

DANUBE WATCH

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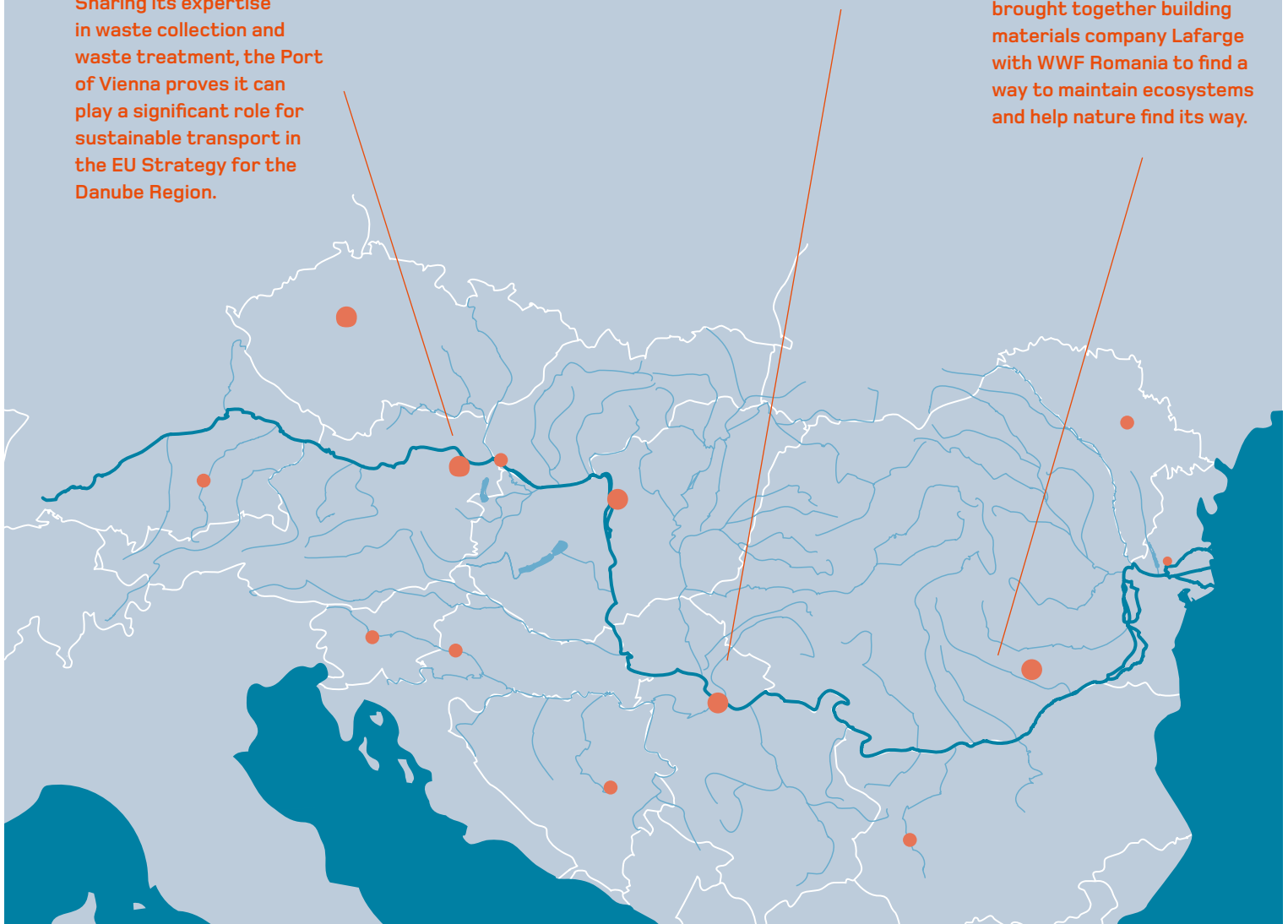
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Dear readers,

You hold in your hands the last issue of Danube Watch for 2012. Writing an editorial for a 'closing issue' is a good opportunity for me to reflect on this year's Austrian presidency. Its focus was, first of all, on the core activities of the ICPDR and the work done by the expert groups, as well as the many activities linked with the implementation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan.

However, I also improved further activities and initiatives such as the cooperation with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, cooperation with the hydropower sector, the preparation of our Joint Danube Survey 3 coming next year as well as the establishment of a Danube Sturgeon Task Force to contribute to the survival of the last remaining natural stocks in Europe – for more on this topic, see the story on river connectivity on page 6 of this issue of Danube Watch.

Through these activities, we saw several major steps toward realising our objective of improving water quality. We saw the development of a climate adaptation strategy and of guiding principles for hydropower, first measures to re-establish river continuity to allow for migration of fish, efforts addressing the challenge of making agriculture

more environmentally friendly, the re-launch of icpdr.org as well as a very successful Danube Day 2012 – which you can learn about through the fold-out map at the end of this issue.

We intend to share the experiences of the ICPDR in integrated River Basin Management with other international river commissions together with the International River Foundation and GEF IW Learn. Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the International River Foundation will lead to a European river prize to be awarded starting in 2013 – you can find further information on this unique award on page 11 of this issue of Danube Watch.

Looking back on this presidency, I am happy to say that I see much progress on the ICPDR's main drive: the notion that water is among the strongest forces to bring people together. Rivers do not care about borders, and therefore the responsibility to look after them is held by all those who contribute to rivers, no matter what country they live in. Joint waters – shared responsibilities. This is the spirit that I hope will shape the future of the ICPDR.

Wolfgang Stalzer, ICPDR President 2012



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Danube Watch is the official magazine of ICPDR, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. Danube Watch enhances regional cooperation and information sharing on sustainable water management and environmental protection in the Danube River Basin. It reports on current issues affecting the Danube Basin, and on action taken to deal with challenges in the river basin. Striving for scientific accuracy while remaining concise, clear and readable, it is produced for the wide range of people who are actively involved in the Danube River Basin and are working for the improvement of its environment.

The ICPDR accepts no responsibility or liability whatsoever with regard to information or opinions of the authors of the articles in this issue.



Credit: ICPDR/N. Jovanovic

FORMER ICPDR HEAD OF DELEGATION MR. JAROSLAV KINKOR PASSES AWAY

The ICPDR lost an excellent water expert and an appreciated contributor to the work of the Commission: Mr Jaroslav Kinkor passed away on 7 September 2012. Mr Kinkor worked at the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic from the beginning of its existence in 1990 as a Director of the Water Protection Department. He was deeply engaged in international cooperation in water management of the Danube, Elbe and Oder River Basins as well as in bilateral cooperation on transboundary waters with countries neighbouring the Czech Republic. After 2005, he worked in a leading position at the Prague Water Supply and Sanitation Company. As a water professional with high expertise and a colleague appreciated for his kindness, Mr Kinkor will be missed within the ICPDR and other river commissions he helped to shape.



KLIWAS: CLIMATE ADAPTATION IN EUROPEAN RIVER BASINS

In late 2011, the German Federal Ministry for Transport, Building and Urban Development organised a conference on climate adaptation in Berlin – the second event of its kind. The focus was on European river basins that include territory within Germany, as well as the effects of climate change on navigation. The conference proceedings along with papers from the conference’s speakers were recently published, presenting climate adaptation research and policy from the Elbe, Rhine, coastal waters and the Danube with a contribution from the ICPDR. The KLIWAS conference proceedings are available in German and English.

Download the KLIWAS conference proceedings from: www.kliwas.de



Credit: Centre for Regional Studies

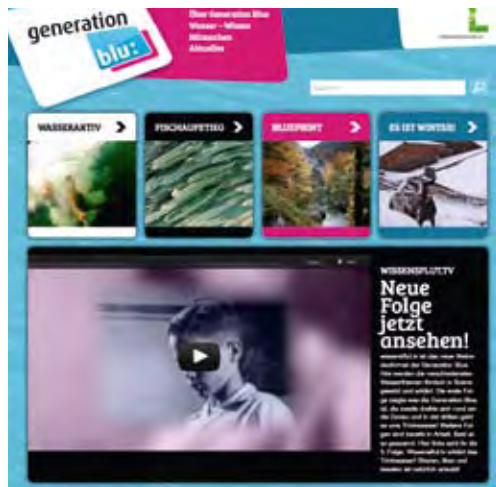
BLUEPRINT TO SAFEGUARD EUROPE'S WATERS

The European Commission presented a ‘blueprint to safeguard Europe’s waters’, a strategy for ensuring that enough good quality water is available to meet the needs of people, the economy and the environment. The objective of the blueprint is to propose a tool box that EU Member States can use to improve water management at national, regional and river basin levels. More detailed information on it will be given in the next issue of Danube Watch.

