



## **PROCEEDINGS of the Meeting on the**

### **Follow-up of the Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin**

at the Danube Commission, Budapest, January 29-30, 2009

## **I PROTOCOL**

### Day 1 (29 January, 2009)

The ICPDR (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River), the ISRBC (International Sava River Basin Commission) and the DC (Danube Commission) have jointly launched the process to develop the *Joint Statement (JS) on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin*. After a year-long process preparing the document, and its adoption by the three river commissions in December 2007 and January 2008, the Joint Statement was publicly announced in March 2008.

On the 29-30 of January, 2009 in the Danube Commission Headquarter in Budapest, a Meeting on the Follow-up of the Joint Statement was organized. Participants were again the representatives of the DC, the ICPDR, the ISRBC, of the European Commission, national transport, environmental and water management authorities and other stakeholders. The Meeting was organized by DC Secretariat and the ICPDR, which also strongly supported it.

This Meeting was attended by over 70 persons from governments (10 countries: AT, BiH, BG, DE, HR, HU, RS, SK, RO, MD), representatives of 3 Embassies (DE, RU, UA), international and regional organizations (European Commission - DG TREN, DG ENV and DG REGIO, CCNR, RCC, REC, FAO, DC, ICPDR, ISRBC, SECI, TINA), NGOs (WWF, DEF), and other stakeholders (EBU, Via Donau, Vienna university BoKu).

The **objectives** of the Meeting were:

- Information about progress in the implementation of the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin;

- Discussion on the further development and application of the *Joint Statement* and its implications;
- Information and discussion about new facts and perspectives of European inland waterway transport;
- Information and discussion about the current state of legal and policy frameworks of integrated river basin management and environmental protection;
- Information about the state of IWT projects in the Danube basin.

The Meeting agenda and the List of Participants are given in Annexes 1 resp. 2.

## Introductory Statements

*(Chaired by Mr. Piotr Suvorov - Deputy Director General of the Secretariat of the Danube Commission)*

The Meeting was opened by welcome speeches of the President of the DC, **Amb. Igor Savolsky** (Russian Federation), the President of the ICPDR-2009, **Mrs. Olga Srsnova** (Slovakia), the Chairman of the ISRBC, **Mr. Branko Bacic** (Croatia). They welcomed all participants on behalf of three commissions and expressed the best wishes of success for this important process.

[Link to Statement I. Savolysky 2009 01 29 \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mrs. Karla Peijs** (EC/DG-TREN) reminded the participants on the new perspectives of integrated waterway transport in Europe and along the Danube.

As European Community Coordinator for Inland Waterways, she has been tasked to support the transport development mainly in two areas: in the north western part between the Seine river and the Scheldt river network and, on the Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube corridor.

She stressed that the Joint Statement exercise is the first constructive example of a cooperation that is much needed in all fields of the human initiatives, but certainly in support of a continuous growth of mobility demand, versus the impellent need to protect the nature of our regions. She looks at this initiative with strong interest and support.

In doing this, a sound plan for the implementation of the Joint Statement Principles can provide a common platform where to start from along with European Commission initiatives of the NAIADES Programme, from the EC Transport Directorate for the development of the inland waterway transport, the global Basin approach of the EC Regional Directorate and the Water Protection initiatives of the EC Directorate for Environment.

Mrs. Peijs looks forward to take an active role in this process, in particular in the aforementioned Meeting as the first step, after the declaration of Principles, for the laying down of rules that, in line with the European and the National Legislations, will promote the development of the river basin, starting from a sound and sustainable transport system.

[Link to Statement Karla Peijs 2009 01 29 BP Final JS notes \(Annex 3\)](#)

## **Session 1: Progress and current status of the Joint Statement**

On behalf of the DC, **Mr. H. Schindler** presented the legal nature, historical background, functioning of the DC and explained the tasks and decision-making process in the DC.

**Mrs. I. Tomic** continued the presentation of the DC activities on the field of IWT and Ecology, as well as process of discussion and adoption of the Joint Statement in the DC Session, Technical WG and Hydrotechnical Expert Group from December 2007 and during 2008.

She also informed about a DC plan to initiate a Masterplan for main infrastructure projects on the Danube in accordance with the JS at the next Hydrotechnical Expert Group meeting (March 17-18, 2009) at the premises of the DC.

[Link to PPT 001 Schindler- Tomic \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. D. Komatina**, Secretary of the ISRBC, reminded the participants that the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin introduced the integrated approach of sustainable water management, making the Sava Commission responsible for both navigation development and environmental protection in the basin.

The Joint Statement is perceived by the Sava Commission as an additional confirmation of its integrated approach, and also as an excellent opportunity to contribute to the development of the Danube transport system and its ecosystem, while working on this issue jointly with the Danube Commission and the ICPDR.

As a contribution to the implementation of the Joint Statement, the Sava Commission organized a Workshop on Environmentally Sustainable Management and Maintenance of Inland Waterways, in October last year, in Belgrade. The majority of participants were stakeholders from the Sava river basin, but representatives of the European Commission, ICPDR, Danube Commission, and other international and regional organizations and institutions also participated.

