



Bayerisches
Landeskriminalamt



Cooperation Southeast - Danube Region

Kick-off Meeting
15 and 16 January
2014
in Munich



Co-funded by the Prevention of and
Fight against Crime Programme
of the European Union.

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*New Town Hall, Marienplatz,
the Glockenspiel coopers' dancers in the tower balcony of the New Town Hall,
Statue of Karl Valentin, a comedian from Munich,
Church of St. Peter - with a Maypole in the front - Viktualienmarkt*





Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Danube connects scenic landscapes and regions of rich cultural diversity from the Black Forest to the Black Sea. For decades, centuries and millennia, its chequered history has been characterised by numerous political conflicts and the division caused by the Iron Curtain. In today's united Europe, the countries bordering the Danube with more than 100 million inhabitants have gained a common vision of economic growth and increased prosperity again. This vision was translated into the European Danube Region Strategy in June 2011.

The Danube strategy focuses, amongst others, on international cooperation to promote security and to tackle serious and organised crime. For this purpose, the Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior, Building and Transport, together with the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and in consultation with all participating countries, have taken the responsibility to coordinate the development, preparation and implementation of measures and projects aimed at promoting security in the Danube region. These are great opportunities we should take advantage of. For this reason, I invited the Interior Ministers of the member states of the European Danube Strategy to the Danube Security Conference (DSC) with the aim to further promote common priorities, the pooling of existing resources as well as closer coordination of national activities. The "International Symposium Cybercrime" held in Stuttgart on 17 October 2013, for instance, is a product of that conference. On that day, security agencies and international stakeholders from the industry and science sectors made a first and important step towards creating an extensive network for combating cybercrime.

In our commitment to security, we are paying special attention to the fight against drug crime. Implementing successful and sustainable measures against major drug transports from the country of origin along the so-called Balkan Route to the "markets" in Central and Western Europe calls for international cooperation to the widest extent possible.

The Working Group South East for Combating Drug Trafficking, which is organised by the Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt (BLKA), has been a well-established expert panel committed to the joint fight against international drug trafficking gangs for more than 40 years. Under the umbrella of the European Strategy for the Danube Region, the group of participants was extended to include Moldova and Ukraine. This means additional support for our approach to combating drug crime.

Now we are giving the starting signal for a new project: With the "Cooperation Southeast Danube Region" (CSDR) project, the BLKA has created a platform integrating the Danube countries into a joint strategy for their fight against drug trafficking in the Danube region. Over the next 24 months, joint events and measures will further strengthen the ties between the participating states. Apart from two conferences in Vienna and Prague, a practical exercise with the participation of six countries (Germany, Austria, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Czech Republic and Hungary) planned in May 2015 will surely be the highlight of this international networking project.

Nowadays, ensuring security and safety at the highest level is more than ever a challenging task. Looking across national borders with an open mind, setting common goals with international partners and ultimately developing joint activities are the key to success. I am therefore convinced that the CSDR will offer valuable incentives to enhance security in the Danube region. I would like to extend my deep gratitude towards all those who provide organisational support for this important project. Finally, I wish to thank the European Commission, which has accepted funding of 90 % of the CSDR project costs.

Joachim Herrmann

*Bavarian State Minister of the Interior,
Building and Transport,
Member of the Bavarian State Parliament*

Joachim Herrmann



Ladies and Gentlemen,

Together with the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior, it is my task as Chief of the Bavarian Police Force and Priority Area Coordinator (PAC) for Priority Area 11 of the European Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) to provide support for projects and actions with the aim of promoting security and combating serious and organised crime. The request by the European Commission that we act as a coordinator in this important project area is not only a challenge for us but also a recognition of the achievements of the Bavarian Police. Bavaria has held the top position in the field of internal security for many years, which can be directly credited to our effective security strategy. The formula for success of the Bavarian Police lies in their constant willingness and capability to adapt to changes, to stay in touch with citizens' needs through community policing but also to intervene strictly and consistently if required.

I am looking forward with keen interest to the start of the project "Cooperation Southeast – Danube Region" (CSDR) which is funded by the European Commission with more than 292,000 euros. As early as January 2012, the course for future cooperation and innovative projects was set at the Conference of the Police Chiefs of the EUSDR countries and the subsequent Interior Ministers' Danube Security Conferences.

