

Foreword

The Danube River is a source of life for 83 million people living in its basin. For thousands of years the River has irrigated the fields along its course turning them into fertile farmland. It has fed the surrounding population on fish. As an important transportation route, the Danube has carried people and goods between different destinations along its 2,857-kilometer-long course. Its natural beauty has inspired poets, painters and composers. Like any valuable asset in the history of humankind, it has attracted conquerors and influenced the course of history.

The Danube is obviously not the only life-sustaining or awe-inspiring river in the world, but it is a uniquely "political" river since it connects 13 European countries, with smaller parts of its basin reaching into yet another four. No other river basin in the world is shared by so many nations. This international character of the Danube can be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it carries the potential for generating political conflict when changes in the River caused by one country reach beyond that country's border. At the same time, it carries at least an equally large potential for promoting co-operation and encouraging consensus building since the success of any effort to manage and protect the River heavily depends, from the very early stage on, on the agreement between so many riverine states.

Recent history has been dominated by co-operation. The population of the Basin has proved to be committed to preventing the Danube from turning into the sewer of Central and Eastern Europe and ensuring that the River should keep its blue colour to continue to live up to the image created by Johann Strauss.

The Joint Danube Survey (JDS, the Survey) is only the most recent proof of this commitment.

From August to September 2001, two ships equipped with accommodation and research facilities sailed from Regensburg, Germany, down to the Danube Delta carrying scientists from different countries who collected and analysed samples of water, sediment and suspended solids to obtain homogeneous data on the chemical and biological status of the Danube and its main tributaries.

The Survey was made possible by the generous financial support of the German government and a large contribution from the Austrian government. In-kind contributions came from other Danube Basin countries and all riparian states contributed their scientific, logistical, managerial and other necessary expertise to make JDS a truly joint enterprise.

Once they are used as a basis for making adequate environmental decisions, the over 40,000 results generated by the Survey will bring us another step closer to a cleaner Danube.

Martina Motlova
President of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

Final Report of the Joint Danube Survey

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5.2.4.4	Manfred Sengl, Igor Liška and Ferenc Laszlo
5.2.4.5	Ferenc Laszlo, Manfred Sengl and Igor Liška
5.2.4.6	Manfred Sengl, Hans-Juergen Brauch and Frank Sacher
5.2.4.7	Robert Brockmeyer and Ralf Schmidt
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The Annexes to particular chapters of this report, which contain additional tables, figures and data are on the attached CD-ROM. The annexed documents are in the Microsoft Word and Excel.

CD-ROM also contains the JDS National Reports prepared by countries participating in the Joint Danube Survey. The National Reports include the results of analyses of the JDS samples carried out by the countries in parallel to the JDS laboratories. The National Reports are in the format as received from the national authors.

Thanks are due to all those who contributed to the success of the Joint Danube Survey

Joint Danube Survey

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