The JS was presented, for the very first time, to a wide range of stakeholders from the Sava countries, and it was found to be a solid framework for future projects in the region, especially for the project of Rehabilitation and Development of Navigation on the Sava River.

[Link to Statement DC \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. P. Weller**, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR, reminded the participants in general about the Danube River Protection Convention, its Contracting Parties, the coordination mechanism and Trans National Monitoring Network – TNMN.

Mr Weller also stressed the implementation of EU WFD as a highest priority for ICPDR and related efforts to achieve a coordinated river basin management plan for the Danube River Basin. He underlined in the frame of the WFD Joint Programm of Measures the necessity to develop navigation fully in line with EU WFD.

The Executive Secretary of the ICPDR informed also about the adoption of Resolution ORD 10 - Joint Statement and Resolution ORD 11 – Navigation, as well as the implementation and further secured application of the Joint Statement in future infrastructure projects. Specifically, he mentioned intense discussion on the ISPA 2 project with the RO Ministry of Transport and the BG & RO Ministries of Environment of as well as with the EC (DG-TREN, DG-ENV and DG-REGIO) since Jan. 2008.

Mr Weller briefed the process leading to the JS, notably the three Workshops (April 2007, Orth/Vienna; June 2007, Bucharest and October 2007, Zagreb) Results.

[Link to Ppt 002 Weller.Progress Jt.St. BP 29 -01-2009 \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr Otto Schwetz**, coordinator of Corridor VII, stressed that its members were pleased with the JS that is a tool to sort our irritations. He also praised the constant dialogue with ICPDR.

**Mrs Cristina Cuc**, Romanian Ministry of Transport, underlined that her country is very interested in cooperation. For the ISPA 2 project, two workshops were already held; the next will be organized after receiving comments and observations on the draft Feasibility Study.

**Mr Cesare Bernabei**, DG TREN, said that the European Commission much supported the JS and considers it a good basis for the future development of transport.

**Mr Gerhard Nagl**, Danube Environmental Forum, explained that his organisation has nearly 100 NGO members and is thus working close to the public. He appreciated the integrated approach of the JS and hoped that the existing infrastructure planning for the Danube will be accompanied by an adequate programme to preserve biodiversity and water related habitats. To reach this objective it would be necessary not only to have an inventory of protected areas but also to work out a plan to conserve and improve Danube biodiversity with its species. He stressed the need to look at the Danube as one entity, such as for the situation of rheophilic fish like the Danube Salmon.

**Mrs Cristina Brailescu**, EC DG Environment, expressed her hope that the Meeting will brainstorm on three issues: need to look at strategic alternatives in terms of IWT, by moving from the project level to plans and programmes, and applying consequently the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) provisions; a stronger project communication and stakeholder involvement (rather than sticking to the minimum legal requirements); the awareness of planners that EU co-financing is linked to fulfilling the requirements of the EC environmental legislation and policy.

**Mr Knut Beyer**, German Ministry of Environment, underlined their interest in this Meeting. Rather than a heavy structure, the JS would become a forum for dialogue with a road map and achieve synergies between difficult activities.

Ms Senaida **Mehmedovski**, BiH Ministry of Transport, confirmed the JS support by ISRBC.

**Mrs Marina Ivica-Matkovac**, Croatian Ministry of Transport, expressed their strong support for the JS. Its promotion shall help to address all its principles.

**Mr Richard Stadler**, Austrian Ministry of Water Management, stated that integrated work and transparency are evidently needed to execute navigation projects.

**Mrs Irene Lucius**, WWF Danube Carpathian Programme, hopes that the JS will soon be implemented, as she sees no need for further explanations.

## **Session 2: Progress in navigation, environmental protection and regional development**

*(chaired by Mr. Dejan Komatina, Executive Secretary of the ISRBC)*

**Mrs. Birgit Vogel** (ICPDR) informed in detail about the *EU Water Framework Directive implementation in the Danube River Basin*. This is highest priority for the Danube countries: While it is binding for all EU MS, the Non EU MS and the EU Accession Country Croatia are committed themselves to implement it (Sofia, December 2000).

WFD requires to achieve the Good Ecological and Chemical Status respectively the Good Ecological Potential in case of designated Heavily Modified Water Bodies of all surface waters including rivers by 2015 and allows no further degradation of their water bodies. To achieve a better common understanding on the environmental objectives of the WFD the presentation included the issue of Heavily Modified Water Bodies and the Good Ecological Potential that has to be achieved via measures. The importance of the Danube River Basin Management Plan and the implications for navigation were also underlined. The DRBM Plan and its Joint Programme of Measures has to be compiled by 2009/10 via good coordination mechanisms and a clear strategy including timelines.

On the base of the Danube Basin Analysis (2004), four significant water management issues (Organic Pollution, Nutrient Pollution, Hazardous Substances Pollution and Hydromorphological Alterations) have been identified for DRB surface waters. Navigation exerts one of the key environment pressures causing ecological degradation, mainly in form of hydro-morphological alterations especially in the Danube River. For the DRBM Plan related management objectives were defined and will guide towards the Joint Programme of Measures. This will take into account future navigation projects. Future step for Navigation – Environment is integrated planning straight from the beginning which will ensure win-win solutions for both navigation development and the environment.