In the next two years, the states participating in the CSDR project will be working hard on a joint strategy to combat drug trafficking in the Danube region. An efficient international network and good global contacts as well as a concerted effort by the countries involved are of crucial importance in the fight against drug-related crime, since drug trafficking in particular is often firmly under the control of internationally operating gangs.

Investigative techniques and tactics such as controlled deliveries across several borders, which require the co-operation of the respective law enforcement agencies, are key to successfully and permanently dismantling drug-trafficking organisations. The findings obtained this way on trafficking patterns and ringleaders of the drug trade are often the decisive pieces of information needed for the presentation of evidence. The controlled delivery of drugs through several states requires the close collaboration of all agencies involved. Carrying out such a complex police operation is always a remarkable feat of logistics. It is therefore of tremendous value to practice a controlled delivery as the centrepiece of the CSDR project in a fictitious scenario involving six countries. The participants will thoroughly analyse the lessons learned and will be able to adopt a more integrated and effective approach to fighting drug crime in the Danube region.

I would like to thank the Bavarian State Criminal Police Office and the project partners, NPC Prague and the Austrian Federal Criminal Police Office, for their strong commitment to implement the CSDR. I am sure that the work will pay off and the manifold contacts evolve into an active network promoting the good and trusting cooperation between the European Danube countries.

*Prof. Dr. Schmidbauer
Chief of the Bavarian Police Force*

Prof. Dr. Schmidbauer



Ladies and Gentlemen,

“The Danube is a river along which different peoples meet and mingle”, author Claudio Magris wrote describing the uniqueness of the Danube.

Ever since ancient times, this river has been bringing peoples and cultures together: It defines a coherent cultural area stretching from southern Germany to the Black Sea. Like a pearl necklace, the river connects wonderful cities such as Ulm and Regensburg, Vienna and Bratislava, Budapest and Belgrade with each other. The Danube is a symbol of our shared European heritage and stands for a common safe future in Europe.

The foundations for the Working Group South East for Combating Drug Trafficking (AG Südost), which is organised by the Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt (Bavarian State Criminal Police Office, BLKA) were laid more than 40 years ago. It is therefore the oldest example of international police cooperation in a united Europe.

In June 2012, the project “Cooperation Southeast - Danube Region (CSDR)” was integrated as a sub-project into the “European Danube Region Strategy”. We are very pleased that the successful cooperation with the Member States will now be continued under the umbrella of the European Union, as concentrating technical knowledge and resources is essential, in particular in the fight against international drug crime.

One of the European Danube Region Strategy’s key objectives is to extend existing police networks for combating organised crime. The different approaches taken in various Member states must be combined and common standards in drug fighting must be agreed on and applied.

Only by fostering a continuous and intensive exchange of information may a common level of knowledge about trafficking routes, methods and hiding places be achieved. The practical exercise will be an opportunity for the participating Member States to cooperate on a transnational basis and at the same time identify problems and weaknesses related to administration, logistics, practical implementation or legal issues, all of which can be used as a basis for new problem-solving approaches.

We can then disseminate the new insights and crime fighting techniques in a sustainable way and, in their fight against drug crime, make this crucial knowledge available to other European countries as well. In the long run, we hope that best practices identified for combating drug crime in Europe also take effect in those countries in Europe that do not yet belong to the European Union.

Commitment and trustful collaboration in the fight against international drug crime have enabled us to achieve remarkable success in the past.

We wish to continue this trend in the future as well and, by working closely with the Member States of the CSDR and strengthening personal contacts, intensify police cooperation across our borders. This will help maintain the standards of the rule of law and ensure a safe Europe for all of us.

*Peter Dathe
Commissioner of the
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt*

Peter Dathe

Background





History

In response to increased heroin trafficking from Europe to the United States ("French connection"), a regional task force was established in 1972 at the initiative of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. The members of the task force came together several times a year to draw up joint countermeasures.

In the beginning, the AG Südost (Working Group South East for Combating Drug Trafficking) only comprised representatives from Bavaria's neighbouring countries. In the period that followed, the Working Group evolved into an international expert panel including representatives from customs and police authorities of 20 states and INTERPOL.

The mission of the Working Group is to promote the mutual exchange of information and experience in the fight against drug trafficking, to initiate countermeasures and to plan and coordinate joint actions on the South Eastern route. Particular emphasis is placed on combating the illicit drug trade along the Balkan Route.

