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Dear readers,

Our LinkingDanube project is coming to an end and it's been a long process with great moments of fulfilment and satisfaction leading us to successfully developing our main output - Danube Region Journey Planner (DRJP) that allows users to plan their journeys in the Danube region according to their personal needs.

Together with all 10 partners from six countries of the Danube Region we leave behind a long list of project results which we hope will contribute to the improvement of Mobility and Multimodality - with focus on rail, road to better connect citizens, greater multimodality and better connected transport links.

We thank you for your constant interest all this time and kindly invite you to follow us on the project website and LinkedIn for latest news on project final event on 26th of June, Bucharest to hear about the project's main results and to discuss about potential follow-up activities.

LINKING DANUBE FINAL CONFERENCE, 26TH OF JUNE, BUCHAREST INVITATION AND AGENDA!

On behalf of the LinkingDanube project consortium, we are pleased to invite you to the LinkingDanube final event to be held in Bucharest, Romania at Europa Royale Bucharest Hotel on 26th of June 2019 in the context of the 8th EUSDR Annual Forum on 27-28 June also in Bucharest.

The LinkingDanube project invites all interested stakeholders to its final meeting where the main project results will be presented. The main goals of the event are to:

- Present the operational and practical part of the Distributed Journey Planning for the Danube Region (DRJP)
- Analyse the impact and development / implementation of the DRJP at regional / European level

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The DJRP demonstrates the feasibility and functionality of the LinkingDanube concept, including both integrating rural public transport services into the information flow of national / regional travel planning and linking services for the provision of cross-border services in the Danube Region.

The LinkingDanube concept and DRJP will be presented to participants where they will have the opportunity to test the functionality of the journey planner at the project presentation stand.

The participation in the event is free of charge and is held in English language.

Please check [here](#) our detailed agenda.

If interested, please register [here](#) till 24th June, 2019.

LINKINGDANUBE EXPLOITATION STRATEGY IS UNDER PREPARATION

The LinkingDanube Exploitation Strategy focuses on the summary of LinkingDanube dissemination and communication activities with the aim to offer from the exploitation perspective opportunities for further promotion of project outputs. Directing the LinkingDanube outputs and results towards the right communication/dissemination channels is one of the key factors for the success of this project and essential to ensure a lasting impact on the sustainable mobility sector.

The objective of exploitation is to effectively use the LinkingDanube project results through scientific, economic, political or societal exploitation routes aiming to turn the achieved results into concrete value and impact for society.

Our focus is a concrete use of LinkingDanube results, and the target audience segmentation includes multi-stakeholders approach, i.e.:

- project partners and other LinkingDanube known/involved stakeholders as well as
- Other potential stakeholders involved in possible future projects exploiting LinkingDanube results wider in the whole Danube Region or in broader European geographical setting.

The exploitation strategy has been prepared in line with a procedure agreed by all project partners and is based on several LinkingDanube deliverables from different Work Packages.

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We defined the target groups and other key stakeholders from the exploitation potential perspective, set project priority and specific objectives, prepared SWOT analysis to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for further exploitation, overviewed dissemination actions and communication tools with Local learning and dissemination workshops and Strategy workshop as key project outputs.

In the process of preparing the LinkingDanube Exploitation Strategy the consortium partners have implemented a thorough examination of possible issues (risks and opportunities) related to further exploitation of project results which are also included. Strategy mainly covers LinkingDanube exploitation aspects from the perspective of the project. However, there are several specific aspects regarding exploitation opportunities and risks that are either country-specific and/or partner/organisation-specific. Therefore, we also summarized the exploitation plans as explored and disclosed by LinkingDanube project partners and prepared some key aspects for Exploitation Action Plan 2019/20.

LOCAL LEARNING AND DISSEMINATION WORKSHOPS ARE FINALISED

In each project country (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia) a **local learning and dissemination workshop** was held with relevant stakeholders and decision makers from policy level in each country.

The last three local learning and dissemination workshops were organized between May-April 2019 April in Romania, Austria and Slovenia. The local workshop held in Slovenia was attended by our Associated partner Franc Žepič - Priority Area 1 B Coordinator of the EUSDR.

The workshops explored issues like training on the implementation of the service, gaining political awareness and commitment on local and national level (including relevant associations for dissemination). This created the learning necessary for a take of the developed API by third parties in a technical sense and exploitation of the concept from the policy level.

Local workshops were successfully organized by project partners themselves in the different areas where the demonstrations are realized to guarantee the optimal integration of the local actors.



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The explicit showcasing of the demonstration applications was given the public a hands-on feeling of what individual benefits they can expect from LinkingDanube and thus increase the positive perception of what can be achieved through EU-wide and transnational cooperation. The workshops were concluded by filling-out of feedback forms by the participants and we received valuable feedback related to the LinkingDanube project outputs, feedback that was used as input to the Exploitation Strategy.



All six local workshops prove that the project theme is of high interest for relevant stakeholders. The LinkingDanube concept provides valuable features, mainly for end users and service operators. The main benefit for end users is easier access to travel information and easier trip planning. For the transport providers, however, the main benefit is keeping the sovereignty over their data and the routing service.