[Link to PPt 003 Vogel WFD&DRBM Plan \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. Andras Demeter**, EC-DG ENV, presented the *Integrated development of the Natura 2000 network along waterways*. He briefly informed what is happening to biodiversity in Europe, and how EU Action wants to halt the serious loss of biodiversity.

Mr. Demeter very picturesquely showed important features of NATURA 2000; This ecological network of protected areas is covering 17% of the EU 27 territory, including large parts of the Danube. NATURA 2000 is no set of paper parks but has clear procedures how to

deal with potentially damaging developments (Art. 6.3/4): Member States must avoid deterioration of designated sites and species but can execute new projects if alternatives or compensations are found and accepted by the EC.

He informed that the EC has already provided various guidances (e.g. how to assess plans and projects affecting protected sites) and that new sectoral guidances are under preparation (on ports and estuaries, on non-energy extractive industries and on wind energy). In particular, a new technical guidance on rivers and inland waterways will be started in February 2009 (co-chaired by DG TREN and DG ENV). Output in 2010 will be web-based guidance documents on management and protection of Natura 2000 rivers.

Finally, the EC considers the *Joint Statement* a very good opportunity for promoting the integrated approach to manage riverine Natura 2000 sites and for strengthening trans-boundary cooperation with the neighbouring non-EU countries.

[Link to PPt 004 Demeter NATURA 2000JS Danube BP 29-01-09 \(Annex 3\)](#)

In the short discussion, Mr Demeter further stressed that each critical issue of a particular project needs to be checked on a case-by-case approach using scientific information.

**Mrs. Nathalie Verschelde**, EC- DG Regio, spoke about *Sustainable development in the Danube river region*. The Cohesion Policy already makes a significant contribution to the Danube area through national and regional structural fund programmes. While the main programmes are negotiated and executed nationally or regionally, there are only limited funds for international cooperation (mainly bilateral) and yet no programme for the Danube basin. She informed the participants that, similar to the new Baltic region strategy and responding to a recent request from Austria and Romania, activities were initiated in October 2008 for developing a *European Danube Strategy*, if a strong mandate from the countries comes in 2009. DG Regio would then start through a wide consultation to identify the themes, objectives and action plan for the Strategy. The needs and opportunities for such cooperation should now be demonstrated, notably by implementing existing Danube projects.

**Mr. Gert-Jan Muilerman** (Via Donau), PLATINA project coordinator, replaced Mr. Michael Fastenbauer and presented the *EU Platina project and its implications for the Danube basin*. He explained the concept of Platina (a platform to realize a set of NAIADES actions supporting the development of inland waterway transport) and its Work Package structure (themes are Markets, Fleet, Jobs & Skills, Image, Infrastructure), informed about the 8 (out of 22) Platina partners in the Danube region and the organizational structure. Muilerman reported the key results of the 1st project year (IWT funding guide; new website; foundation of a European IWT educational network).

In relation to the Joint Statement foreseen for 2009, some activities are being undertaken:

- Integrative study on hydro-morphological alterations of the Danube and
- Preparation and publication of a best practice manual on waterway infrastructure planning following the Joint Statement.

Related details were given later in the presentation of Mr Zinke.

In response to questions, Mr Muilerman informed that a Platina innovation group collects ideas on new ship technologies for future funding, and that the wave impact can also be addressed.

[Link to PPt 006 Muilerman/Fastenbauer PLATINA via donau GJM \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. Jörg Rusche** (EBU) informed about the EBU Members and their cooperation activities, in his talk about the *Potential of non-structural measures to improve IWT in the Danube basin.*

He underlined the potential of non-structural measures in form of best practise in the fields of environmental performance (low emission and low consumption concepts of vessels), River Information Services (RIS), jobs & skills (training and education), State aid schemes and reduced administrative barriers, which will lead to clear benefits.

Mr Rusche also showed new figures on the external cost advantages of ships, compared to trucks and railways, and the benefits and cost advantages triggered from structural measures (deeper fairway ). from PLANCO Study 2008).

[Link to PPt 007 Rusche 2009-01-29 BP\(Annex 3\)](#)

In the short discussion it was stressed that such cost comparisons should also address the need to adapt ship sizes to rivers that are subject to climate change effects. Such aspects may also be addressed in the new study for the Bavarian Danube or via modern logistic chains.

**Mr. Alexander Zinke** (ICPDR) presented a new *Interdisciplinary dialogue on IWT infrastructure preparation* executed within the Platina project. ICPDR, together with Boku university, Via Donau and INE, are executing in 2008-2009 three tasks which aim to ensure the proper integration of environmental aspects in the development and maintenance of IWT infrastructure. First, a study will analyze the effects of navigation on the Danube hydro-morphology and produce recommendations how to limit these in future IWT projects. Second, a new Manual on integrated planning will be drafted that will, thirdly, be discussed at two training workshops with a diverse list of participants (mainly national IWT planners and waterway managers): This concrete follow up on the JS will address how its Principles can be implemented on the base of best practice examples.