Problems

The number of Working Group participants has been declining over the years. The number of meetings was reduced from five to two, and finally - as of 2005 - to one per year.

Due to financial constraints, some member states cut down on the number of experts sent to the meetings or stopped to attend the meetings altogether. Another problem is the language barrier, as meetings could only be held in German so far.

Solution

In recent years, the demands by law enforcement agencies that more importance be attached to the international fight against drug trafficking as an issue affecting the internal security of the countries concerned have increasingly coincided with the determination and political will of policy-makers to take appropriate steps.

The Working Group South East has worked on concepts to counteract declining attendance and thus strengthen cooperation in the Balkans. At the Interior Ministers' Danube Security Conferences, the course was set for joint action in the Danube region.

Following preliminary organisational work, the project "Cooperation Southeast - Danube Region" (CSDR) was applied for within the framework of the European Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) - Priority Area 11 "Security" at the beginning of 2012 and was accepted in June 2012. The Steering Group of Priority Area 11 issued a Letter of Recommendation with the aim of further strengthening political support for the project, as the fight against international drug crime is a major issue in the field of security policy.

In their approach to find solutions to the above-mentioned problems, the officers in charge of the issue also considered filing an application for financial support by the European Commission within the framework of the ISEC program. The first contacts were established with the designated partner states Austria and the Czech Republic.

The EC funds should be used to cover the costs incurred by participants when attending the meetings and to enable the organisers to hold the meetings in German and English with the aid of simultaneous interpreters. At the same time, increased attendance and the resulting strengthening of networks should make the meetings more attractive again, creating a strong momentum not just for the duration of the project but in the long term.

Added Value

In times of tight budgets, we have to concentrate forces and resources, particularly in the light of ever-increasing challenges in the fight against international drug crime. One of the key objectives of the European Danube Region Strategy is to expand and reinforce existing police networks for combating organised crime. We have to combine the different approaches of the member states and to agree on and apply common standards in the

Background

fight against drugs. Using the Working Group's well-established and efficient networks will generate powerful synergies, especially as the Danube region and the Balkans largely cover the same territory and share a common historical and cultural background.

The conferences are intended, in particular, to maintain and expand a strong network of law enforcement agencies in the Balkan Route and Danube regions, which shall form the basis of concerted and effective anti-drug actions along one of the principal routes of international drug trafficking into the EU. Besides, they shall intensify the dialogue and cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries in this field.

In the preliminary stages of the project we realised that the overall concept of the Working Group South East would have to be further developed if a grant application was to be filed. It was soon agreed that a major exercise would provide the added value needed for the project.

After close consideration and careful analysis of current operational activities we found that there was basically no need for an exercise on the classical smuggling route from the South. So, in view of the "Eastern Partnership" project within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), we contacted the Republic of Moldova. The Moldavians were interested in participating for the first time in a joint exercise as part of the project.

By way of this exercise, the countries involved shall be given the opportunity to cooperate across borders and to recognise and solve the inherent administrative, logistic and operational problems. The geographical focus is on the Danube region. By including the Republic of Moldova which does not yet have well-established strategies and experiences in a coherent European policy framework, an attempt is made to integrate EU neighbours in such a policy framework and enable them to actively cooperate in anti-drug operations at the European level. The concept is in compliance with one of the priorities of the European strategy on drugs.

Project CSDR

In December 2012, a call for bids relating to this issue was published within the framework of the ISEC programme. The Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt (BLKA) decided to submit an application for funding of the project "Cooperation Southeast - Danube Region". We drafted the basic concept of the project and prepared the extensive application papers.

In September 2013, the European Commission granted financial support of the project; the agreement was signed in November 2013. The financial volume of the project amounts to approx. 330,000 euros, 90 % of which will be funded by the EC. In addition to organising and implementing the project, the BLKA will also cover the remainder of an estimated 33,000 euros.

*The two onion domes
of the Gothic Cathedral of Our lady
Mary's column
Marienplatz,
Münchner Kindl
(symbol on the city's coat of arms),
Old Town Hall*



The success of the project will largely depend on the participation of, and support by, every single member state of the Working Group South East. Thanks to the financial support by the European Commission, all working group members will be able to take part in the project and fully concentrate on the important issues without having to worry about tight budgets at home. Besides, EC funding allows for simultaneous interpretation at the conferences so that they can be held in German and English, which means that experts who used to stay away because of the language barrier can now attend the meetings, too.

