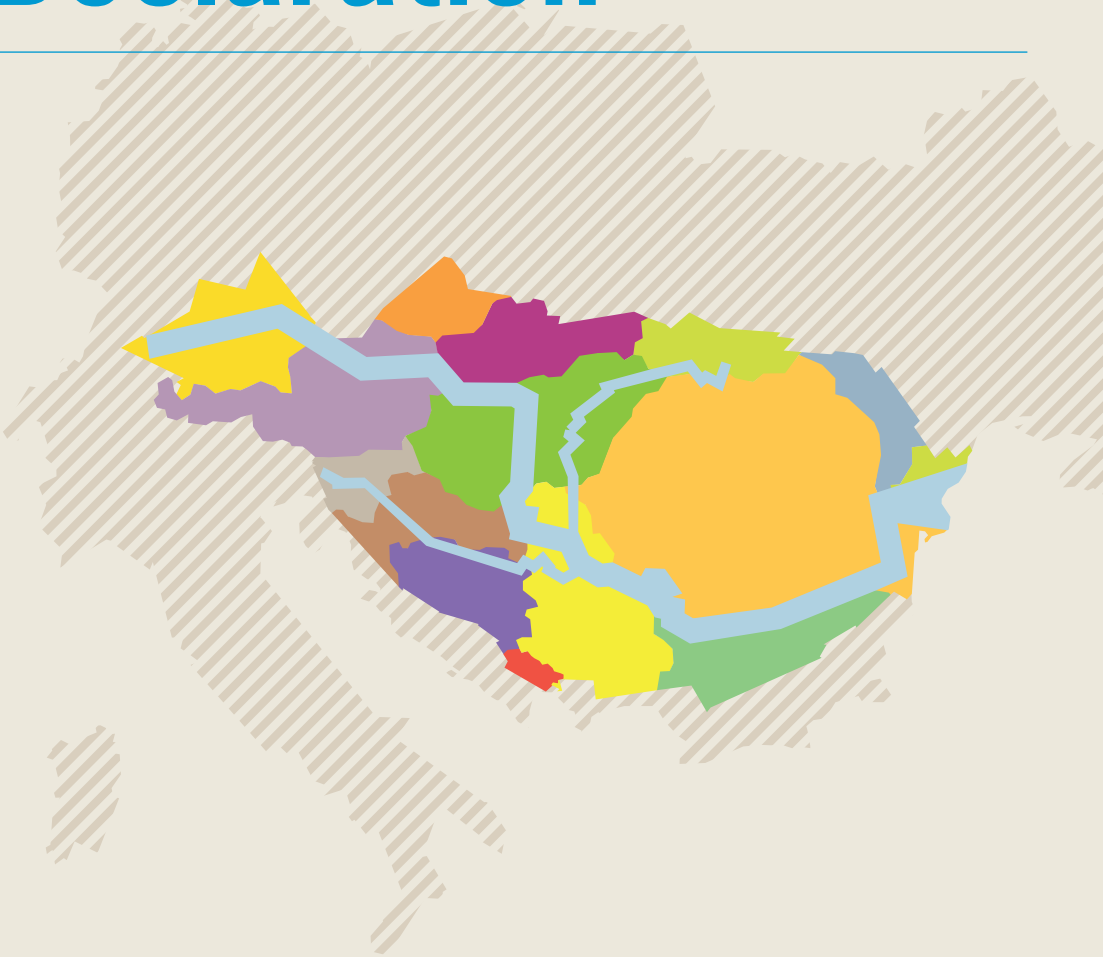
ICPDR IKSD

International Commission
for the Protection
of the Danube River

Internationale Kommission
zum Schutz der Donau

The 2016 Danube Declaration

A Summary



On 9 February 2016 in Vienna, the ICPDR convened its 3rd Ministerial Meeting of Ministers and high-level representatives responsible for water management from the 14 Danube River Basin countries (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine) as well as the European Commission. This Ministerial Meeting endorsed two important plans for the Danube: The Danube River Basin District Management Plan Update 2015 and the Flood Risk Management Plan. The meeting also adopted the 2016 Danube Declaration which shows the highest level of commitment for the ICPDR concerning its future work to address the joint challenges facing the Danube basin.

The Danube Declaration outlines the path towards a cleaner, healthier and safer Danube River by 2021.

A cleaner, healthier and safer Danube River for everyone to enjoy

These three key elements of the ICPDR's management plans also provide the three pillars of action that are needed for the Danube to achieve:

cleaner water;

a **healthier** home for aquatic animals and plants and;

a **safer** environment for people to live without the fear of floods.

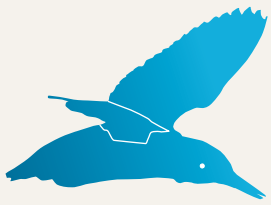
Cleaner

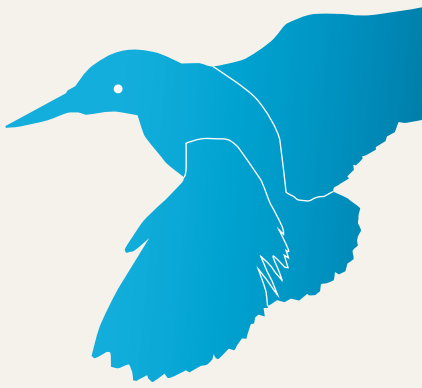
Reduce pollution from settlements, industry and agriculture

A cleaner Danube means reducing water pollution. Wastewater from households, commercial sites, industries and the agricultural sector are major sources of pollution. Collection of municipal and industrial wastewater through urban sewer systems and appropriate wastewater treatment are important measures to keep rivers clean. Since 2009, wastewater infrastructure was improved for 900 municipalities – and there are another 1000 waiting for proper wastewater infrastructure, of which half are currently already under development. Improving the treatment of our wastewater contributes to the reduction of organic, nutrient and hazardous substances pollution. Nutrient and pesticide reduction is also highly relevant with regard to diffuse pollution from agricultural areas. All Danube countries need to harmonize their water and agricultural policies in order to improve the implementation of targeted and cost-efficient measures and good agricultural practices.