Starting from the status quo in Danube IWT planning, the concrete needs for better planning are currently identified. In the workshops in 2009, the wide range of international experience on integrated planning will be presented and the new guidance discussed on local Danube cases (lower and middle Danube, Sava). The finalised Manual shall be widely disseminated, and in 2011 an update workshop shall assess the experience gained with its application.

[Link to PPt 008 Zinke. Budap.Jan2009 \(Annex 3\)](#)



In the short discussion it was explained that non-structural measures (e.g. RIS) and new engineering techniques (e.g. groins, dredging) can improve both navigability and nature protection.

**Mrs. Irene Lucius** replaced Mr. Georg Rast on behalf of the WWF-Danube Carpathian Programme and presented the *Perspectives for IWT in the Danube region from an NGO point of view.*

Mrs. Lucius underlined that WWF, having participated in the development of the Joint Statement, supports this document and is strongly committed to promote and participate in implementing the agreed guidelines and procedures.

From the WWF's point of view, however, there is little or no progress within on-going projects regarding the JS's „integrated approach“ (chapter 3) and „recommendations“ (chapter 4). Also transparency and participation for interested and obligatory parties are very limited. Base data and intention to properly apply environmental legislation (e.g. WFD) are still weak or missing. The JS does not yet cover all navigation development projects from big scale structural projects to maintenance works at local/regional level. Cooperation among key government institutions (e.g. Ministries for Transport, Economics, Environment) is poor and SEA application is missing or weak.

Today, all free flowing Danube river stretches are at risk by unsustainable IWT development, as shown in several examples. The NGOs consider the Danube waterway as a major European route for IWT but not with one general minimum draught or width. Future development should be based on container traffic and better intermodal transport links; waterway improvement should be achieved by non-structural means and by more flexible and temporary fairway maintenance. SEAs should be done at different levels. The EU environment legislation is a reliable framework for assessing impacts on a case-by-case approach.

WWF also proposed to develop more detailed recommendations (as a new JS annex), to monitor the JS application on international and national level and to involve NGOs and other stakeholders in transparent processes.

[Link to PPt 009 Lucius/Rast DCPO JS Nav Env Sust DRB Budap.Jan2009-2 \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. Edgar Martin**, Giurgiulesti Port Director in Moldova, gave a in brief presentation of the technical equipment and *Actions for the protection of the environment at Giurgiulesti International Free Port.* He informed that environmental impact assessments for both the Oil Terminal and future Dry Cargo Terminals in the Port have been undertaken under the terms of the Espoo Convention and other applicable international and Moldavian legislation. He also stressed the intention to be the most modern and environmentally responsible port facility on the lower Danube. The port is a private investment that intends to be profitable at long term.

[Link to PPt 005 Martin Env prt gifp eng dc\(Annex 3\)](#)

### **Session 3: Current state of IWT bottleneck projects in Danube countries**

*(chaired by Mr. Horst Schindler, DC Counselor for Inland Waterways Maintenance)*

**Mr. Nicolai von Rimscha**, from the Bavarian Ministry for Economy & Transport, presented the State of navigational bottlenecks in the German Danube section.

The Main-Danube waterway is in the exclusive competence of the Federal Government. The yet not extended section between Straubing and Vilshofen is the only exception. According to the 1921 Main-Danube treaty between the German Reich and Bavaria not only the Federal Government, but also Bavaria has a say regarding the extension.

The Bavarian Danube section of Straubing-Vilshofen (providing a 2.50 m draught at only 160 days/year) has been subject of long years of public, political and expert discussions over choosing either Variant A (extension of status quo by optimised river engineering works: 2.50 m at 185 d/y) or Variant C (impoundment by one barrage: 2.50 m at 290 d/y).

In 2008, a new variant-independent study (at costs of € 33 mil.) was agreed to be co-financed by the EC (DG TREN) with the aim of finding the best possible technical solution for the project. The study is expected to be finished by 2012. Due to the complex political background of the project a “Monitoring Group” involving a wide range of stakeholders (including NGOs) will observe the execution of the study. The study will fulfill the JS principles (balancing the navigation and ecological needs, propose mutually acceptable solutions).

[Link to PPt 010 Rimscha Vortrag Englisch \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. Leo Grill**, Austrian Federal Ministry of transport and innovation, presented an update of the *Integrated River Engineering Project on the Danube to the East of Vienna*. He reminded the Project area, aims and measures, and underlined the results of the integrative planning approach, complying with the objectives of the JS. The project presents a living and successful example for integrative planning combining the needs of navigation and ecology, and was honoured as best practice in the Joint Statement.

Mr. Grill informed about the Project EIA will soon complete its long EIA phase (2006-2009), then the detail planning, approval and construction will follow. An integrated monitoring programme runs since 2005 and will accompany the implementation period. The first Pilot Project Witzelsdorf (2007-2009) is an excellent example for combining the needs of navigation and ecology. He presented details about the reconstruction of low water regulation (innovative groynes support ecological dynamics) and river bank restoration.

