposals for concrete follow-up measures and recommendations for further joint action.

3.3 Information meeting on the new BMBF funding initiative "South Eastern European Junior Research Groups" on March 12/13, 2018

In this first meeting with representatives from science and research ministries and funding organisations from Albania, Austria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro the BMBF informed about a new funding scheme for establishing young research groups in South Eastern European Countries in cooperation with German partners. The BMBF invited the ministerial representatives to jointly develop this initiative.



4 Outlook and perspectives

A follow-up information meeting on the new BMBF funding initiative “South Eastern European Junior Research Groups” is planned in June/July 2018. The call for proposals is foreseen for summer/autumn 2018.

5 Other relevant information related to Research and Innovation cooperation in/with Western Balkan economies

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