Healthier

Water and ecosystems



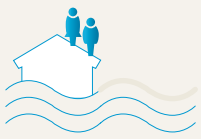


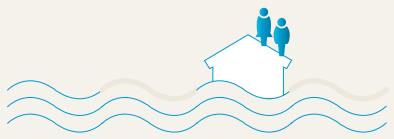
Rivers are ecosystems that provide a living environment for aquatic animals and plants as well as services for people, such as drinking water and recreation. If we want healthier water bodies, we must strive to balance any man-made changes with the need to sustain native species in fully-functioning aquatic ecosystems. The ICPDR has adopted the Danube sturgeons as a flagship species because they require different habitats and structurally varied river landscapes at different stages in their life cycle. The complex needs of sturgeons make them a useful indicator for a river in good ecological condition. Other typical Danube species are the Danube salmon or the amphipod crustaceans *Dikerogammarus bispinosus* (killer shrimp) and *Corophium curvispinum* (Caspian mud shrimp). Typical plants that are commonly found in the Danube River are phytobenthos representative *Diatoma vulgaris* (algae) and the centric diatom *Stephanodiscus hantschii* (all) common types of phytoplankton.

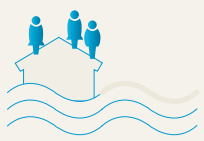
In 2019, a 4th Joint Survey will be undertaken to help increase wider understanding about the issues facing the Danube water quality and the river's ecosystems and habitat.

Safer

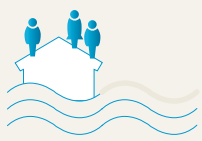
Less damage from floods

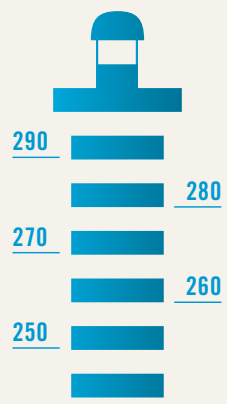






Floods often cause human casualties and suffering as well as great economic damage, many times also environmental degradation. Danube floods in June 2013 caused 9 casualties and the total financial consequences in the Danube River Basin amounted to 2.4 billion Euro. The disastrous floods that occurred in May 2014 in the Sava River Basin caused 79 casualties, 137,000 persons had to be evacuated and damages amounted to almost 4 billion Euro. Flood hazard and risk maps are an effective tool used to show the potential adverse consequences of different flood scenarios. They are used to inform and prepare for flood events and are a valuable basis for priority setting and technical, financial, and political decisions in such situations. Although floods are natural phenomena that cannot be prevented, we urgently need to increase our investments in flood risk management in order to reduce the likelihood and severity of negative consequences.





The Plans provide a foundation for cooperation

Danube River Basin District Management Plan Update 2015 (DRBM Update 2015)
This plan developed in line with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), defines the framework for water management in the Danube River Basin for the next six years until 2021. It aims to protect the Danube and to ensure the sustainable, long-term use of its water resources. The plan includes the latest assessments on significant pressures facing the river, the status of its water and a joint programme of measures. It also establishes and strengthens several integrative principles for river basin management. This includes economic approaches and integration with other sector policies such as energy, transport, agriculture and adaptation to climate change. This plan also raises awareness on the impacts of discharges of nutrients and hazardous substances from the Danube on the Black Sea ecosystem in line with the coordination requirements of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

The plan identifies the four Significant Water Management Issues (SWMIs) that contribute the main pressures on the ecological and chemical status of surface waters and the chemical status of groundwater bodies across the Danube basin. These pressures include: pollution by organic substances; nutrients and; hazardous substances; as well as hydromorphological alterations.

Danube Flood Risk Management Plan (DFRMP)
In order to strengthen a basin-wide approach to flood risk management across the Danube, we have built on the 2004 ICPDR Action Program for Sustainable Flood Prevention – and the seventeen sub-basin flood action plans published in 2009 – with the first Danube Flood Risk Management (DFRM) Plan in line with the EU Floods Directive. With this DFRM Plan we underline our common objectives to reduce existing flood risks, to strengthen resilience against floods, to raise public awareness and to apply the solidarity principle by avoiding exporting of flood problems to neighbouring countries. The DFRM Plan also prioritizes measures with positive downstream effect such as natural water retention, warning systems, reduction of risk from contaminated sites in floodplain areas or exchange of information.

The way forward

The 2016 Danube Declaration lays the foundation for the future of integrated water policy in the Danube basin. Over 80 million people call the Danube their home and they deserve to live with clean, healthy and safe water. Through its two plans, the ICPDR has developed the toolkit needed to ensure that the necessary next steps are taken to achieve this goal. It is now in in the hands of our governments to put the plans to action so that we can pass on a cleaner, safer and healthier river for future generations to enjoy.

The full document can be downloaded on the ICPDR website:
www.icpdr.org/main/sites/default/files/nodes/documents/danube-declaration2016.pdf