[Link to PPt 011 Grill Works Budapest 20090126\(Annex 3\)](#)

The discussion revealed that Slovakia recently criticised the Austrian project, saying that changed sediment loads could produce problems near Bratislava. AT experts calculated much lower sediment transport and invited their colleagues to discuss their results.

**Mrs. Olga Srsnova**, on behalf of the Ministry of Environment of Slovakia, presented integrated bottleneck removal projects, some of them to be executed in cooperation with Hungary at the common border section.

She stressed the protection of the NATURA 2000 sites (Birds, Habitats) and groundwater bodies at the whole Slovak Danube alluvium. The Mikovini map (1733) shows the many natural bottlenecks of the region. Putting the Gabčíkovo system into operation has partly increased the ground water levels and increased the flood protection for the downstream section (lower flood peak at Budapest), as experienced at the flood event in August 2002. New proposals suggest restoring the interconnections of the main Danube arms in the area adjacent to the canal; this could be achieved by integrated and adaptive management.

[Link to PPt 012 Srsnova Danube Commission Buda uprav verzia \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. Tamas Marton**, on behalf of Ministry of Transport of Hungary presented the *Sustainable development of inland waterways transport*. He stressed the need to change our approach to transport tasks, what is meant by sustainability and that limiting factors for inland navigation do not only exist in rivers.

Objective of the Hungarian Project is to study the elimination of fords and bottlenecks hindering navigation along the Danube between Szob and the Southern State border (from km 1708 to km 1433) to meet the requirements set for the Danube-Main-Rhine waterway (UNECE directives). The fairway shall be increased from 18 dm to 27-29 dm depth and to at least 120 m width. The Project will be implemented with a view to the complex requirements of sustainable development so as to achieve improved navigability through improving the state of the environment, i.e. adhering to the Acquis Communautaire in the field of environment and water protection and management.

The Project will be implemented by surveying the riverbed, modeling, drawing technical designs, making the necessary environmental studies and impact assessments, and managing to get the building permissions for all intervention sites. Measures need to prevent or compensate side effects; alternative solutions, such as a narrower fairway, shall be investigated. After the recent completion of the feasibility study, the detail planning will have to be based on a SEA and must comply with the WFD (e.g. assess if barrages would be compatible). Co-funding will be requested from the EU. Hungary expects to be able to start training works at the end of 2010.

[Link to PPt 013 Marton 2009 01 26 Sust. Devel. of IWT\(Annex ?\)](#)

**Mr. Ljubisa Mihajlovic**, from PLOVPUT and **Mrs. Marina Babic-Mladenovic**, from Jaroslav Cerni Institute, presented the situation of the *Unstable bed and banks of the Danube River at the "Apatin" Sector*. They explained that the Danube section shared by Serbia and Croatia (km 1433 – km 1295) is of common interest with Hungary (km 1433 – km 1333). The

unfavorable navigation conditions are linked to unfavorable flow conditions, sediment regimes and ice transport in this sector.

The talks described the previous river training works, the river bed development before 2002 and during the flood 2002 (serious erosion of the Serbian and Croatian banks) when the river flow became divided in 2 parts. They stressed the local protection of the left bank but the continued unsatisfactory navigation conditions.

On the Croatian side, there is the nature park Kopacki Rit, a unique reserve. The Apatin section is one of the most critical sections for navigation, creating problems for both sides. Solution would be large-scale river training works by both countries. Field surveys, hydraulic models and preliminary designs were done in 2004-2006; feasibility studies including EIA, a review of possible solutions and the detail design with a full application of the JS are pending: Problem is the current lack of a bilateral agreement (undefined borderline). Croatia and Serbia are prepared to organize a workshop and a visit of foreign guests to this location.

[Link to PPt 014 Mihajlovic ICPDR Apatin \(Annex 3\)](#)

[Link to PPt 015 Mladenovic BP 2009 \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. Zdenko Tadic** from “HIDROING” Osijek on behalf of Croatian Ministry of Maritime and Transport, presented the Preliminary design for the Danube reach from river km 1400 to 1410 from the Croatian point of view. He also stressed the general need to obey the WFD and to harmonize the mutual technical solutions for the reach and the EIA study for both countries. Mr. Tadic underlined the urgency of intervention (notably from rkm 1405 to 1407).

[Link to PPt 018 Tadic 2009-01-29 BP Compression Final \(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr Georgi Georgiev** from the Bulgarian River Maintenance Agency very briefly introduced the ISPA 2 project which was then presented in more detail by the next speaker.

**Mr. Alexandru Balcu** from Technum - Trapec - Tractebel - CNR – Safege, on behalf of the Romanian Ministry of Transport, presented the ISPA 2 project at the Danube River between Iron Gate II (rkm 863) and Calarasi (rkm 375).

He introduced the recent assessment of the actual situation (e.g. first-ever topo-bathymetric survey of these 500 km, hydrographic field investigations, 33 identified bottlenecks), the methodology applied in the still ongoing study (traffic study, numerical model and environmental aspects), then described the partial results (general principles of preliminary proposed strategies, development of scenarios and variants for the eleven most critical sectors as well as new types of measures).