Participants

Austria and the Czech Republic volunteered as project partners at an early stage and committed themselves to actively supporting the project by hosting conferences and assisting in the exercise.

In the course of further talks, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Hungary also agreed to take part in a major exercise, the "controlled delivery". Moreover, Hungary spontaneously offered to host the debriefing in Budapest and assist in organising the meeting.

A total of 20 states and INTERPOL will attend the conferences as participants and observers.

Synergies

The CSDR project must not be seen in isolation but as part of a coherent European anti-drug approach. Through our project partner Austria, in particular, there is a close link to the EU-funded project "Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2013-2014". The two projects are similar in certain aspects, which will lead to synergies and have a positive impact on both of them.

The established contacts and the exchange of experience within the Working Group South East are a sound basis for concrete investigations under the auspices of the "Drug Policing Balkan Advanced 2013-2014" project.



Overview

It was agreed with the European Commission that the project should officially start on 1 January 2014. It will terminate after 24 months, on 31 December 2015, at the latest. All project activities have to be carried out within this time frame.

The project schedule is as follows:

January 2014 - Project Start and Kick-off Meeting in Munich

The project was officially launched by the kick-off meeting in Munich on 15 and 16 January 2014. It was attended by the project partners Czech Republic, Austria and Germany. The results of the meeting are summarised on the following pages of this brochure.

September 2014 - 1st Conference

The next step will be the 153. meeting of the Working Group South East for Combating Drug Trafficking (AG Südost). The meeting will be organised by Austria in the greater Vienna area. Further details will be announced in the invitations to be mailed soon, including information on the conditions for the refund of costs. Expenses will only be reimbursed on the basis of, and in compliance with, EC regulations.

May 2015 - International Exercise

We will conduct a major international exercise in the form of a controlled delivery (working title: "Perseus"), aimed at promoting and putting into practice the operational approach of the Working Group South East. The cross-border exercise will cover the territories of Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic and Germany. By way of this exercise, we particularly wish to practice international cooperation, the transfer of criminals at the border and the cross-border use of technology.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the Republic of Moldova, which has not been represented in the Working Group South East so far, takes part in the exercise.

June 2015 - Follow-up Meeting

Only a few weeks after the exercise, the countries involved will meet for a debriefing in Hungary, where the experts who took part in the exercise will address and analyse the practical and administrative problems and work out solutions. The host country, Hungary, will assist the project group in conducting this follow-up meeting.

September 2015 - 2nd Conference

The 154. meeting of the Working Group South East will be organised by our project partner from the Czech Republic. The meeting will focus on representing and analysing the lessons learned from the major exercise. Besides, the CSDR project shall be evaluated.

Overview

2014	January	Kick-off
	September	1st Conference
2015	May	Exercise
	June	Follow-up Meeting
	September	2nd Conference

GERMANY

Project management **Jörg Beyser**

Tasks:

- Fundamental decisions
- Financial controlling
- Internal evaluation
- Personnel planning
- Head of conferences

Project administration **Michael Kirchner**

Tasks:

- Coordination and assistance of subprojects
- Development and accomplishment of the kick-off Meeting
- Public relations
- Preparation of brochures
- International cooperation
- Contact person for European Commission

Financial management and deputy project management **Hans Schmidt**

(Assistants: Andrea Knoll and Robert Mahler)

Tasks:

- Verification of factual and calculative correctness of bills and receipts
- Accounting
- Payment order to BLKA, Unit 112
- Document archiving

Conferences **Florian Schaffner**

Tasks:

- Preparation of conferences
- Implementation of conferences
- Preparation of the protocol

Exercise management **Manfred Rauscher**

(Assistants: Horst Wanner and Eduard Kohl)

Tasks:

- Preparation and implementation of the exercise
- Exercise management the field
- Evaluation of the exercise
- Preparation and implementation of the debriefing
- Presentation of the results in the 2nd conference

AUSTRIA

.BK Vienna **Christian Mader, Thomas Dörner**

Tasks:

- Technical contribution as a transit country to the project
- Operational preparation of the 1st conference
- Implementation of the 1st conference

CZECH REPUBLIC

NPC Prague **Petr Kočí**

CPJ Prague **Pavel Hoffman**

Tasks:

- Technical contribution as a country of origin to the project
- Operational preparation of the 2nd conference
- Implementation of the 2nd conference

Overview

German members



JÖRG BEYSER
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Head of Division 61
Narcotics and Drugs
Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
80636 Munich, Germany
Phone +49 89 12 12 - 1610
Fax +49 89 12 12 - 2619
dst0270@polizei.bayern.de



HANS SCHMIDT
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Head of Unit 614
Investigation of Drug Traffic
Northern Bavaria
Joint Investigation Team of Police
and Customs
Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
80636 Munich, Germany
Phone +49 89 12 12 - 1614
Fax +49 89 12 12 - 1805
blka.csdr@polizei.bayern.de



MANFRED RAUSCHER
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Deputy of Unit 612
Investigation of Drug Traffic
Southern Bavaria
Joint Investigation Team of Police
and Customs
Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
80636 Munich, Germany
Phone +49 89 12 12 - 2612
Fax +49 89 12 12 - 2618
dst0270@polizei.bayern.de



FLORIAN SCHAFFNER
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Head of the administrative office
Division 61
Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
80636 Munich, Germany
Phone +49 89 12 12 - 2610
Fax +49 89 12 12 - 2616
dst0270@polizei.bayern.de



MICHAEL KIRCHNER
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Member of Unit 615
Drug Enforcement Task Force
Northern Bavaria
Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
80636 Munich, Germany
Phone +49 89 12 12 - 1771
Fax +49 89 12 12 - 1762
blka.csdr@polizei.bayern.de



ANDREA KNOLL
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Member of Unit 614
Investigation of Drug Traffic
Northern Bavaria
Joint Investigation Team of Police
and Customs
Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
80636 Munich, Germany
Phone +49 89 12 12 - 1806
Fax +49 89 12 12 - 1805
blka.csdr@polizei.bayern.de



EDUARD KOHL
Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Member of Unit 612
Investigation of Drug Traffic
Southern Bavaria
Joint Investigation Team of Police
and Customs
Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
80636 Munich, Germany
Phone +49 89 12 12 - 3624
Fax +49 89 12 12 - 2618
blka.csdr@polizei.bayern.de



HORST WANNER
 Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Member of Unit 612
 Investigation of Drug Traffic
 Southern Bavaria
 Joint Investigation Team of Police
 and Customs
 Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
 80636 Munich, Germany
 Phone +49 89 12 12 - 3658
 Fax +49 89 12 12 - 2618
 blka.csdr@polizei.bayern.de



ROBERT MAHLER
 Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt
Member of Unit 614
 Investigation of Drug Traffic
 Northern Bavaria
 Joint Investigation Team of Police
 and Customs
 Office: Maillingerstr. 15,
 80636 Munich, Germany
 Phone +49 89 12 12 - 1803
 Fax +49 89 12 12 - 1805
 blka.csdr@polizei.bayern.de

Austrian members



THOMAS DÖRNER
 Federal Ministry of Interior/
 Criminal Intelligence Service
Head of Heroin Unit
 Drug Related Crime Office 3.3
 Office: Josef-Holaubek-Platz 1,
 1090 Vienna, Austria
 Phone +43 1-24836-85781
 Fax +43 1-24836-85393
 bmi-ii-bk-3-3@bmi.gv.at



CHRISTIAN MADER
 Federal Ministry of Interior/
 Criminal Intelligence Service
Leader of Data-Information-Management
 Drug Related Crime Office 3.3
 Office: Josef-Holaubek-Platz 1,
 1090 Vienna, Austria
 Phone +43 1-24836-85784
 Fax +43 1-24836-85393
 bmi-ii-bk-3-3@bmi.gv.at

Czech members



PETR KOČÍ
 National Drug Headquarters
 Criminal Police and Investigation Service
Deputy Director NDH CPIS
 Office: P.O. Box 62, 17089 Prague 7,
 Czech Republic
 Phone +420 974836590
 Fax +420 974836519
 petr.koci@pcr.cz



PAVEL HOFFMAN
 General Directorate of Customs
 Customs Drug Enforcement Unit
Head of Unit
 Office: Budejovicka 7,
 14096 Prague 4
 Phone +420 724496171
 Fax +420 261333800
 p.hoffman@cs.mfcr.cz

Kick – off Meeting

The kick-off meeting took place at the Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt (BLKA) in Munich on 15 and 16 January 2014.

It was attended by Mr. Petr Koci from the Czech Police; by Mr. Christian Mader and Mr. Thomas Dorner from the Austrian Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) in Vienna; and by the permanent project staff members from Germany, Mr. Joerg Beyser, Mr. Hans Schmidt, Mr. Manfred Rauscher, Mr. Florian Schaffner and Mr. Michael Kirchner as well as the subproject assistants Mr. Horst Wanner, Mr. Eduard Kohl and Mr. Robert Mahler.

The meeting took place in a very friendly atmosphere, due to the long and trusting relationship between the members who have been working together in the Working Group South East, amongst others, and have established good personal contacts over the years.

The extensive agenda comprised 12 items, the most important of which are briefly summarised in the following:

Overview of the process up to date as well as the current state of the project and the agreement

We discussed the activities from the date of application until the signing of the agreement. We put particular emphasis on explaining to all participants the reasons and deliberations leading to the decisions that were made.

Planned project stages

The planned stages of the project were thoroughly explained in terms of contents and schedule. Besides we deliberated whether, or to what extent, it would be possible to make adjustments to the project.

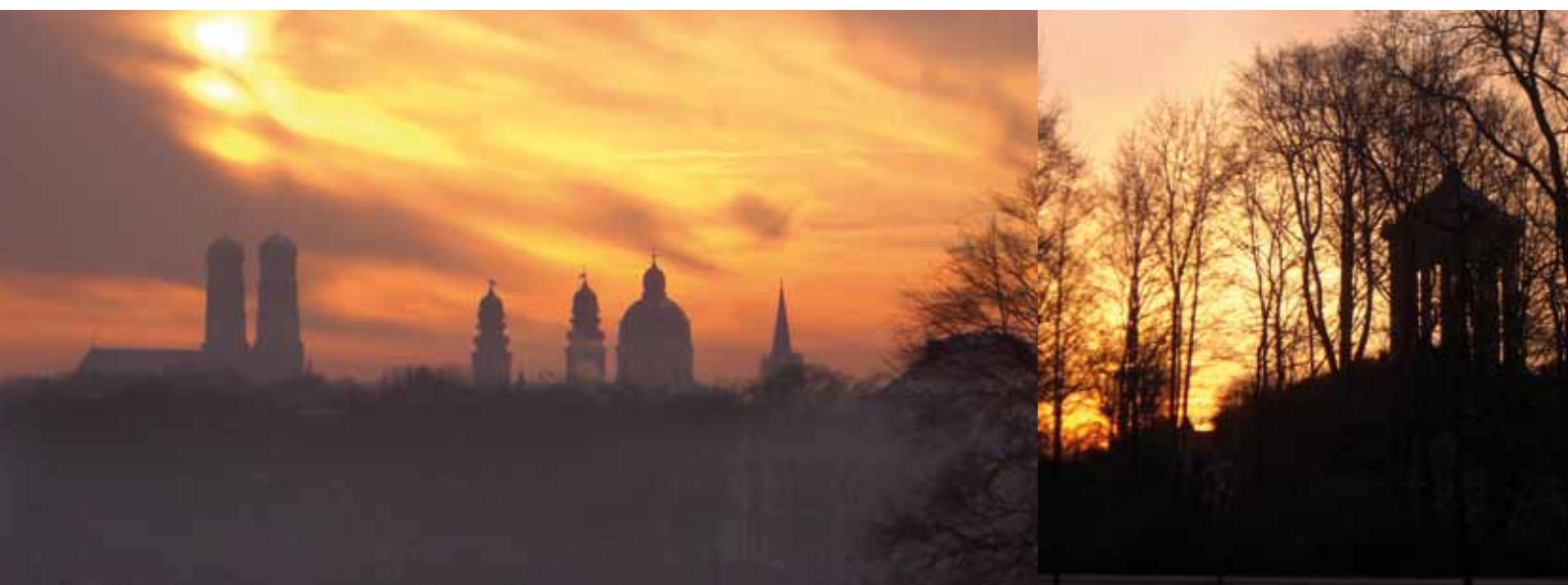
We discussed the questions regarding the evaluation of the project and its individual components.

In addition, we briefly introduced the brochures intended for dissemination so that all participants would get an idea of their contents and size.

EU guidelines, conditions for financial support

We presented the main points of the EC guidelines and the rules concerning the schedule and progress of the project and the reimbursement of costs.