Find more information on the blueprint here:
<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/>

WELCOME TO NEW ICPDR HEADS OF DELEGATION

The ICPDR is pleased to welcome new Heads of Delegations: Ms. Marta Moren-Abat of the European Commission’s DG Environment and Mr. Miodrag Pescic of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (Directorate for Water) of Serbia. The ICPDR Secretariat and Danube Watch are looking forward to supporting the new Heads of Delegations in their endeavours for the Danube River Basin.



'GENERATION BLUE' LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

The Austrian youth platform for water, 'Generation Blue', launched a new website earlier this year. The re-launch involved not only a complete overhaul of the look and feel of the site, but also the introduction of innovative features and a strong focus on films. 'WissensflutTV' shows informative clips on water issues, filmed in a lively fashion to appeal to a young and internet-savvy audience. The community aspect of the site, one of the strengths of Generation Blue, is supported by links from the website to other outreach and communication activities of the Austrian Ministry of the Environment. One of the first film clips of WissensflutTV presented the Danube and included a reference to the ICPDR.

You can watch the Danube clip and other films online at: www.generationblue.at/mitmachen/wissensflut.html



ICPDR.ORG: FIRST MONTHS WITH THE NEW WEBSITE

Following the re-launch of icpdr.org, in recent months there has been an update to the contents and new information added. New features such as photo galleries were implemented in some articles, and through the news items on the front page users are encouraged to return frequently to check for current news from the Danube River Basin. In October alone, the website had almost 15,000 readers, many of whom commented favourably on the new design. Many users appreciated that they could find documents or articles more easily than in the past, and users with slower internet connections benefit from the 'light mode'.

Keep coming back for updates to: www.icpdr.org



'THE DANUBE – EUROPE'S AMAZON' WINS DOCUMENTARY AWARD

The first part of the ScienceVision documentary 'The Danube – Europe's Amazon' won the 'Best Film – City of Pamplona Award' in Spain. The documentary was selected from 160 submissions to the Telenatura Festival 2012. The ICPDR co-produced the documentary and congratulates the directors, Rita and Michael Schlamberger. DVDs and blue ray discs of the documentary were recently released and can be ordered from amazon.de.

Watch the trailer to 'The Danube' here: www.icpdr.org/main/danube-amazon-europee

The need to reconnect rivers to provide access to habitats for migratory species is clear. However, understanding where it will bring the most benefit is the big challenge.



One river: finding continuity for habitats

Re-establishing river continuity is a key issue for fish, but is also necessary to achieve the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Interruptions to river and habitat continuity are a major pressure on the Danube and its tributaries, and were defined – under hydromorphological alterations – as a Significant Water Management Issue in the Danube River Basin Management Plan. The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires the achievement of good ecological status, which, in addition to traditional pollution parameters also focuses on “biological quality elements” – such as fish.

Assessments undertaken for the 2009 Management Plan identified more than 900 continuity interruptions on large rivers (with more than 4000 km² catchment area) from infrastructure projects for flood protection, hydropower, navigation, among others – out of thousands of continuity interruptions in the entire Danube River Basin. Those continuity interruptions prevent access to habitats and suitable spawning grounds for migratory fish species.

To some extent, all fish are migratory species, and the sturgeon is the most prominent representative of

GETTING PAST THE IRON GATES

The largest hydropower dam and reservoir system along the entire Danube is located at the 117-km-long Djerdap (Iron Gate dam I and II) Gorge, and jointly operated by Romania and Serbia. The Iron Gates dams are the most significant barriers for fish migration.

If fish migration could be established at this point, it would open a stretch of 800 km upstream to the Gabčíkovo dam, and would provide migratory fish with access to the Danube and its tributaries within this stretch. Building fish migration aids at this site is a challenge. There is an approximate 30-metre difference in water level at Iron Gate I, and there isn't much space around the structure of the dam – both problems that cannot be solved easily with standard solutions for fish migration. To find efficient solutions, a specific feasibility study is needed.

the long-distance migrants. Habitats such as spawning, nursery, wintering and feeding sites have to be in place to secure self-sustaining fish stocks. This means that existing habitats need to be protected, while former and degraded habitats must be restored.

Knowing where to begin. Though more than 100 fish migration aids are planned to be built by 2015, the problem can't be solved at once. To ensure the most effective implementation of these measures, the ICPDR has developed an ecological prioritisation approach for continuity restoration in the Danube River Basin. This approach provides information about where measures would be most efficient ecologically and where they will offer the biggest benefit for fish, letting river managers know where to start first.

“The prioritisation approach is one of the most unique methods where really all the countries committed to improving something,” says Stefan Schmutz, Head of the Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna “and this can be used as a template for other catchments.”

The prioritisation index considers factors such as migratory behaviour (with long-distance migrants receiving the most weight), location of the obstacle (with obstacles farther away from the mouth of the river receiving less weight), the length of the reconstructed habitat (to give more weight to river segments that are less fragmented by continuity interruptions) and whether or not the obstacle is in a protected area. It is planned the approach will be updated next year as part of the 2013 update of the Danube Basin Analysis.

The results of the prioritisation assessment show that continuity interruptions in the lower Danube at the Iron Gate dams I and II should be given the highest priority. Within the habitats for long-distance migrants, sites in upstream areas of the basin such as Bavaria should also receive high priority, since these are longer reconstructed habitats within Natura 2000 protected sites. More detailed information on the priority ranking in the whole basin can be found in the Danube River Basin Management Plan, available on www.icpdr.org.

The final decision for any measure, however, is up to the countries and will also have to consider where it is technically feasible to build fish passes or find other solutions, as well as take into account the national priorities for restoration programmes.

Support for state-of-the-art measures. Understanding where and when to build migration aids is half the challenge, but it is vital to make sure such aids actually work. “One of the biggest challenges right now is the lack of data,” says Aleš Bizjak, of the Institute for Water of the Republic of Slovenia. “Comprehensive research is needed to identify efficient solutions.”

River managers need support for the planning, design, construction and operation of fish passes. A guidance document already exists in Bavaria; the Czech Republic is currently preparing such a document and one will soon be finalised in Austria. These guidance documents are useful for not only administrations or consulting engineers, but also the operators of infrastructure facilities by supporting planning for the investments.

Monitoring fish passes can provide critical information about the effectiveness – or failure – of measures. “Even the experts don’t know the reasons... Is there something wrong with the fish pass, or is that there is not a large enough fish population? One of the main topics right now is how to integrate monitoring results in the planning stage,” says Otto Pirker of Verbund.

In all cases, planning must be done with all stakeholders working together. “The big issue for the Danube

Basin is to get the people to understand that fish migration is an essential part of restoring good status,” says Veronika Koller-Kreimer, Head of the Aquatic Ecology Subdivision at the Austrian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and Chairperson of the ICPDR Task Group on Hydromorphology.

The ICPDR has had success bringing various stakeholders together to ensure balanced representation of needs for infrastructure projects. The Joint Statement on Navigation and its yearly follow-up meetings, for example, ensure that inland waterway transport projects follow guidelines that protect ecological needs. Furthermore, the ICPDR is currently developing Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower Development, which aim for a similar balance in the field of renewable energy.

Shared habitats, shared solutions. To support river continuity measures, the ICPDR organised a workshop on river and habitat continuity, held in Vienna on 4–5 September. The meeting included members of the ICPDR Task Group on Hydromorphology and the Team of Experts on Hydropower, as well as experts working specifically on the planning, construction and operation of fish migration aids.

The workshop included field trips to three fish migration aids in Austria. “The site visit to the Hydropower Plant Melk was a typical example of where we had to go for a compromise”, ... “Why we came to this decision and how we weighed the advantages and disadvantages – these discussions are a good basis for know-how transfer,” says Pirker.

Providing support for the challenges of river continuity will be an important next step. “We have to support the Danubian countries with the existing experience of other countries to share information on state-of-the-art fish migration aids or where to start restoring continuity,” says Koller-Kreimer. “We have started with this in the working groups of the ICPDR, and we need to continue in the future.”

Sharing experience can ensure that measures in one country are effective for the basin as a whole. “If countries restore continuity, it has to be linked to the activities in the other countries, because the fish don’t stop at the borders,” says Schmutz. “We are dealing with the same ecosystem, the same fish species, and therefore we need strategies that really fit together.”

Kirstie Shepherd is a freelance journalist living in Vienna and has called the Danube River Basin home since 2000.

Environmental law terms: getting through the legal language labyrinth

A unique collection of standard definitions for environmental risk assessment terminology in EU legislation is now available.

The new study provides the most elaborate and state-of-the-art review of EU legislation from the position of terminology related to environmental risk assessment.