Project currently addresses the environmental aspects in the EIA phase, such as the relevant EU legislation (EIA, Bird, Habitat, WFD), the JS and relevant Conventions (Danube, Berne, Ramsar, Belgrade etc.). Several alternative development strategies and environmental friendly

engineering measures are proposed for the improvement of the navigation conditions. Balcu stressed that ISPA 2 is a living project that will continue also after the end works.

[Link to PPt 016 Balcu 2009-01-29 Follow-up JS ISPA2 VO 1 SHORT\(Annex 3\)](#)

**Mr. Zeljko Milkovic** from the ISRBC presented the *Rehabilitation and development of navigation on the Sava River*. He first described the navigation regime under the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (2002), the history of navigation, the present unfavourable condition of the Sava waterway (due to a long period of poor maintenance), and the recent beginning of the rehabilitation project..

He underlined the multi-functional approach in all phases of this ongoing Project and described the results of the pre-feasibility study (2007), the study on transport demand and institutional, policy and legal framework (2007) and the feasibility study (2008), as well as a project plan for restoring the marking system (2009).

The IWT project aims at restoring a class IV waterway and extending it to class Va up to Sisak for commercial transport. Recommendations for the section upstream and downstream Sisak include to stimulate nautical tourism, as well as environmental development and RIS. A strategic environmental review serves as a basis for the future EIA studies that will take the JS further into account.

The draft study was discussed in 2 stakeholder workshops and the environmental reports are available on the ISRBC web-site; the Final Report was recently publicly presented. Currently Governments are looking for funding the detailed design; the EIA for the Croatian section has already started.

[Link to PPt 017 Miljkovic Prezentacija Bud\(Annex 3\)](#)

## **Plenary discussion**

All participants expressed great support for the principles and ideas of the Joint Statement and confirmed that it is a good general platform for further activities.

This Meeting strongly supported the appliance of guidelines of JS in riparian countries and facilitates the process of sharing experience with all stakeholders.

The opinion that all EU environmental rules should be respected when realizing or preparing inland navigation or infrastructure projects prevailed. This is to be applied all over the Danube region, even for countries that are not EU members.

Sides shared the view that discussion held during the Meeting in Budapest was useful and will contribute to continue and intensify the dialog between the three commissions - DC, ICPDR and ISRBC, EC, national authorities and NGOs, on the protection of the riverine environment and the improvement of the sustainable development of Danube inland navigation.

The evening was concluded with a **joint dinner** in the Danube Museum Ship Restaurant “Lajos Kossuth”, jointly sponsored by ICPDR and Via Donau.

Day 2 (30 January, 2009)

### **Session 3: Improving and securing the application of the Joint Statement**

*(chaired by Mr. Philip Weller, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR)*

**Mr. Cesare Bernabei** on behalf of Jonathan Scheele, EC DG TREN, presented *The point of view of the EC about the application of the Joint Statement* and once again underlined the importance of IWT for the transport system in Europe. He informed about activities undertaken by the EC in order to support IWT development: Legislative Instruments, the NAIADES Action Programme, TEN-T Priority Projects, financial support and the activities of the TEN-T Coordinator of Inland Waterways, Mrs. Karla Peijs.

Mr. Bernabei stressed the importance of the Joint Statement initiative as a step in the right direction: Its successful implementation would send an extremely positive signal.

At the same time, Mr. Bernabei opened the several questions for further reflection:

- What are the problems met so far in its implementation and how can we overcome them?
- Can they be solved at national level or is there a need for a more co-ordinated reaction at river basin level?
- Is there a need for more practical guidance on undertaking certain types of detailed assessments?
- Is there a need for monitoring, reporting and potentially revising the Joint Statement in 2-3 years, on the basis of initial results?

The resulting answers will giving guidance on what can be done further to develop IWT in a sustainable manner, by fully applying the Joint Statement principles.

Mr. Bernabei repeatedly expressed the EC support to the JS and mentioned that the Platina project may provide support for the drafting of a feasible road map towards the drafting of guidelines for applying the JS Principles. This work can then be used also for the Working Group on Rivers of DG-TREN + ENV which will be shortly established. It aims at producing guidelines and best-practices on the integration of the Natura 2000 requirements into the IWT design, while taking into account the provisions of the Water Framework Directive. The guidance is intended for planners in all EU MSs, but will certainly reflect the needs of the Danube river IWT projects and will contribute to a more effective implementation of the JS.

[Link to Statement 2009-01-30 JS J. SCHEELE-C. BERNABEI Final BP JS](#)

After the statement of Mr Bernabei, Mr. Weller briefly introduced to working group discussions for which all participants split into two rooms. The active participation in both Working Groups produced the following results.

## **Working Group A: Facilitating better application of the JS in IWT projects**

*Facilitator: Dejan Komatina, ISRBC; Rapporteur: Alexander Zinke, ICPDR*

The participants discussed the following key questions:

1. *What are the lessons learned from insufficient application of the JS? What are the practical problems in IWT projects and how can they be overcome?*

The group found that the application of the JS can be eased and improved in various ways:

- The lack of integration may be due to the limited scope of a defined IWT project.
- Inform other stakeholders (e.g. letter, internet) about bottleneck issues and what to do there. Stakeholders should respond in active and constructive way on a given project: provide concrete proposals.
- EIA/SEA cases: IWT planning not well communicated with environmental data
- Lack of communication between MoT and MoE: EC to promote more cooperation. Involve policy makers.
- JS and other guidelines are useful but one has to also learn from other projects.
- There may be concerns/resistance on environment-sensitive projects at national as well as on international level. This needs a process to develop with patience and, in the end, to have trained communicators and competent experts able for cross-sector discussions.
- Awareness that there are always people who disagree.
- Integrated planning should start from scratch, not from pre-defined objectives. A good launching of project planning and PP is crucial.
- New EC guidance, manual and check list may be useful for planners and policy makers who have to deal with more than technical issues nowadays. Explain responsibilities for the aspects to be checked and sorted out by planners.
- Time tables are often given and cannot be changed.
- Monitoring needs should be known from the beginning and various experts involved in its definition; its costs be foreseen in the budget.
- Transport discussion should not be limited to rivers but assess transport effects and impacts on the wider region and on the overall environmental impacts.
- Question is not if there will be IWT on the Danube but how it can/shall be done (e.g. via modal split).
- The JS is a dialogue tool.

2. What kind of support do IWT project planners need? What issues or aspects should need special attention (e.g. via training, studies, projects)?

- Manual and check list for integrated planning.
- List of the most important technical and environmental terms.
- A concrete list of items to be checked (e.g. WFD Art. 4-7) and an explanation how to apply them, as appropriate on a case-by-case base.
- Links or contacts to relevant persons/ institutions/administrations (domestic and international) with specific knowledge.
- Guidelines easy to understand and apply.

3. What kind of technical support should the 3 Commissions, the European Commissions or other institutions provide to ease the application of the JS?

- EC and other funding institutions should develop mechanisms to inform at an early stage beneficiaries that IWT projects applying of funding should utilize the JS principles.
- Support preparation and dissemination of various awareness material using different communication tools (e.g. training workshops).
- Don't use bureaucracy as a tool.

## **Working Group B: Securing future development of and adherence to the JS**

*Facilitator: Philip Weller, ICPDR; Rapporteur: Ivana Tomic, DC.*

The participants discussed the following key questions:

1. What is the way to strengthen adherence to the JS and secure its sound application? How can the application be organized at national level? Who will be involved, who will lead?
2. What kind of international monitoring and reporting (mechanism) is needed for the Jt. St.? Who shall do it and how to execute and secure it? What information is required for the monitoring?
3. What intervals are needed for future JS Meetings? What aspects or issues need to be subject of further developing the Jt. St.?



The participants identified that there are “two pillars” for the application of the JS which need to be addressed separately:

- “Danube level” (EC and international political/strategic level) and
- national/local level (ministries level and operative/technical level).

There is a major problem of knowledge about the JS on the national/local level.

Communication problems exist: between countries, internal communication, with NGOs and public participation; exchange the information about the local project on the “Danube level”.

It was suggested to work on finding communication mechanisms and in particular to have written material in national languages.

There needs to be a way to secure the communication of information from the local project to the basin-wide level. Updated Lists of projects in the Danube River Basin should be maintained.

Recommendation was made there should be a steering/monitoring group on the national level.

A mechanism for monitoring projects on the international level was proposed to be developed, based upon criteria including the connection and integration in the WFD plans, use of Strategic Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Assessment - as appropriate, Public Participation, evaluation of cooperation between Ministries, coordination with Natura 2000.

## **RESULTS**

### **Awareness and information:**

- Need for better awareness and dissemination of information
  - Where possible create national language availability of information (also Joint Statement!). The DC could provide in future translation into Russian, French and German languages.
  - Tools: Cross-border EC programs, PLATINA.
  - Contribution of all different actors at all levels (EC, international – Commissions, national, local, NGOs).

### **Character of the Joint Statement:**

- Facilitating instrument bringing together different perspectives and actors
  - No new legally binding document, since legal basis is already in place

- Building trust among participation stakeholders – Continuation of this process is needed
- Integrated approach and interdisciplinary dialogue between experts

#### **Next steps:**

- Continuation of the dialogue at all levels (EC, international, national, local)
  - Further elaborate mechanisms for sharing information and monitoring of implementation of the JS (DC, ICPDR and ISRBC)
  - Further elaborate and emphasize the River Basin approach (coordination of activities)
  - Responsibilities for the dialogue should be assumed by the appropriate levels (national and **international**).

#### **European Guidance:**

- Working Group on Rivers – guidance on implementation of Natura 2000 and WFD by DG ENV and DG TREN

#### **Interval for JS Meetings:**

- Next meeting to be organized by River Commissions on the Joint Statement in one year.