*Sunset over the Englischer Garten,
a beautiful vista of the city if offered by the Monopteros*



Kick-off Participants



From left to right: Michael Kirchner, Horst Wanner, Thomas Dorner, Christian Mader, Eduard Kohl, Petr Kočí, Robert Mahler, Manfred Rauscher, Jörg Beyser, Florian Schaffner, Hans Schmidt

Distribution of tasks among the project partners

To avoid misunderstandings, we discussed in detail the tasks that would have to be performed and who would perform them, as well as the distribution of responsibilities and the decision-making processes that have to be complied with.

Planning of the exercise and the debriefing

The officer leading the exercise roughly outlined the scope and the planned course of action. In particular, the practical and tactical aspects of the exercise were specified which have to be observed in order to maximise the positive impact. It was stressed that the details

of the event had to be treated confidentially, also within the project team, in order to create a level playing field for all countries involved and ensure a realistic outcome.

Presentation, discussion and approval of the kick-off brochure

A draft of this kick-off brochure was presented, discussed and unanimously approved.

In the final meeting, the participants agreed that the conference had been a success. The chairman, Mr. Beyser, closed the conference by thanking the participants and wishing them a safe journey home.

Forecast

Evaluation

A comprehensive project evaluation concept is still being developed.

Essentially, the success of project will be judged by the number of participants in the Working Group South East for Combating Drug Trafficking on the one hand, and the findings and recommendations gained from the major exercise on the other hand.

An increase in the number of participants will be a first indicator of success regarding the Working Group South East because it means that more experts and opinions will be available, providing a broader base for ultimately implementing the results in practical anti-drug measures.

Besides, the conferences themselves shall be evaluated, and the participants shall be given the opportunity to contribute to the further development of the Working Group South East by constructive criticism.

Another criterion is the number of conducted joint investigations within an assessment period of one year at a time, which is an indication of the qualitative improvement of the Working Group.

As far as the practical exercise is concerned, the last major cross-border event in which the Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt BLKA took part dates back as far as 1998. Hence, conducting such an exercise is a success per se. All lessons learned - positive or negative - will be discussed in a follow-up meeting, reviewed and disseminated to the Working Group members.

Dissemination Strategy

One of the top priorities of any project funded by the European Commission is the dissemination of the knowledge gained. As a lot of information is confidential, a two-pronged strategy will be followed in this connection.

Confidential and security-related data will only be distributed to Working Group members, as usual.

Unclassified information and data that need not be protected will be passed on, in the form of folders such as this one, publications and on data carriers, to police and customs authorities of the EU as well.



Funding

Funding of the project by the European Commission amounts to approx. 90 % of the total costs, estimated at approx. 330,000 euros in the project plan. The remaining amount will be paid by the project coordinator, i.e. the Free State of Bavaria.

Basically, the financial assistance granted by the European Commission in connection with conferences covers the participants' travelling expenses (tickets or mileage allowance), daily allowance (food and accommodation, inter alia) and the usual conference costs (equipment and interpreters).

Expense accounting is done by the financial managers of the project. If possible, the costs are taken over directly; sometimes, it may be necessary to pay the expenses first and get them refunded by bank transfer. The exact requirements, limits and regulations will be announced in due time.

The project team will try and take over directly as many expenses as possible or otherwise arrange for the costs to be processed and refunded as soon as possible.

Bavariastatue, Oktoberfest, Herzerl Stand (Gingerbread Heart), big wheel



Notes



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Bayerisches Landeskriminalamt (BLKA)
Project Cooperation Southeast - Danube Region
Maillingerstr. 15, 80636 Munich

Editor: Michael Kirchner, BLKA

Design: Layla Helou, BLKA

Photos: Claudia Vodermaier, BLKA, p. 2, 8-9, 14-17

Benedikt van Hasz, BLKA, p. 5, 6, 12-13, 18

Ludwig Waldinger, BLKA, p. 19

Office:

Wallensteinstr. 47, 90431 Nuremberg

Phone: +49 89 1212-1771

Fax: +49 89 1212-1762

Mail: blka.csdr@polizei.bayern.de

Print: BPFi Ainring

Zwieselstr. 1, 83404 Ainring



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2014

CSDD

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
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REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
CZECH REPUBLIC
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
HUNGARY
REPUBLIC OF ITALY
REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO
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