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.” – Mark Twain

Without uniform terminology for environmental assessment, scientists, water managers, government agencies and NGOs can find themselves unable to communicate effectively over the smallest of issues. This lack of standard definitions hinders development, concerted scientific research and harmonised actions for environmental risk assessment and mitigation in the Danube Basin, and indeed in Europe.

A new study presents the most thorough review of environmental assessment terminology in EU legislation to ICPDR experts and non-experts alike. The final report of the study will be published in research articles and available soon on the ICPDR

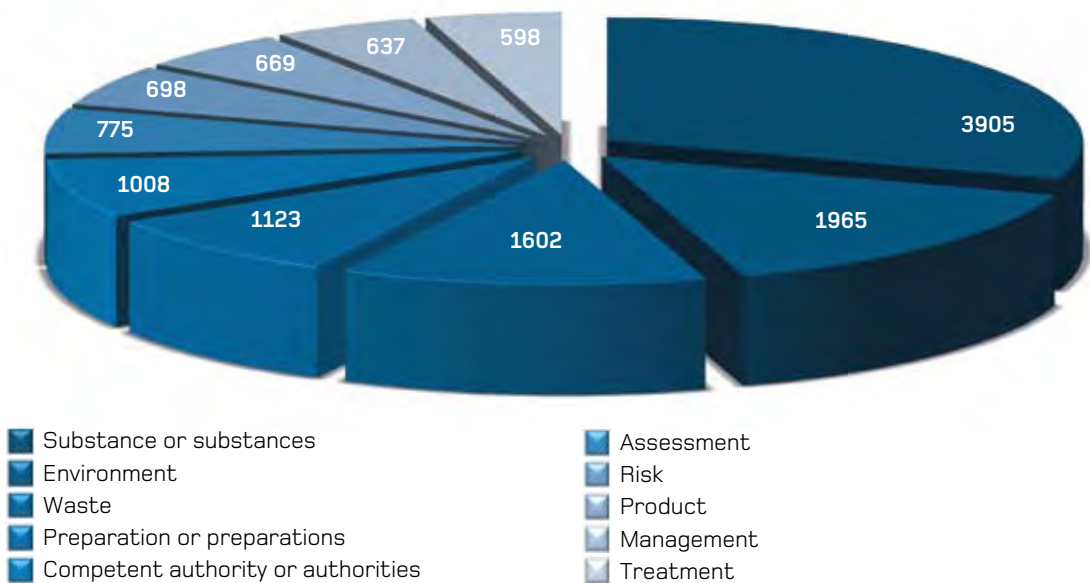
website, and will allow various stakeholders from across the entire Danube River Basin to start speaking the same language.

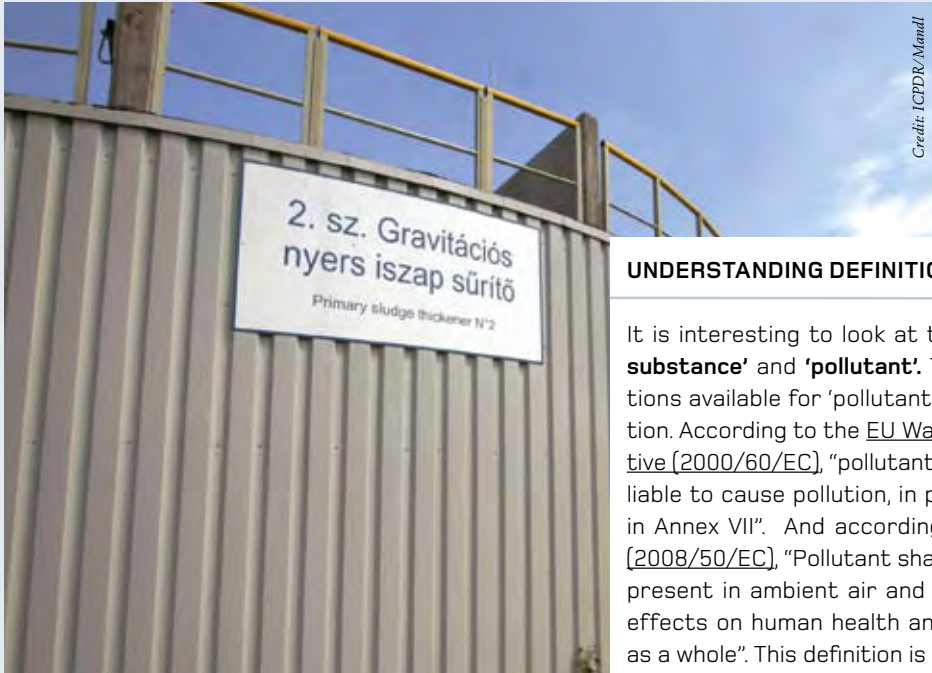
Tripping over terminology. Risk assessment is a support tool helping decision-makers estimate the probable damage of human activity. Risk assessment is gaining wide recognition, after hazard estimation and environmental impact assessment, and EU legislation now requests risk assessment in the context of human health and ecosystem protection.

Risk assessment is characterised by a wide diversity of terms and definitions used both in the scientific literature and in a technical and legislative context. However, efficient environmental protection and water management requires legislation with a definition of basic terms at the core, especially for the body of EU law. So it is crucial to know if the definitions given in various EU directives are the same, or if they overlap or contradict one another.

Gathering a shared vocabulary. The new study provides the most elaborate and state-of-the-art review of EU legislation from the position of terminology related to environmental risk assessment. More than 40 operative legislative documents relevant to environmental risk assessment were reviewed and the results include more than 500 definitions of 440 unique terms. The resulting digital directory gives the definitions in various directives, and provides the links and statistics of definitions such as the number of occurrences or the number of connections to other directives.

The 10 most frequently occurring words in the reviewed legal documents





Credit: ICPDR/Mandl

Efficient environmental protection and water management requires legislation with a definition of basic terms at the core

In addition to revealing overlaps in legislation at the level of basic terminology, the interactive vocabulary allows the user to identify those directives that are referred to most by other legislation, thus providing strong sources for recognised terminology.

The environmental legislation labyrinth. After establishing a list of relevant directives and regulations as well as a glossary of the legal definitions of the documents, research on the varying connections among the definitions and the source directives was carried out. The list of EU legal documents, primarily directives, was studied and additional operative or reference legislation was added to the list. Reference to other directives can indicate very strong connections, such as adopting the same definition word-for-word, or simple legal notes such as ‘repeals’, ‘helps the implementation’ or ‘amendment’. These kinds of correlations were identified in all of the documents in the new database.

The results of the new study provide an overview of frequently used terminology and identify possible overlaps or gaps among risk-assessment-related definitions. How can the environmental practitioner be guided to an ‘environmental quality standard’ if there is no definition of the term ‘environment’ in the relevant legal document? Although it is impossible, and indeed unnecessary, to have an explanation of every single term used in a directive, this new study will contribute to the standardisation of these terms.

Balázs Németh is with the Ministry of Rural Development, Hungary, and works with the ICPDR. *Győző Jordán* works at the Research Institute for Soil Science and Agrochemistry, Centre for Agricultural Research, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Hungary.

UNDERSTANDING DEFINITIONS

It is interesting to look at the terms ‘**dangerous substance**’ and ‘**pollutant**’. There are four definitions available for ‘pollutant’ in related EU legislation. According to the [EU Water Framework Directive \(2000/60/EC\)](#), “pollutant means any substance liable to cause pollution, in particular those listed in Annex VII”. And according to the [Air Directive \(2008/50/EC\)](#), “Pollutant shall mean any substance present in ambient air and likely to have harmful effects on human health and/or the environment as a whole”. This definition is quite similar to that in the [Air Framework Directive \(96/62/EC\)](#), which says “pollutant shall mean any substance introduced directly or indirectly by man into the ambient air and likely to have harmful effects on human health and/or the environment as a whole”. In the [E-PRTR Regulation \(No 166/2006\)](#) we find the following: “pollutant means a substance or a group of substances that may be harmful to the environment or to human health on account of its properties and of its introduction into the environment”. Does ‘harmful’ mean ‘dangerous’ in this context? In these definitions of ‘harmful’ human health only is indicated, with no reference to the expressions of ‘dangerous’ or ‘pollutant’.

What does ‘**substance**’ mean, one of the most basic terms in environmental management? Substance is defined as “any chemical element and its compounds, with the exception of radioactive substances” by [E-PRTR Regulation](#), but it is defined as “a chemical element and its compounds in the natural state or obtained by any manufacturing process, including any additive necessary to preserve its stability and any impurity deriving from the process used, but excluding any solvent which may be separated without affecting the stability of the substance or changing its composition”, by the [REACH Regulation \(No 793/93\)](#). Other characteristics of substances occur frequently in [EU legislation](#) as well, such as “active, basic, carcinogenic, corrosive, dangerous, existing, explosive, flammable, extremely flammable or highly flammable, harmful, hazardous, irritant, mutagenic, not chemically modified, notified, oxidising, ozone precursor, phase-in, priority, radioactive, sensitising, toxic or very toxic”. A scientific harmonisation of terminology related to substances is vital.

Sustainable transport policy at work at the Port of Vienna

Sharing its expertise in waste collection and waste treatment, the Port of Vienna proves it can play a significant role for sustainable transport in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

The Port of Vienna is one of the largest cargo transport centres in Austria. Its excellent geographical position and trimodal cargo handling make it an efficient hub for international goods and passenger transport.

As one of the most important intersections along the Danube axis and a hub for south-east Europe, the Port of Vienna has a significant role to play in the EU's strategy for the Danube Region.

The Port of Vienna spans a surface area of approximately 350 hectares, and consists of three cargo ports. The Port of Freudenuau handles cars, storage goods and bulk goods. One of the largest storage areas in Austria is located here, as well as the largest Combi Terminal at the Danube. In the Port of Lobau, oil is transported via ship on the Danube and is then stored or handled in the port. Albern port hosts mainly facilities for grain and bulk goods.

Sustainable use of the waterway. For the port of Vienna, sustainable transport policy means effectively combining water, rail and road networks. Its strategic objective is to develop and implement projects

of ships' waste along the Danube. The aim of WANDA, under leadership from via donau, was to find common solutions for a sustainable, environmentally sound and cross-border coordinated approach to ship waste management for cargo vessels along the Danube.

Developing pilot programmes. In the WANDA project, the Port of Vienna brought in its expertise in waste collection and waste treatment, and field surveys on waste collection were conducted in the ports of Lobau, Albern and Freudenuau to develop suggestions for more efficient waste management on ships and in the ports.

The project organised separate waste collection of oil, waste and other used materials and the Port of Vienna participated in pilot tests for a mobile ship waste collection vessel, which led to an overall collection of oily waste water of about 400 m. Waste water was collected directly where produced, which led to a large reduction of deposits in the port itself.

More work to be done. Newly established waste collection stations were not as well received in the Albern and Lobau Ports; for the most part they were not used for their purpose. More efforts will have to be made to raise awareness of the need to separate waste directly on the ship to secure waste separation at the deposit units.

The port of Vienna will continue to participate in the follow-up project Convention for Waste Management for Inland Navigation on the Danube (CO-WANDA), which began in October 2012. It will be important to generate a legal framework to arrive at joint regulations along the Danube River, but the results of WANDA clearly show the necessity to manage waste generated on inland waterways.

Monika Unterholzner is the Head of the International Department and Communications at the Port of Vienna.



In the WANDA project, the Port of Vienna conducted field surveys on waste collection in the ports of Lobau, Albern and Freudenuau to develop suggestions for more efficient waste management on ships and in the port.

that involve the Danube as an important part of the transport chain. As one of the most important intersections along the Danube axis and a hub for south-east Europe, the Port of Vienna also has a significant role to play in the EU's strategy for the Danube Region.

The project 'Waste Management for Inland Navigation on the Danube' (WANDA) was launched in 2009 to coordinate the development of the collec-

A river prize for Europe

Through a partnership of river organisations, a new prize launching next year will recognise efforts to overcome water management challenges on rivers from the Ural Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean.

From 11 to 13 September 2013 a new European Riverprize will be awarded for the first time in Vienna. Even though the big day is still almost one year away, many details for the prize competition and the awarding ceremony have now been finalised.



Credit: Atmosphere Photography

“The European Riverprize should highlight the importance of integrated river basin management in Europe, very much in line with the work of our commission,” says Wolfgang Stalzer, ICPDR President of 2012. The ICPDR won the Thies International Riverprize in 2007 and “It is therefore a great pleasure that the ICPDR can serve as something like a launching platform for a related award in Europe.”

New recognition for Europe. The European Riverprize was established through a partnership between

the International River Foundation (IRF) with the ICPDR and the European Centre for River Restoration (ECRR). It will celebrate successful approaches that have overcome the challenges to river restoration, ecosystem health, water quality and climate change within the social and political context of the European continent.

Judged by a panel of European experts, the first European Riverprize will be awarded in Vienna on Thursday 12 September, 2013. The award ceremony, for which 250 to 300 guests are expected, will take place in conjunction with the European River Restoration Conference in Vienna. The organisers have secured the Baroque theatre hall ‘Aula der Wissenschaften’ at the heart of Vienna’s old town for this special occasion.

Working for sustainable water management. Applications will be assessed based on a documented river management framework, evidence of social and economic gains, an integrated approach to river management, long-term vision and demonstrated, outstanding achievements in river ecology. Participation is open to all organisations, including business, government and civil society, that are engaged in the sustainable management of rivers and their basins from the Ural Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. The winner of the IRF European Riverprize will automatically qualify as a finalist in the Thies International Riverprize in the following year.

Eligible countries are Albania, Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,

Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.

For further information on the European Riverprize, check www.icpdr.org or www.riverfoundation.org.au and register for the European River Restoration Conference 2013 at www.errc2013.eu.

Benedikt Mandl is the Technical Expert for Public Participation and Communication in the ICPDR Secretariat, and the Executive Editor of Danube Watch.

The ICPDR won the Thies International Riverprize in 2007. “It is therefore a great pleasure for the ICPDR can serve as something like a launching platform for a related award in Europe,” says Wolfgang Stalzer, ICPDR President of 2012.

In 2011–2012, more than 500 local schoolchildren toured the Matasar-Fusea quarry. “In Romania, people think they have to go to the Danube Delta to see birds. They are so surprised to see the same birds in their own place.” — Andreia Petcu, Environment & Rehabilitation Manager, Lafarge-Romania



Quarry rehabilitation re-frames nature

A restoration project for the Matasar-Fusea quarry has brought together building materials company Lafarge with WWF Romania to find a way to maintain ecosystems and help nature find its way.

You can almost forget you're in a quarry. Yes, from a certain vantage you can see piles of sand. And over there is a grading machine at work. But there's a butterfly, and a heron. There's a man fishing for his supper. This isn't an ordinary quarry.

In the 1980s this site, located on the floodplains of the Arges River, was the biggest sand and gravel operation in Romania, providing materials for what is now the Romanian Parliament building (People's House), the second-largest building in the world after the Pentagon. Rehabilitation work on the quarry started in 2009 on the first section; the company plans to replicate this pattern of quarry and nature restoration, section by section over several decades.

Lafarge has worked with WWF Romania on the restoration – just one activity within a global partnership that began in 2000 between the construction materials company and the conservation organisation.

Working for nature and society. The first goal of the rehabilitation was to improve water quality, which in turn created more attractive habitats and nesting areas

for birds, fish, frogs and other native species. The second goal was to educate surrounding communities and generate enthusiasm for the natural beauty and biodiversity in their midst.

Enhancing the social value of the landscape. A Bucharest-based landscape architecture team was asked to create installations and objects to enhance the restored site's appeal. Architect Ioana Tudora described their work during a recent tour of Matasar-Fusea:

“As a landscape architect instead of an ecologist, I have a different perspective. Sometimes, while quarrying, you create absolutely gorgeous landscapes – even more beautiful than before. A quarry can be a plus because it exposes geological strata and structure, often showing astonishing beauty that we don't want to cover again in the rehabilitation process. Reconstructing what was might not be the best solution if it means destroying something new that has come into being. It takes a lot of consideration.

“Our aim here was to enhance the social value of the landscape. We want to show it in an understandable and relevant way.

“People work here. You can’t chase people and villages away to put nature in their place – it doesn’t work like that. People need to live with an ecosystem if they are going to respect it. I discussed with WWF both the ecological and social perspectives. We acknowledged and agreed that this is an active area. The site is crossed by a main road; it won’t be wilderness.

“These objects are here to invite people, to welcome people, to make them part of the site. Because if they respect it, they will protect it.

“Originally, everyone thought we must do something rustic, made of wood; you know wood is considered the ‘ecological’ construction material. But it doesn’t fit this situation. It would totally disappear in the land-

We look at landscapes during our holidays – only then we take the time to admire. But our daily environments, whether urban or rural, can be admired every day. An attractive environment invites contemplation; that’s a social service today, to take that quiet moment and just contemplate things.”

The value of restoration for business. Jim Rushworth, Lafarge VP Environment and Public Affairs, Quarries, Aggregates & Concrete, talks about why quarry restoration makes business sense:

“The projects we support aim to help communities, whether it’s through education, providing employment, using local services or turning a quarry into a place of beauty for recreation.



“The business value is that, for the majority of our operations we need water in addition to raw materials. Any operation near a watercourse must be managed correctly to avoid negative impacts on the ecosystem or surrounding communities. A comprehensive restoration project does more than mitigate harm, it adds value.