In the plenary discussion only few comments were given to the presented working group results: It was suggested to **add one more pillar on environment and biodiversity**: This needs to be addressed at basin-wide level.

As there were no further contributions to the discussion, the chairman suggested that the 3 commissions will jointly develop the Meeting Conclusions on the base of its results.

Also, all Meeting presentations will be published via internet, together with the proceedings. The DC handed out to the participants a CD with most presentations given on Day 1.

The chairman thanked all speakers and participants for their input which he considers a good base for further cooperation and dialogue. He also thanked the DC for their excellent hosting of the Meeting.

#### **Closing Remarks**

The representatives of the 3 River Commissions considered the Meeting an important step that provided a valuable feedback. They expressed their satisfaction with the results of the process and the meeting, and the repeatedly expressed commitment to further implement the Statement. It became evident that it is important to jointly meet at regular intervals and to tackle the many river development issues.

The EC Coordinator for Inland Waterways stressed that she learned a lot about IWT project problems and that the EC does not want to reach its transport goals at every price, i.e. it wants

more navigation but not to spoil nature. She expects that in one year more satisfaction will be achieved.

The President of the ICPDR and the Secretary of the ISRBC expressed their gratitude to the Danube Commission for their organization and hospitality.

## II CONCLUSIONS of the Meeting

After the meeting, the three commissions (DC, ISRBC and ICPDR) have summarised various important findings that are relevant for determining the further steps for the Commissions and other relevant stakeholders:

### 1. Assessment of progress in bottleneck projects

Along the Danube the list of bottlenecks has still a similar character as in autumn 2007, when the *Joint Statement* was concluded. Navigation is hampered in many sections and various efforts are under way to improve the situation but the desired result is difficult to achieve.

Over the last years stricter framework conditions have developed through the progressing implementation of EU environment directives: Waterway institutions, policy makers, funding institutions and other stakeholders must be aware that all IWT projects risk to affect the riverine water quality, habitats and species but must make sure that no environmental deterioration is triggered. Therefore, any IWT project has a better chance to receive environmental permits and become internationally funded if it

- meets the Principles and Criteria of the *Joint Statement*, in particular
- is started with an integrated planning approach and striving for a sustainable development, early and seriously taking into account the EU environment protection objectives and other river-related development plans and projects (notably in nature conservation, flood management)
- went through a sound SEA/EIA procedure including early public information and participation.

New projects, such as PLATINA, help to improve the IWT sector and its needed capacity building with respect to integrated planning.

### 2. Future application of the *Joint Statement*

The Meeting has indicated a strong support by all governments, the European Commission and other participating stakeholders for the continued and strengthened implementation of the JS. The experience made so far has indicated that more efforts are needed to secure a sound application of the *Joint Statement*. This can be facilitated by increasing awareness of relevant stakeholders (in particular those responsible for or involved in IWT planning) and conducting more training on integrated planning and the technical options for ecology-benign waterway development and maintenance. A number of concrete activities should be taken up in the near future:

- Under the EU PLATINA project, a new *Manual on integrated planning* and several related *training workshops* are planned in spring 2009 which can serve as a forum for improving the overall understanding of the integration of environment and navigation.
- Governmental and non-governmental environment stakeholders are asked to more actively promote awareness in other sectors, such as waterway transport, about the

ongoing implementation of mandatory environment protection (WFD, FFH/B-D, flood protection etc.) and the related documents (notably Natura 2000 lists, RBM Plans, flood protection schemes) which need to be taken into account in waterway development.

- The most relevant government bodies (in particular the Ministries for Transport and for Environment) should develop a *national steering and monitoring process* securing close cooperation, coordination and communication about the integrated preparation and execution of IWT projects in the spirit of the *Joint Statement*.
- The European Commission supports the Joint Statement.
- For the implementation of the recommendations included in the JS further guidance is needed, however. The PLATINA project will contribute to this by providing technical guidelines regarding sustainable waterway development and a best practice manual on sustainable inland waterway planning.
- The 3 commissions secure in 2009 the translation of the JS into Danube basin languages and foster their wide dissemination, in particular to IWT project planners and funding bodies (provisionally by DC: *German, Russian*; by ISRBC: *Sava languages*; by ICPDR: *Slovak, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian*).

For the regular monitoring of the further application of the *Joint Statement*, the 3 commissions (DC, ICPDR, ISRBC) will set up (until July 2009) and manage a simple system for information exchange. This will ask the Danube basin governments (transport and environment ministries as well as waterway agencies) to annually and briefly inform about

- the current status of bottleneck projects (e.g. appraisal, feasibility, detail planning, construction, monitoring & aftercare phases);
- their experience and support needs in the application of the JS elements;
- facilitate, where agreed or requested, a guidance process for successful IWT project preparation and execution.

The regular Meetings under the *Joint Statement* shall serve all related stakeholders to exchange information on the progress made, the experiences gained and any major development obstacles that should be jointly assessed.

The next Meeting of the JS process shall be convened in February 2010 in Zagreb.

**Annex 1: Final Agenda**

**Annex 2: List of Participants**

**Annex 3: Statements and Presentations (.ppt)**