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Participants of the workshops are convinced that the concept has a lot of opportunities and benefits for future development of cross-border transport. LinkingDanube Journey planner offers huge potential to become a real planner and to be used in “real life” after its completion and some improvements. Longer discussions were held at workshops about pricing and ticketing. Participants would welcome, if the LinkingDanube Journey Planner offered also the possibility to directly buy tickets for their journeys or at least to offer information on the prices.



As concluded by most of participants, the biggest burden of linking multimodal transport services is not overcoming technology related issues or legal burdens. It is the willingness to share data of transport operators and internal organizational issues. Organisational and quality aspects in the information supply are the main challenges for a more broader deployment and exploitation of “linking of services”.

As a final conclusion, we are strongly convinced, that the local learning and dissemination workshops held in 6 member countries were successful. The stakeholders were informed about the LinkingDanube project and its results and they are willing to contribute to future cooperation between interested institutions on cross-border projects.

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY WORKSHOP ORGANISED IN MARCH 2019

The Strategy Workshop was held in Vienna on 19th of March 2019 under the theme "Facing the challenge of Distributed (Open) Journey Planning" and the main goal was a joint meeting and exchange of the LinkingDanube partners with other stakeholders currently involved in OJP implementations as the Swiss Federal Railways (operating the Swiss Public Transport Open data platform), the South Tyrolian Transport Structures as well as DELFI.

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The aim was to create a common understanding of OJP from a technical and organizational point of view, as well as to enable a first alignment of the existing OJP services and architectures.



“Events like this workshop are very important. Especially because this time actors from both technical and political fields came together. This enabled us to bring together a very wide range of topics to form a common understanding,” says Katharina Helfert, one of the organisers of the workshop at AustriaTech.

Main targets of event:

- Create a common understanding of open/distributed journey planning among stakeholders
- Identification of DRJP stakeholders and their needs in Europe (LinkingDanube, DELFI, others)
- Preparation and alignment for further cross-border cooperation (e.g. in LinkingAlps, LinkingDanube Follow-up project and other possible cross-border cooperation)
- Exploitation of LinkingDanube Concept (Strategy development) and alignment with other concepts (DELFI/EU-SPIRIT and others).



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LINKINGDANUBE PROJECT WILL BE PRESENTED AT THE 8TH ANNUAL FORUM OF THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION



The [8th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region](#) will take place on 27th and the 28th of June 2019 in Bucharest, Romania (Palace of Parliament) and is being held under the motto: “Building cohesion for a shared prosperity in the

Danube Region”, covering topics of particular importance for the Danube region: connectivity and regional mobility, economy, ICT, environment, tourism, links between Macro-regional strategies, ESIF programs and the new Cohesion Policy.

The second day of the Forum will be dedicated to post-2020 EU policy design, with a focus on the role of DTP and EU mainstream operational programs for the region. An emphasis will be placed on the possibilities of creating better synergies between macro-regional strategies and EU programs and policies in the framework of the new Cohesion Policy.

The LinkingDanube project - Linking multimodal traveller information services for transnational journey planning will be presented at the EUSDR Annual Forum on Thursday, 27th of June 2019 in the thematic session 2 - Promoting interconnectivity for improving European regional mobility throughout EUSDR by one of the LinkingDanube project partner - ELECTRONIC SOLUTIONS.

Also the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) will be one of the organisers of the 8th Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and it will have a strong presence in the Forum with the organisation of:

- THE PLENARY SESSION 'Present and future role of the Danube Transnational Programme in the Danube region' - 28th OF JUNE, 9:00 h.
- DTP in the Exhibition area of the Forum

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LINKINGDANUBE AT EU SUSTAINABLE ENERGY WEEK

The LinkingDanube project attended the [2019 European Sustainable Energy Week's 3-day Policy Conference](#) that has covered the sustainable Transport topics extensively. On day 1 we've actively participated at the 'Innovative mobility solutions shaping Europe's energy future' session where Sustainable Mobility experts have presented the collective efforts of 16 European cities (including Stockholm, Madrid, Antwerp, Funchal, Limassol, Rethymno, Munich Aberdeen and Trieste) towards sustainable mobility. The 16 cities participate in 3 CIVITAS Innovation Action projects, DESTINATIONS, PORTIS & ECCENTRIC. As the session debate showed, the key challenge is to raise awareness of the significance of reducing energy and fuel use by the transport sector as a whole and thus make an important contribution to the fight against climate change. Behavioural change towards more sustainable means of transport was also discussed which is one of the central challenges also of the LinkingDanube project.



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We have also networked intensely in the [EUSEW's Networking Village](#) where several opportunities have been discussed for LinkingDanube results exploitation.

Let us only mention here that we have successfully networked with the [Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy](#) to present our project at their webinar at the end of 2019 and with the [EU Smart Cities Information System](#) to share our project's results in the future.

CONTACT



Bettina Neuhäuser

Project manager

E-mail: bettina.neuhaeuser@austriatech.at

Mihai Niculescu

Communication manager

E-mail: mihai.niculescu@elsol.ro

Follow LinkingDanube project on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/linkingdanube/>

LinkingDanube website: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/linking-danube>



Managing Authority

Joint Secretariat | Danube Transnational Programme

Honvéd utca 13-15 -1055 Budapest, Hungary

Tel: +36 1 795 9193

E-mail: danube@interreg-danube.eu | Web: www.interreg-danube.eu