“The good thing about restoring a sand and gravel pit or a quarry is that quite often it doesn’t require a significant amount of money. By working with an NGO that understands the local biodiversity, you can create significant improvements just using the equipment on site.

“Matasarú is about more than quarry rehabilitation. It has shown that ecologists and engineers can work together to achieve a shared aim: to bring nature back.” — Orieta Hulea, Conservation Director, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme

scape. I said, concrete won’t harm the landscape. It’s stone, part of nature, and it’s made right here. So we tried to do something ecological out of concrete, and worked on different concrete options with Lafarge to create the installations.

“Lafarge really cares about rehabilitation of nature. Others plant a tree and think they can call it ‘nature restoration’. Lafarge wanted to create a landscape that worked for nature, yes, but for people, too.”

Someone has to look. “The history of landscapes begins with painting; the idea was to frame nature. So, if it’s not human, it’s not a landscape. Someone has to look. Foxes and wolves aren’t seeing beauty – they’re too pragmatic.

“Landscapes should touch diverse audiences. We all live in landscapes every day, we just don’t see them.

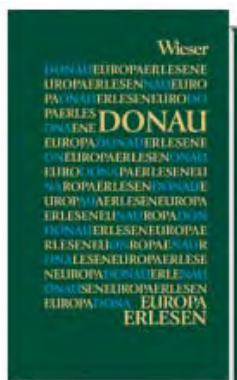
“It also really boosts the morale of the people at the quarry, because they can see that the area that was extracted has now become a beautiful place, with forests or wetlands. As we get more examples of what can be done and the benefits it creates, I believe Lafarge can encourage greater interest in the environment within our industry.

“When industry, NGOs and governments come together, you quite often find that the goals are aligned. Industry can provide land and resources, NGOs provide expertise and governments can create legislation or policy that encourages others to replicate the success.”

Gretchen Lyons is the Manager of Conservation Communications at WWF International.

‘DONAU’: epic anthology with Danube theme

More than 600 pages of abridged texts in German about the Danube – prose, reports, historic scriptures – are presented in a new collection by the Austrian publisher Wieser.



Editor Christian Fridrich gathered texts from several centuries and from authors as varied as Elias Canetti, Ovid, Karl-Markus Gauß – and even Sigmund von Birken with his legendary travel report ‘Der Donaustrand’ of 1664. The result is a colourful mix of impressions from different regions and different ages, ideal reading for any Danube enthusiast: texts

that reflect the diversity of this unique river.

The pieces were arranged according geographically, starting in the Black Forest and moving towards the Black Sea, allowing the reader to embark on a journey through the same succession of cultures and stories followed by the river.

Previous volumes of the ‘Europa erlesen’ series have explored several areas in the Danube River Basin, including Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Banat, Backa and Vojvodina.

‘Donau’ costs 25.90 EUR (ISBN: 978-3-99029-014-9) and can be ordered from book merchants or directly from the publisher at: www.wieser-verlag.com.

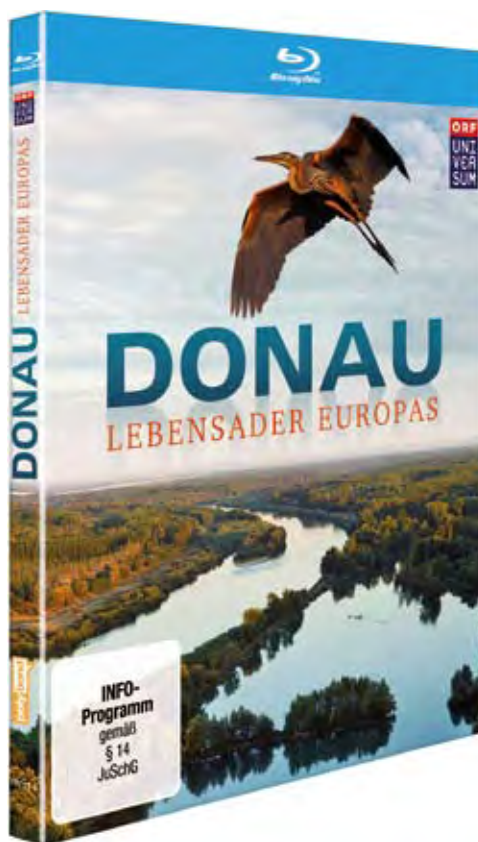
Benedikt Mandl is the Technical Expert for Public Participation and Communication in the ICPDR Secretariat, and the Executive Editor of Danube Watch.

‘The Danube – Europe’s Amazon’ is now available on DVD and Blu-ray

Romantic shores, wild nature, baroque art: one can barely escape from the fascination of the Danube. The groundbreaking two-part documentary by Rita and Michael Schlamberger shows unknown sides of a river that shapes an entire continent. Along the course of the Danube, nature rules over the lives of people. As the Danube passes different landscapes and climate zones, it changes its nature: contrasts between wilderness and high culture emerge in a unique mix. While part one gives an overview of the course of the Danube, part two shows the extreme faces between floods and frost.

The documentary that has already enchanted millions of viewers on TV is now available on DVD and Blu-ray in German and English. DVDs and Blu-ray discs can be ordered from amazon.de or other media companies.

German and English / Dolby Digital 5.1/
16:9 / PAL ca. 100 Min. (2 x 50 Min.) /
Documentary



SCRIPT & DIRECTORS MICHAEL
SCHLAMBERGER, RITA SCHLAM-
BERGER CAMERA JIRÍ PETR,
MICHAEL SCHLAMBERGER MUSIC
ANDREAS FABIANEK

A CO-PRODUCTION OF ORF
UNIVERSUM, SCIENCEVISION, NDR
AND BR IN COOPERATION WITH
ARTE AND ICPDR.

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The Tisza River Basin as a classroom

In 2013, the ICDPR will provide an internship opportunity as part of a unique programme training the scientists, managers and leaders who will tackle tomorrow's environmental challenges at the river basin level.

Today's water management challenges cross traditional boundaries between science and policy. To meet these needs, river managers need interdisciplinary training that integrates scientific research with resource management and policy-making to become agents for change tomorrow.



Credit: Amanda Marshall

The US National Science Foundation's Integrative Graduate Education Research and Training (IGERT) Fellowship programme aims to train a diverse team of PhD students using team-based collaboration to integrate science, management and policy at the river basin level. Each IGERT team is assigned a river basin, spending two years developing management plans for that basin. Previous teams analysed the Cache and Kaskaskia Rivers in Illinois and the Mississippi River; this year's team will analyse the Tisza River Basin.

Putting students in direct contact with water managers. During the second year of study, the IGERT programme places students in internships with government agencies and organisations active within the target basin. The ICDPR has been chosen as one internship opportunity, and will provide data and on-the-ground experience for student Shanna N. McClain beginning in January 2013. For the IGERT project, McClain will be researching the potential impacts of floodplain reconnection in the Tisza.

For McClain, the match is ideal: "I feel quite fortunate to have been afforded the opportunity to work with the ICDPR, as my areas of interest specifically relate to international governance of trans-boundary river basins and researching the policies and mechanisms that guide the management of these areas."

Bringing experience to the Tisza. McClain's previous studies have focused on international policy related to river basin management, integrated water resource management, flood mitigation as well as the establishment of flow regimes. She also completed a comparative analysis of environmental flows policy in Africa's Orange-Senqu River Basin and the Murray-Darling River Basin in Australia.

Shanna N. McClain (far right) and the team of IGERT Fellows explored the Cache River Basin in June 2012, as part of the first Project Area of the IGERT Fellowship.

Since December 2011 she has worked as a consultant for the UN Environment Programme and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environmental Emergencies Section, where she has worked on mainstreaming environmental preparedness and prevention activities as part of a broader framework of humanitarian response.

McClain is looking forward to joining the work in the Tisza Basin. "The Tisza provides a unique landscape", says McClain, "with remarkable issues that can present larger implications for floodplain management/reconnection, preparedness for environmental emergencies, adaptation to climate change, and multilevel governance in water resources."

Kirstie Shepherd is a freelance journalist living in Vienna and has called the Danube River Basin home since 2000.

IGERT FELLOWSHIPS IN WATERSHED SCIENCE AND POLICY

The Integrative Graduate Education Research and Training (IGERT) fellowships are awarded by Southern Illinois University Carbondale in the United States.

IGERT fellowships provide:

- multi-disciplinary, team-based training in watershed science and policy
- graduation education that crosses traditional boundaries between science and policy
- real world preparation for team-based critical thinking and problem-solving challenges
- the application of scientific knowledge within a policy and management context

The third meeting of the stakeholder forum, held on the Plovput vessel Istrajni I travelling from Beska to Belgrade, gave forum members a better understanding of perspectives from navigation, environmental protection, industry and archaeology.



Planning together is better – inside a stakeholder forum in Belgrade

Successful implementation of water management strategies requires close cooperation between experts and organisations involved or interested in river basin management planning – in short among all stakeholders.

Water is everybody's issue. Government agencies are not alone in protecting shared water resources; they need to cooperate with actors from different sectors. An open, accountable process through which individuals and groups can exchange views and influence decision-making promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need in a meaningful way.

A project in Serbia by the Directorate for Inland Waterways Plovput demonstrates that a strategic approach and careful planning are necessary for successful public participation.

An example from Serbia. The Directorate for Inland Waterways, together with the Ministry of Transport, is the beneficiary of the project 'Preparation of Documentation for River Training and Dredging Works on Critical Sectors of the Danube River in Serbia'. The documentation is being prepared in line with Serbian legislation, as well as relevant EU and international legislation framework. This project, fully funded by the EU, began in 2011 and will be finalised in 2013.

The basic approach within the project is to establish conditions which would ensure minimum navigable depth and width of the fairway of the Danube River during the low water periods, while respecting environmental interests. The adopted guidelines for the development of the documentation within this project include: preserving connectivity conditions of the water bodies, preferable application of detached structures, preserving sediment equilibrium and ensuring mitigation measures.

Bringing stakeholders together. Integrated inland waterway management is oriented towards harmonising the interests of various stakeholders, and respecting national and international legal frameworks, including, among others, the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin.

The Stakeholders' Forum of the project was established in line with the long-term orientation of the Directorate for Inland Waterways Plovput towards application of the modern concept of inland waterways management, as well as with identified good practice in implementation of similar projects on the Danube River.

The kick-off meeting of the Stakeholders' Forum was held on 26 June 2012 in Belgrade. The basic principles of the forum included: voluntary membership that was free of charge, mutual acknowledgment of and respect for the various standpoints of the forum members and transparency of the work. Those basic principles are part of the general rules on organisation and work of the forum, agreed upon by the forum, members at the second meeting of the forum, which was held on 17 July 2012 in Belgrade.

Finding solutions together. The Stakeholders' Forum is a multidisciplinary body in which different interests

from forum meetings are available to the general public at Plovput's web-site (www.plovput.gov.rs), ensuring direct insight for all stakeholders of the project and guaranteeing the transparency of the planning process. A representative of Plovput is the forum chairperson, and makes sure that all forum members have equal treatment. The chairperson is also the link between the forum members and consultants (Witteveen Bos, Danish Hydraulic Institute and Energoprojekt), making sure that information is properly exchanged between forum members and consultants. Forum members have the right to raise questions as well as to make recommendations for further investigations or a more

detailed analysis regarding different options for critical sectors.

Reaching goals. The third meeting of the forum took place on the Plovput vessel Istrajni I, travelling from Beska to Belgrade. This site visit was organised by Plovput at the request of forum members to get a better understanding of the current conditions on two critical sectors which are of interest for the project.

At the fourth meeting of the forum held on 14 September 2012 in Bel-

grade, the first big milestone of the forum was reached by a common agreement on preferred options for six critical sectors on the Danube River in Serbia, which are to be further investigated in the next phase of the project.

Plovput thanks all the forum members and observers for their active roles and contribution in the planning phase of the project. Acknowledging and understanding different interests of different stakeholders is of a crucial importance for implementation of such a complex multidisciplinary project. With everyone's input, reaching a common understanding is possible.

For more information, please visit: www.plovput.gov.rs/forum-zainteresovanih-strana.

Ivan Mitrovic is the Project Manager at the Directorate for Inland Waterways Plovput, Republic of Serbia. *Jasna Muskatirovic* is the Head of the Survey and Design Department at the Directorate for Inland Waterways Plovput, Republic of Serbia.

The project in Serbia aims to establish the minimum navigable depth and width of the Danube River during the low water periods, while preserving sediment equilibrium and connectivity conditions of the water bodies.



Credit: Photo by the Project Team

are represented: navigation, environmental and nature protection, industry and archaeology. The advisory group was made up of the ICPDR, the Institute for Nature Protection of Vojvodina, WWF, the Ship Masters' Association of Serbia, the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, the National Alliance for Local Economic Development, Aqua et Archaeologia, the Centre for Ecology and Sustainable Development, and Local Agenda 21 for Kostolac.

A number of observers (all of which are welcome) have taken part at forum meetings, including the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia, relevant Serbian ministries and other governmental institutions interested in the project, international river commissions, waterway administrations from other Danube countries, as well as NGOs which are not members of the forum.

Ensuring transparency and equal treatment. Considering the wider importance of the work being done, all forum documents are prepared and distributed in both Serbian and English. Likewise, all documents



The Great Rivers Partnership

Through a partnership programme from The Nature Conservancy, river managers from around the world, together with scientists, corporations and public agencies, are collaborating to restore the health of the world's mighty waterways.

The Magdalena River in Columbia is a working river, transporting more than three million tones of goods each year. River managers there are grappling with questions about how to balance the economic, cultural and conservation interests of the river for the 28 million people living in the river basin.

Meanwhile, over 5,000 kilometres away, river managers on the Mississippi River are asking similar questions about their own working river, which is at the heart of the US agricultural economy. Thanks to work by the Great Rivers Partnership of The Nature Conservancy, scientists and decision-makers can come together to solve these problems together.

Focused on common problems. A founding grant from Caterpillar Foundation and other key partners launched the Partnership in 2005, bringing together representatives from industry, conservation NGOs, government agencies and scientists to improve the economic and social benefits derived from water resources while preserving and restoring freshwater ecosystems. Addressing the links between economy, human well-being and ecosystem sustainability, the Great Rivers Partnership focuses on common problems and tangible outcomes, especially in agriculture, navigation, flood control, hydropower and fisheries.

The Great Rivers Partnership has established a global network to share knowledge and best practices through technical exchanges, conferences and site visits. It is this effort to facilitate exchange that brought managers from the Mississippi and Magdalena Rivers together.

“The Magdalena River is at a critical point in its development, and we want to help ensure that decisions to improve hydropower, flood risk management, agriculture, fisheries, and more are informed by relevant experiences on other great rivers with similar challenges,” said Michael Reuter, director of the Great River Partnership. “The Mississippi River, which has been developed intensely over the past 200 years, has many lessons that could be shared with the Magdalena to preserve its natural integrity while also providing multiple benefits for people and industry. But that’s just one example; there are many. The Great Rivers Partnership taps into a broad network of organisations

The Magdalena River is South America’s fifth largest basin. Covering 24% of Colombia’s national territory, the river generates life and serves as an economic livelihood for more than 30 million Colombians living throughout the basin.

with lots of expertise focusing on large rivers around the world, like the Danube.”

Building partnerships. In 2008, the Great Rivers Partnership brought staff from Cormagdalena, the agency managing the Magdalena River, to the Mississippi. For a week, staff and scientist from Cormagdalena, The Nature Conservancy, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center visited sites in St Louis and New Orleans to discuss coastal land loss, sediment management issues, navigation needs and flood risk management.

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Founded in 1951, The Nature Conservancy is an environmental organisation based in the US, working to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. With over one million members and projects in over 30 countries, The Nature Conservancy is one of the world's largest environmental organisations. The Nature Conservancy takes a scientific approach to conservation, selecting areas to preserve based on careful analysis of what is needed to protect local plants, animals and ecosystems. Furthermore, The Nature Conservancy works with all sectors – including business, communities, partner NGOs and government agencies – to achieve its goals.

At the end of the trip, agencies from the two rivers agreed to work together to develop a plan for the sustainable management of the Magdalena River. This cooperation will draw on technology, engineering, restoration and conservation expertise from the top river managers across the US.

“There is a tremendous opportunity at the Magdalena,” said Julio Carcamo, who heads The Nature Conservancy’s conservation initiatives in five Latin America countries, including Colombia. “Cormagdalena, which is the Magdalena River Environmental Authority, is developing a ‘master plan’ for the Magdalena, emphasising hydropower and navigation. Meanwhile, Colombia’s Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development is drafting a strategy plan for the entire basin. And, in response to the 2011 flood, the government has launched a multi-billion dollar fund to implement flood-risk reduction strategies. The Conservancy and Great Rivers Partnership has collaborative relationships with each of these entities. Our goal is to build on these relationships to advance Integrated River Basin Management, or IRBM, on the Magdalena.”

By building these kinds of partnerships between great rivers worldwide, the Great Rivers Partnership is ensuring that the knowledge gained in one river basin can

be used by river managers facing similar challenges on the other side of the world.

For more information, please visit: www.greatriverspartnership.org.

Kirstie Shepherd is a freelance journalist living in Vienna and has called the Danube River Basin home since 2000.

THE GREAT RIVERS PARTNERSHIP AT WORK

Field to Market. In 2006, the Great Rivers Partnership joined an alliance of growers, agribusinesses, food companies and conservation organisations working to identify and support sustainable agricultural practices that meet the world’s growing food needs while reducing impacts on the environment and improving the well-being of growers and their communities.

Called Field to Market: The Keystone Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, the alliance is working to track the impact of agriculture on soil, water, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity and land use.

A water producer programme for South America. The Great Rivers Partnership helped launch an innovative programme in 2007 that is being used in Brazil and other parts of South America to protect water for people and nature. The Water Producer Programme compensates rural landowners who preserve and restore forests and grasslands along streams and implement best management practices on cropland and cattle ranches.

Today, similar water funds and water producer initiatives are being used in Columbia, Ecuador and Peru to protect forests and grasslands and help provide clean, safe drinking water for millions of people.

Flagship floodplains. In 2007, The Nature Conservancy launched an effort to restore 7100 acres of former floodplain, prairie and upland forests at Emiquon along the Illinois River. Today, hundreds of acres of prairie and wetlands have been planted, bringing water to former lakebeds and attracting the return of hundreds of thousands of migratory birds.

Most importantly, the Great Rivers Partnership has helped to position Emiquon as a proof-of-concept project, helping to secure key capital investments and advancing a policy agenda to enable the restoration. In turn, Emiquon scientists have shared the lessons they’ve learned with other great rivers beyond the US.



Colombians rely on the Magdalena River Basin for a connection to their natural heritage and culture, and to generate 85% of their gross domestic product.



The European Water Stewardship programme is an integrative system for business and agriculture to assess, verify and communicate sustainable water management practices.

A new standard for water management practices

Important progress has been made in water protection in Europe over the past few decades. However, Europe's waters still need increased efforts to get them clean, to bring them back to their ecological health and to manage them in a sustainable way. Cristina Babryn of the European Water Partnership (EWP) speaks about a new tool to encourage stakeholders to solve Europe's water problems and contribute to solutions that will address the global water crisis.

Important progress has been made in water protection in Europe over the past few decades. However, Europe's waters still need increased efforts to get them clean, to bring them back to their ecological health and to manage them sustainably. The Chairman of the European Water Partnership (EWP) speaks about a new tool to stimulate stakeholders to solve Europe's water problems and contribute to solutions that will address the global water crisis.

Danube Watch: Why is an EU water standard needed?

Cristina Babryn: European legislation has expanded within member states to cover wider climatic and social conditions. This has made it clear that legal measures are not enough to drive all the change needed to improve water status in Europe. In addition, we need actions from the private sector and citizens to enhance these regulations and to push for real change.

From recent discussions on the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), the so-called Blueprint Process, we saw the difficulties in achieving the WFD objective – good water status for all EU waters by 2015. Given the international nature of Europe's river basins, global strategies for collective action and cohesive management are all the more important. For that, we urgently need applicable tools that enforce and support private actions in support of sustainable water management.

Danube Watch: What is the motivation for companies to apply the EWS Standard?

Cristina Babryn: Businesses regard the EWS assessment as an added value. It provides them with an

opportunity to network with stakeholders, provide a global overview of risks, identify the best response to pressure from authorities, facilitate internal training, integrate available information and identify communication needs. The assessment is flexible in its response strategy, and takes factors such as local geographical, climatic and social conditions into account for finding targeted and applicable solutions.

Entire sectors apply the EWS Standard, particularly those with site-specific challenges that aren't being addressed by other environmental assessments. This has been the initial motivation for a recent pilot study on airports, where the entire sector will benefit from the EWS site-specific approach in the future.

Associations within a sector can use the standard as a unified assessment approach, which the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC) did as part of its 'Responsible Care Program'. This allows for clear communication of goals and objectives within the associations to improve water use efficiency and secure the long-term availability of natural resources. In the recent European Crop Protection Association (ECPA) project 'Time to Change Initiative', stakeholders shared their long-term goals and expectations in implementing the EWS Standard, and they expressed appreciation for the advantage of its application as a group.

Danube Watch: There are many ways in which companies can prove environmental awareness. How does the EWS Standard differ other similar schemes?

Cristina Babryn: There are no competitors, as EWS is structured as a complementary scheme. It is targeted for all water users who want to have an integrated, holistic view of their water management performance to define local and targeted water response strategies. Other systems address specific aspects of water management in depth – like foot printing – or deal with basic water management indicators through a sustainability or best-management practice assessment, like EMAS or Global GAP. The EWS Standard, on the other hand, provides an integrative assessment of the impacts on all aspects of water management.

Danube Watch: How is the EWS Standard funded?

Cristina Babryn: EWS has structured its business model along a stakeholder approach, giving them the rights to the intellectual property. The EWS Standard on its part is currently under EWP management and is different from standards awarded by public authorities since it is entirely voluntary and funded by the EWS partners. Clients cover the costs of activities directly related to the certification and are entirely site-specific, depending on the size, location and sphere of the certification at hand and look to results provided by initial water reporting.

Danube Watch: How do you avoid 'green washing'?

Cristina Babryn: We involve partners and members to develop a clear certification process and establish indicators. This should ensure that the implementation of EWS is as stringent, thorough and transparent as possible. Using an experienced third party certification also provides validity for the EWS Standard.

For more information on the EWS Standard, please visit: www.ewp.eu/activities/water-stewardship/water-stewardship-standard/

Benedikt Mandl is the Technical Expert for Public Participation and Communication in the ICPDR Secretariat, and the Executive Editor of Danube Watch.

EUROPEAN WATER PARTNERSHIP & STEWARDSHIP

The European Water Partnership is a non-profit organisation which coordinates activities regarding European water issues. It was born as the result of a stakeholder process combining knowledge of water users in Europe to respond to the need for a cohesive system for business and agriculture to assess, improve and communicate sustainable water management practices.

European Water Stewardship (EWS) Standard & certification process

The EWS Standard strives to be structurally simple yet also thorough. It is based on four principles:

1. Sustainable abstraction: Quantification of water use and its impacts on the water supply and river basin status.
2. Water status: Knowledge of risk linked to substances used and the impact of effluents or other pollutants on any potential destinations and any mitigation strategies.
3. High conservation value areas: Are mapped and potential impacts on ecological values well known.
4. Governance: Long-term management procedures addressing overall water use efficiency, public participation and collective actions with transparency regarding management and economics.

Voluntary application of the EWS Standard highlights the following steps:

1. Assessment of risks associated with the operator's water management.
2. Identification of the immediate operational impacts on the local watershed.
3. Development of appropriate actions for a mitigation strategy based on recognised management risks.

It is clear that legal measures are not enough to drive all the change needed to improve water status in Europe. We need actions from the private sector and citizens to enhance these regulations and to push for real change.

Better understanding of wetlands

Wetlands connect us all, upstream-downstream along the rivers. A recent conference organised in the Danube River Basin brought together participants from all over the world to find sustainable solutions to protect these valuable ecosystems.



The captain of a tourist boat in the Romanian Danube Delta Ramsar site waits for his international visitors to return from a particularly interesting birdwatching spot.

Rivers, lakes, marshes and floodplains form a network of water-related ecosystems. In the 1960s, the term 'wetlands' was created to streamline the new focus on these hitherto neglected ecosystems and their values. Wetlands take care of water – they provide the natural infrastructure to capture, filter, store, transport and release water. Wetlands are critical arteries of the water cycle that keeps us supplied with water. Sustainable river basin development depends therefore on the maintenance of the services provided by its wetlands.

Wetlands were the focus as 900 participants from all over the world gathered on 4–13 July 2012 in Bucharest, Romanian capital for the triennial conference of the parties (COP11) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. This was the first time a global conference on wetlands was hosted in the Danube Basin, and provided an opportunity to showcase the work undertaken by the ICPDR and its partners for integrated river and ecosystem management along the Danube and its tributaries, and to learn from experiences in other river basins.

Delegates debated globally relevant themes, such as the functions of wetlands for flood retention, water treatment, recreation and the improvement of the local climate in urban environments, the role of wetland services and products to alleviate poverty and to improve local economies, as well as the importance of integrated ecosystem management for water security and sanitation. This latter was also covered in the new 'Ramsar Wetland Disease Manual', indicating how to create healthy wetlands for healthy people.

Wetlands and river basin management. Of particular relevance to river basin managers was the resolution adopted on wetlands and energy issues. This stresses the interrelations between environmental risks, the need for transparency and the social responsibility of river basin planning and management. It also highlights the need to undertake strategic environmental assessments, such as for navigation and hydropower infrastructure that may substantially alter the hydromorphology of rivers and their sediment transport.

In the current context of a changing climate, sectoral policy decisions in the fields of energy production, transport, agriculture, water provision and others are likely to have cumulative impacts on ecosystem services and the water resources that depend on them – impacts that are often still underestimated and not sufficiently taken into account.

Sharing difficult decisions. The delegates did not make any revolutionary decisions, but they spent long hours discussing how to cope with ongoing climate change (regarding carbon sequestration in wet forest ecosystems) and sustainable ways of producing healthy food with minimum pesticide use for an ever growing population (in irrigated rice paddies) – both of which are difficult subjects to obtain a global consensus and where the debate will continue in upcoming multilateral environmental conferences.

However, the outcomes of the Ramsar conference show that environmental problems cannot be managed any longer in isolation. Sustainable solutions need to be based on intergovernmental – and interministerial – policies which integrate energy and food production, water security, sanitation, public health and others,



Wetland experts in the Danube Basin have shown that they can work well with water engineers through their cooperation over the second assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwater, prepared by the UNECE Water Convention with support from Ramsar.

From the DANUBEPARKS network, composed of protected areas along the river listed as ‘Wetlands of International Importance’ under the Ramsar Convention, to the impressive number of ecological restoration projects in the region and the pioneering ‘Joint Statement on Navigation and Environmental Protection’, the Danube Basin served as an appropriate background to host an international meeting on water-related ecosystems. Cooperation between the water and nature sectors has a promising future, particularly in the Danube Basin.

This potential was also illustrated by the theme of the conference ‘Wetlands: Home and Destinations’, focusing on the role that wetlands play for recreation and tourism. A special publication, ‘Destination Wetlands’, was launched for the occasion by the UN World Tourism Organization and Ramsar and high-



Cooperation between the water and nature sectors has a promising future, particularly in the Danube Basin.

(left) Reed harvesting can support sustainable local economies, such as in Vilkovo, situated in the Ukrainian Ramsar site along the Kyliya Branch of the Danube River. (right) A rich wetland ecosystem developed in the Vacaresti water retention polder at the edge of Romania’s capital of Bucharest. The site is within viewing distance of the Palace of Parliament where the Ramsar Conference of the Parties took place. Vacaresti will hopefully become an urban wetland recreation and education area.

and are based on the maintenance and sustainable management of the ecosystems and their products upon which we all depend.

The Bucharest message. The stark message from the conference is the need for intersectoral cooperation as a prerequisite for successful work in the water sector. And that is a message with which the partners in the Danube Basin can easily agree.

lights 14 wetland tourism case studies from across the world, including the Danube Delta and Skocjan Caves Ramsar sites in the Danube Basin.

To download a copy of that publication, please visit: www.ramsar.org/tourism.

Tobias Salatbe is the senior adviser for European countries at the global Ramsar Convention secretariat.

← Danube Day has many faces: every country celebrates it through local, often personal ways. Fold out to discover how 81 million people in 14 countries celebrated Danube Day this year.

Danube Day 2012

Danube Day was a superb celebration of everything achieved in the 18 years since the signing of the Danube River Protection Convention. Whether you were one of the hundreds of thousands who participated; one of millions who heard about it; or work for one of the 900 organisations involved, you helped spread Danube solidarity through more than 350 individual events. Bridging national and institutional boundaries, the 14-country festival demonstrates that the region is strongest when it works together. It reminds us of the value of rivers, renews our resolve to look after them and, with so many events focused on enjoying rivers, helps us reclaim them!

Suzie Holt lives in Devon, UK, and is a writer on environmental issues. She has been involved in Danube Day since its start in 2004 and prior to that worked for WWF on the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative.

GERMANY

For the 1500 visitors to Bavaria's Action Weekend, the Danube swim and riverside rock concert provided some relief from soaring daytime temperatures. Baden-Württemberg's 'Heimattage', marking the hand-over of the Wolterdingen Dam, attracted an estimated 30,000 people and an international line-up entertained at Ulm's festival.



1

AUSTRIA

The MS Negrelli brought Danube Day to 5000 Upper and Lower Austrians and featured in Linz's river festival. A big hit was having your photo taken to form part of a giant salmon mosaic! The 'fish of faces' was unveiled by Minister Doris Mures and Vienna Councillor Ulli Sima. Over 1500 teenagers took up the Lebensministerium-Coca-Cola 'Danube Challenge'.



2

SLOVENIA

Over 1000 pupils used their artistic and scientific skills in three competitions, vying to become national 'Art Masters', 'water detectives' and top journalists. Rapper Zlatko performed at the Environment Ministry's 'You Are My River' final, where young eco-reporters investigated water's role in food production.



3

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Ekořim, organisers of Bosnia's 'Danube Art Master' contest, relayed Danube Day messages to thousands via radio interviews. Three Sarajevo friends won first prize for their colourful and innovative bird feeders made from bottles found along the river.



4

CROATIA

Cross-border and cross-sector cooperation took centre-stage. The Sava Commission Youth Parliament involved Croatians, Slovenes, Serbians and Bosnians. Kopački rit hosted talks between navigation and environment sectors, as well as a Croatian-Hungarian youth expedition.



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HUNGARY

Media coverage reached around 2.5 million people, and featured the Rural Development Ministry's hand-over of the 'Danube United' flag to Slovakia; the GWP/Coca-Cola/Ministry 'Danube Box Contest' involving 450 schools and Budapest's 'Danube Flow' festival: a riverside feast, a flashmob, concerts and a stone-skimming contest.

SERBIA

Festivities were the biggest in the Basin: 150,000 people; 150 events; 28 locations! Media coverage reached up to four million people. Commissioner Hahn joined 100 donors and government and civil society representatives to mark 29 June. At Belgrade's 'Ada Huja Festival', work began to transform the landfill site into a 'natural oasis in the city'.



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MONTENEGRO

'Sunny Colours of Nature' won top prize in a contest run by Friends of Tara River Society. Part of the basin-wide 'Art Master' contest overseen by GWP, the artworks share common messages of environmental concern; basin-wide solidarity; anger at rubbish dumped or wonder at nature's beauty.



9

SLOVAKIA

Marking the Gabčíkovo Dam's 20th anniversary, the Ministry of Environment, Slovenske elektrarne, BROZ and Coca-Cola Hellenic joined forces for the 6th Gabčíkovo Open-Day. Over 2000 people enjoyed free boat trips, plant tours, performances in the park and the final stage of the Slovakia Tour cycle race.



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BULGARIA

Action and awareness were central at conservation, sport, science and art endeavours. Thousands celebrated at Persina Nature Park and in Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Pleven, Ruse and Silistra. WWF surveyed birdlife on the border with Romania. Clean-up actions took place in Baikal and Lom, where Neptune pronounced "plastic waste is killing our rivers!"



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The ICPDR would like to thank the more than 900 organisations involved in Danube Day 2012. See www.danubeday.org to find out more about the events and organisers.

DANUBE DAY

UKRAINE

The Tisza Festival in Kvasovo reached up to the skies and down to the water, with hot air balloon trips; home-made kites to send aloft messages of solidarity and the release of fish into the Borzhava river. Music and green actions brought together children from the Tisza and Danube Delta.

ROMANIA

Some 192 organisations energised the Danube spirit with discussion, culture and sport. Rovana Plumb signed a joint project with Bulgaria at the Danube Conference. The Environment Ministry, Save the Danube & Delta NGO and others brought the Delta's hospitality to the capital at the 4th Danube Gastronomy Festival and thousands enjoyed 15 regional festivals.

MOLDOVA

Minister Salaru joined festivities in Valeni, where tradition and novelty combined to showcase folk choirs and a teen fashion show of ingenious outfits crafted from recycled rubbish. Mr Salaru joined local officials, NGOs and civil society to discuss cooperation on the River Prut.



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During events, EU Regional Policy Commissioner, Johannes Hahn, made a seven-country tour to review outcomes arising from the first year of Danube Strategy implementation.

ICPDR MEETINGS

For final dates, please consult the ICPDR calendar, available at www.icpdr.org.

11-12/12/2012	VIENNA, AUSTRIA 15TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE ICPDR
5-6/3/2013	HOF, AUSTRIA 16TH GROUNDWATER TASK GROUP MEETING
14-15/3/2013	SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 23RD FLOOD PROTECTION EXPERT GROUP MEETING
19-20/3/2013	BUDAPEST, HUNGARY 17TH MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT EXPERT GROUP MEETING
20-21/3/2013	VIENNA, AUSTRIA 16TH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM EXPERT GROUP MEETING
18-19/4/2013	BELGRADE, SERBIA 13TH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EXPERT GROUP MEETING

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UPCOMING ISSUE

Sturgeons in the Danube River Basin
ICPDR Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
EU blueprint to safeguard Europe's water