

Mission Statement of the

Danube Strategy Research Network

The **Danube Strategy Research Network (DSRN)** is an informal interdisciplinary group of researchers cooperating in research projects, publications, discussion rounds and conference organisations. The DSRN offers a platform for transnational and interdisciplinary exchange in research projects about EU macro-regional strategies with a focus on the EU Strategy for the Danube Strategy (EUSDR). Founded in 2012 at a kick-off meeting in Stuttgart the network connects researchers of various sciences such as political science, cultural studies, sociology, law, economics and geography at various levels of their careers (e.g. Professors, PhD students and M.A. students). The aim is to provide a holistic view of the EUSDR and its implications for the Danube Region development.

*The DSRNs member's **research objectives** are firstly the improvement of the macro-regional concept and especially of the EUSDR, secondly the support of the civil society participation and thirdly to accompany the process of European integration in a critical, constructive and sustainable manner.*

The **aim of the DSRN** is to support exchange between:

1. researchers working on matters related to the EUSDR from all over Europe;
2. researchers from various disciplines such as social, cultural and economic sciences;
3. researchers and practitioners (officials and politicians from the EU, national, regional and city level, actors from civil society and economy amongst others);
4. The research can support any other field of research and projects related to the EUSDR

The DSRNs aims will be achieved through research on

- the assessment of the macro-regional concept in general and the EUSDR (particularly on the multi-level governance and influence of networks)
- the evaluation of the Danube Region Strategy (implementation)
- the processes of Europeanization, European integration and territorial cohesion
- a cultural specific implementation of the EUSDR as well as
- civil society activities and their role within the macro-regional framework

These exchanges will create new synergies between the various fields of interest engaging in research on macro-regions and contribute to fostering cultural understanding across borders. Thus the network will embrace the different scientific cultures and cultural logics within the Danube Region. Activities on evaluating the macro-regional development will strengthen the implementation and trigger further dynamics. Since the network accumulates researchers, it has a strong voice and research results will be more accessible to practitioners.

Contacts DSRN coordination:

Katja Vonhoff: katjavonhoff@yahoo.de

Franziska Sielker: franziska.sielker@fau.de

Recent activities:

1. Preparation of a the 2nd DSRN Conference in Odessa organised jointly with the National Institute for Strategic Studies Odessa and the Centre for Regional Studies in Odessa foreseen for June 2014
2. "Conference on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region: Chances and Challenges 2014-2020" (04. – 06. November 2013 in Brussels) organised jointly by the Danube Strategy Research Network, Representation of Baden-Württemberg to the EU, Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Agapedia – Jürgen Klinsmann Foundation. The project is funded by the Ministry of State, State of Baden-Württemberg, Baden-Württemberg Foundation and Robert Bosch Foundation.
3. International workshops about comparative research on macro-regions were organised in Kristiansand (13-14 December, 2012) and Potsdam (June 12-13, 2013) by Professor Dr. Stefan Gänzle and Professor Dr. Kristine Kern.
4. Kick-off meeting of the network in Stuttgart on 29-30 November 2012 (including a background talk with Peter Friedrich, Minister of the Federal Council, Europe and International Affairs of the Federal State Baden-Württemberg)
5. Several publications are published and in preparation by various network members. Most of them focus on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, but there are also comparative studies on macro-regions in general
6. Empirical studies in research groups and preparation of research projects;
7. Consultancy for development and implementation of projects in the Danube area as well as political issues;
8. Presentations at scientific conferences, but also at information events of the EUSDR for practitioners;
9. Informal exchange between the research network members.

Selected Ph.D. thesis's in process:

Orgonas, Doris (University of Tübingen, Historical and Cultural Anthropology, supervisor Prof. Dr. Reinhard Johler): "Alte Brücken, neue Wege und aktuelle Dynamiken. Baden-Württembergs institutionalisierter Kultur-, Forschungs- und Bildungsaustausch mit Ungarn"

Sielker, Franziska (FAU Erlangen-Nuremberg, Geography, supervisors Prof. Dr. Tobias Chilla and Prof. Dr. Phil Allmendinger from the University of Cambridge): "European integration and rescaling – Macro-regional reterritorialisation and new governance structures"

Vonhoff, Katja (University of Stuttgart, International Relations and European Integration, supervisor Prof. Dr. Cathleen Kantner): "Transnational networks in the Danube Area" (working title)

Wulf, Johann (Andrassy University, supervisor Prof. Dr. Jürgen Dieringer): In his dissertation, he compares the two macro-regional strategies EU Strategy for the Danube Region and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea.