

# DANUBE WATCH

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DANUBE RIVER / WWW.ICPDR.ORG

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International  
Commission  
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Internationale  
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zum Schutz  
der Donau

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# Dear readers,

It is my pleasure to address you, the Danube Watch readership, in an editorial note just over a year since I began to serve the ICPDR as Executive Secretary.

Since summer last year, I have found my appreciation for the value of the ICPDR reassured: the commission continues to deliver numerous benefits to contracting parties and the 80 million people living in the Danube Basin. Its work towards coordinating the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Floods Directive in our basin is particularly important.

Other areas with an EU dimension also saw much progress recently: I am very pleased that we have entered a stage of true cooperation with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, in a way that synergies are generated especially in Priority Areas 1A, 4, 5 and 6. The ICPDR and PAs 4 and 5 have jointly elaborated a document that promises a future of mutually beneficial coordination of the work towards our shared vision.

Let me now turn towards the core business of the ICPDR: drafts of our most important work pro-

grammes, the Danube River Basin Management Plan and the Flood Risk Management Plan, are at the brink of completion. They will soon enter a stage of intense public consultation and my plea to you, dear reader, is to use this opportunity to provide us with feedback, create ownership and broaden the support for the two plans.

When a similar process came to an end with the adoption of the first Danube River Basin Management Plan in 2010, the ministers of the ICPDR countries highlighted four areas for inter-sectoral work: inland navigation, climate change adaptation, hydropower development and agriculture. Resulting dialogue activities have given rise to guidance documents and other products, now feeding into the new management plan. One of these four areas, agriculture, remains a particular challenge that will continue to call for coordinated efforts to tackle resulting pressures on water. I look forward to continuing this process with the support of the ICPDR community.

*Ivan Zavadsky,*  
Executive Secretary of the ICPDR



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Danube Watch is available on the web at [www.icpdr.org](http://www.icpdr.org)



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## IMPRINT

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



## MONERIS: NUTRIENT EMISSIONS MODELLED FOR Odra

The International Commission for the Protection of the Odra River Against Pollution (ICPO) has published a report and assessment with models of basin-wide nutrient emissions. Similar to the ICPDR's work in this field, the report relies on MONERIS (Modelling Nutrient Emissions in River Systems) to combine historic data with projections. The report spans the period between 2000 and 2021, with the future covered in different scenarios and uncertainty assessments. Results can also be displayed in maps drawn up by the StatPlanet tool.

Read the MONERIS report for the Odra here: [www.mkoo.pl/show.php?fid=4628&lang=DE](http://www.mkoo.pl/show.php?fid=4628&lang=DE)



## RULING ON WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE ART. 9

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has settled a legal dispute between the EU Commission and Germany concerning Art. 9 of the Water Framework Directive: while Germany and other EU member states only recover certain water costs such as for drinking water and wastewater treatment, the Commission interpreted the obligation more broadly to include uses linked to hydropower, navigation or irrigation, among others. The ECJ has now dismissed the case on grounds that “absence of pricing for such activities will not necessarily jeopardise the attainment of [the WFD's] objectives”.

Link: <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/liste.jsf?language=en&num=C-525/12>



## SEDIMENT MANAGEMENT CONCEPT FOR ELBE RIVER

A concept report for sediment management was published by the International Commission for the Protection of the River Elbe. It comprises guidance for good sediment management practices and deals with sediment quantity and quality issues in the Elbe Basin which conflict with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. The report is the first document that addresses sediment issues for any intensively used, transboundary river basin with the intent to develop guidance and recommendations with an inter-sectoral approach. The report is available in German and Czech, with an English summary version under preparation.

Download the sediment management report at: [www.ikse-mkol.org](http://www.ikse-mkol.org)



## IRF EUROPEAN RIVERPRIZE AND INTERNATIONAL RIVERPRIZE

The 2014 IRF European Riverprize was awarded to the Austrian stretch of the Mur River at a gala event in Vienna's city hall end of October. The ICPDR is happy to note that all three finalists (Danubeparks, BROZ of Slovakia and the Mur River) were from the Danube River Basin and congratulates the winners. Earlier in September, the Rhine River won the IRF International Riverprize in Canberra after winning the European prize last year, the first year of the prize's establishment. The ICPDR congratulates the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine (ICPR).

Learn more about these prestigious awards at: [www.riverfoundation.org.au](http://www.riverfoundation.org.au)



### SEE RIVER COMPLETED AT RIVER RESTORATION CONFERENCE

The SEE River Project, which aimed to reach a common agreement on river corridor management in light of both development and conservation interests, has come to an end at the 6th European River Restoration Conference in Vienna in late October. SEE River was pursued through close cooperation of experts and stakeholders from river areas and authorities. A Toolkit for Integrative Management of International River Corridors was developed, tested through application on six international river corridors and integrated into the daily work of 26 organisations in the SEE partner countries. The ICPDR was an observer of SEE River.

**Download the final publication of SEE River at: [www.see-river.net/final-publication.html](http://www.see-river.net/final-publication.html)**



### NEW PROJECT FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH

A new project called Danube:Future draws from regional, national and international initiatives for interdisciplinary sustainability research with training and capacity building. The project contributes to the sustainable development of the Danube River Basin with particular focus on the contribution of the humanities. The project aims to support the creation of green jobs and strengthen civil society organisations. It is coordinated by the Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt in cooperation with the University of Trieste, the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna and the University of Novi Sad.

**Follow the Danube:Future project at: [www.danubefuture.eu](http://www.danubefuture.eu)**

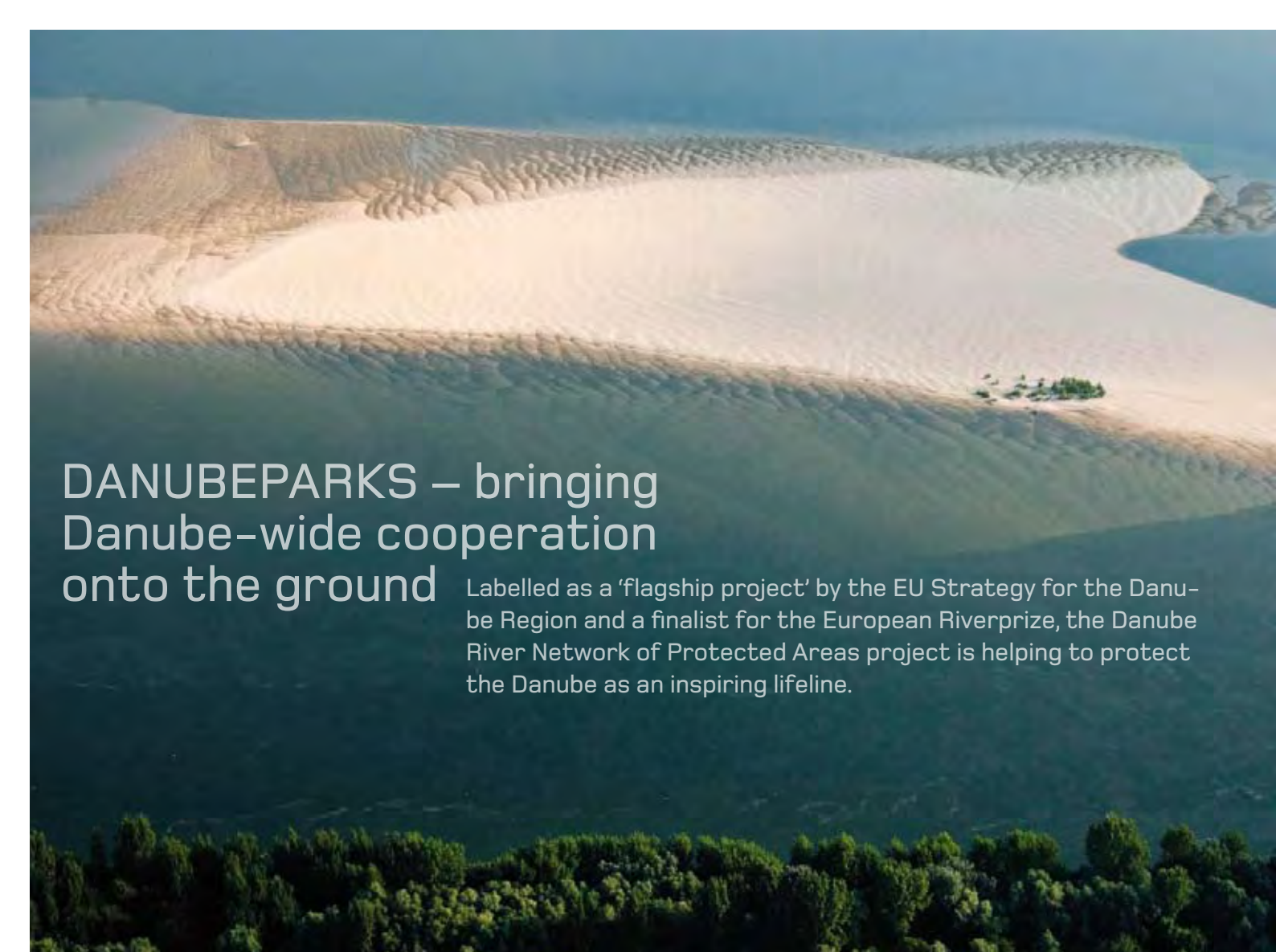


### DANUBE WATCH QUESTIONNAIRE: VOICES FROM OUR READERS

The last issue of Danube Watch contained a questionnaire to collect some opinions from the DW readership. The completed questionnaires that we received reflect a high satisfaction with the publication: 80% think the layout is up to date. The same percentage prefers to read the printed issue over its online version; about one third would welcome cross-links with social media – and on the content side, there was a strong call for more articles related to water management organisations from outside the Danube Basin and for more on social aspects and water quality. Danube Watch thanks all readers who submitted their views!

### NEW HEADS OF DELEGATIONS TO ICPDR

The ICPDR welcomes new heads of delegations. For the Czech Republic, Mr. Josef Nistler follows Mr Karel Vlasak. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Bosko Kenjic follows Mr Reuf Hadzibegic; for Moldova, Mr Anatolie Pirlui follows Ms Valentina Tapis, and for Slovakia, Mr Vladimir Novak follows Mr. Martin Bacik. Danube Watch thanks the outgoing heads of delegations for their support and is looking forward to working with their successors.



## DANUBEPARKS – bringing Danube-wide cooperation onto the ground

Labelled as a ‘flagship project’ by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and a finalist for the European Riverprize, the Danube River Network of Protected Areas project is helping to protect the Danube as an inspiring lifeline.

**The Danube River hosts outstanding biodiversity and its relevance for nature conservation in South-East Europe is reflected by the high number of protected sites along its course, preserving unique areas with ecological, scientific and cultural significance.**

In 2007, DANUBEPARKS was established to foster conservation agendas on a transnational level and to raise the capacity of each single protected area. Through intense exchange of experiences and the development and implementation of Danube-wide conservation strategies, Danube Protected areas have tackled habitat management, protection of Danube flagship species and nature tourism on a Danube-wide scale for the first time. Funded by the ETC Programme for South East Europe, the two-year DANUBEPARKS STEP 2.0 follow-up project has been just been finalised.

**River Morphology – the key for long term preservation.** Natural morphological processes are the key for long-term preservation of the Danube River ecosystem. All Danube protected areas are drivers for river restoration, and DANUBEPARKS promotes river dynamics.

Within the ICPDR Joint Danube Survey 3, the DANUBEPARKS project monitored indicator species for river morphology – Little Ringed Plover and Sand Martin. Monitoring showed that only Danube sections in good hydro-morphological conditions can host relevant numbers of these characteristic bird species. The results are a clear appeal towards consequent protection of intact Danube section and river restoration wherever possible.

**Cooperation across sectors.** Considering the multi-functionality of the Danube River, cross-sectorial cooperation is a daily mat-

ter for protected areas and cooperation was intensified with NEWADA Duo, the Network of Danube Waterway Administration, within DANUBEPARKS STEP 2.0. Fruitful workshops resulted in the identification of future fields of cooperation and in the joint elaboration of initiatives like WILDIsland – The Danube Wild Island Habitat Corridor. Concepts for side arm restoration at the Drava River and modelling local sediment management activities stress the intention of DANUBEPARKS to contribute proactively to an integrative river management.

**Danube-wide perspectives for flagship species.** The White-tailed Eagle is an umbrella species for the protection of large-scale wetlands and in South-East Europe the Danube River is the backbone for its population. The “White-tailed Eagle Action Plan”, adopted in 2011 by the Council of Europe, forms the foundation for conservation activities.



© DANUBEPARKS/Persina Nature Park/Alexander Ivanov

In 2007, cooperation began with seven Protected Areas from seven Danube countries and the first project saw the accession of several new Network partners. Today, DANUBEPARKS is a platform for 20 Protected Areas from nearly all Danube countries. With the strategic enlargement, the Network aims to strengthen its voice by additional partners and, at the same time, to keep a clear focus on the content-oriented work on the Danube and its larger tributaries.

*The Protected Areas of the DANUBEPARKS network preserve and restore the most valuable habitats of the Danube River Basin, thus safeguarding an important part of Europe's natural heritage for future generations. Initiatives towards habitat connectivity will be the focus for future DANUBEPARKS work – islands as stepping stones within a Danube Wild Island Corridor.*

In January 2014, the protected areas joined up with experts from BirdLife, WWF and other NGOs to organise the first Danube-wide winter count of the White-tailed Eagle. This first report stresses the importance of the Danube as a wintering area for up to 750 eagles, and is an essential instrument in planning future protection measures.

The Black Poplar is the giant of the Danube river ecosystem. These gnarled trees give the landscape personality and provide important habitat structures for many other animal species. Due to intensive forestry practices, the Black Poplar has continued to

face loss of natural regeneration areas and hybridisation with poplars from forestry plantations. Based on a mapping of Black Poplars in all the Danube protected areas, a cadastre has now been published. Numerous trees in each protected area were genetically and morphologically tested and the results underline the need for active intervention in every protected area to preserve genetic variability. Reforestation measures have already been undertaken with local Black Poplar seedlings to reverse the trend by enabling wetland forests to reconquer the space they originally inhabited along the Danube.

#### **Bridging conservation and community.**

Danube protected areas share responsibility in creating awareness of environmental issues, particularly among local populations and tourists. To reach these educational goals, high quality programmes are essential. The “Assessment Tour 2014” – visiting more than 40 organisations offering environmental education along the Danube – led to the planning of a DANUBEPARKS visitor centre, to be built close to Budapest by the Duna-Ipoly National Park, and in the development of specific tourism offers (e.g. for people with disabilities).

#### **DANUBEPARKS Association founded.**

DANUBEPARKS has become a platform for lively cooperation. The exchange of experience has led to expanded horizons, Danube-wide strategies and concrete protective measures. Yet there is still much to be done. For this reason, the DANUBEPARKS association was founded

in August 2014. “In the future, the association will be the voice of the Danube protected areas, promoting our agenda in the political arena and constituting an ongoing framework for cooperation,” says DANUBEPARKS President Carl Manzano (Donau-Auen National Park, Austria).

“We express commitment to further intensify our efforts for our joint Danube natural heritage and to contribute actively to relevant policies like the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the revision of the Danube River Basin Management Plan and the implementation of Natura 2000,” says Eszter Buchert (Duna Drava National Park, Hungary) and Grigore Baboianu (Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority, Romania) in their roles as DANUBEPARKS vice presidents.

**Future priority: habitat corridor.** DANUBEPARKS contributes to more coherence and efficiency in the management of protected areas. Facing the responsibility of Danube protected areas serving as an inspiring lifeline of biodiversity, the conservation and further development of the Danube as a habitat corridor and establishing Green Infrastructure along its course is on the top of the agenda for the future work of the Danube River Network of protected areas.

**For more information, please visit: [www.danubeparks.org](http://www.danubeparks.org).**

*Georg Frank* is the Secretary General of the DANUBEPARKS Network.

# Global Change Atlas of the Danube Region: sharing research for transboundary solutions

For answers to pressing issues regarding the future management of land, water and energy resources, scientists and institutions must think beyond geographical borders and across disciplines.



Countries participating in the GLOCAD, shown in the map here, will collaborate closely to tackle the region's biggest challenges – whether it's developing sustainable agriculture, preserving biodiversity, reducing pollution or adapting to the increasing danger of floods, among others.

The GLOCAD project aims to facilitate collaborative research, assess pressures of global change in the region and disseminate information gathered from the collaborative network on natural resources management in the region.

**Integrated water management is based on the understanding that rivers know no boundaries and that countries must work together to find solutions to shared problems. A new research network established in the Danube region will ensure that knowledge about land and water management flows just as smoothly.**

The new project, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and led by scientists at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich, will establish a collaborative research network to develop a digital Global Change Atlas of the Danube Region (GLOCAD). The GLOCAD initiative will focus on issues relevant to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, including pressing social and environmental issues related to water, food and energy.

**Strengthening cooperation.** To tackle the region's biggest challenges – whether it's developing sustainable agriculture, preserving biodiversity, reducing pollution or adapting to the increasing danger of floods, among others – Danube countries must collaborate closely. “Scientific cooperation between countries needs to be improved to understand regional differences while finding common solutions to problems”,

says Markus Muerth, researcher at the the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich working on the GLOCAD project.

The GLOCAD project will improve cooperation between institutions in the Danube River Basin and help researchers at those institutions exchange knowledge on land and water management as well as potential changes in land use, climate and ecosystems and their services to society created in past and ongoing projects.

**Producing and sharing knowledge.** The network will develop common methods to monitor, map and model the current and future state of water resources, agriculture, energy production and ecosystems in the Danube region using state-of-the-art remote sensing, simulation models and information technologies. The network will provide Spatial Scientific Services (SSS) – including detailed standardised tools and digital maps of the region – which will allow for analysis of resources like water and soil for a variety of issues related to the Danube Strategy.

This information will be made available to a variety of stakeholder groups, and the network will complement other research initiatives in the region, especially the

Danube Water Nexus and Danube Data and Service Infrastructure initiatives carried out by the European Joint Research Centre (JRC).

“We need and have already contacted ICPDR as the main external partner at the supranational level,” says Muerth. “We cannot look at policies and measures regarding water, land and energy from a scientific standpoint, but need the input of stakeholders at this level and at the national and regional level, too.”

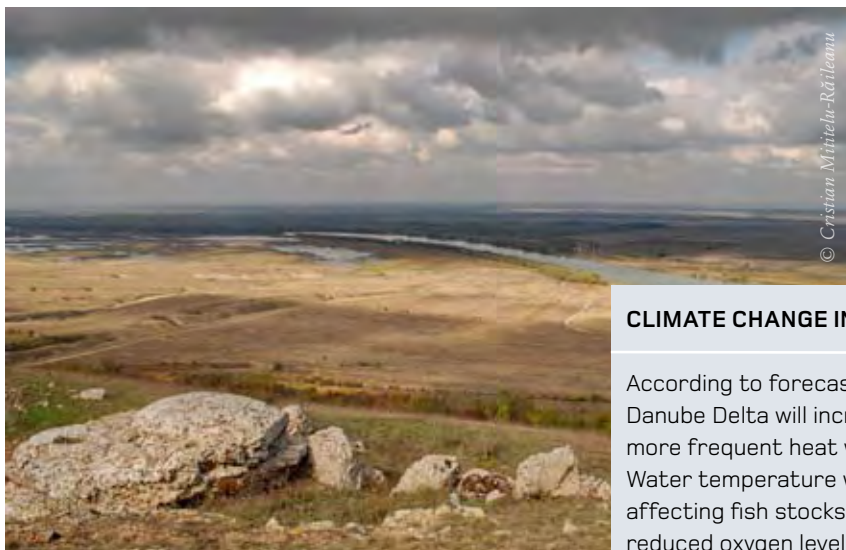
The network aims to secure project funding from Horizon 2020 with a commonly agreed, well-founded and progressive proposal that also complements the work of the JRC regarding the scientific support of the Danube Strategy in the best possible way. “We hope that our work will contribute to the communication of the water, energy and agricultural sectors in the Danube region,” says Muerth.

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



# Preparing for climate change in the Danube Delta

A new strategy to adapt to the effects of climate change will help communities in Romania, Moldova and Ukraine face coming challenges to protect the natural resources of the Danube Delta as well as their own livelihoods.



The Danube Delta is a World Heritage site and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve – rich in biodiversity and home to around 6000 species of flora and fauna. At the same time, the Danube Delta sub-basin is a centre of economic and cultural activities shared by Romania, Ukraine and Moldova and home to a large human population which depends on the Danube Delta for their livelihood.

However, recent years have brought increasing threats from climate change jeopardising the welfare of the humans and wildlife living in the region. To reduce the risks of climate change and to protect the Danube Delta and those who depend on it, the three countries sharing the Danube Delta (Romania, Moldova and Ukraine) have endorsed a new Danube Delta Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

The adaptation strategy and action plan builds on the ICPDR Strategy on Adaption to Climate Change for the Danube Basin, and will help governments and environmental organisations better understand the expected changes and the steps to adapt the region to those changes.

“The strategy isn’t limited to the future, it also takes into consideration the past and the present”, says Camelia Ionescu, of the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and manager of the project to develop the strategy. “It looks deeper into peoples’ needs, while at the same time considering nature’s conditions; it is both a visionary document and a tool which can be applied on long term”, says Ionescu.

## Strategies that strengthen the community

The strategy and action plan are the result of a four-year, European Community-funded regional project launched in March 2011, ‘Climate proofing the Danube Delta through integrated land and water management’. The project aimed to address climate change issues and increase the resilience of Danube Delta ecosystems, while improving local communities’ livelihoods.

The project team developed a pilot programme for generating green energy from waste

*The likely consequences of climate change – frequent floods, long periods of drought, deteriorating water quality and declining fish reserves – are jeopardising the welfare of the communities living in the region and the unique biodiversity of the Danube Delta.*

## CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE DANUBE DELTA

According to forecasts, air temperature in the Danube Delta will increase by 1-1.5° C, leading to more frequent heat waves and milder winters. Water temperature will rise by 2° C, dramatically affecting fish stocks because of algae growth and reduced oxygen levels in the water. The water level in the Black Sea will rise up to 0.5m by 2050 and small rivers will have 5-25% less water, especially in the summer.

reed in Vilkovo, Ukraine, which will generate income and reduce heating costs for local communities and promote the wetland ecological reconstruction. The project also included a training programme on techniques and tools to facilitate adaptation of economic and management practices.

The final event of the project was the International Conference on Climate Change Adaptation in the Danube Delta held in September in Tulcea, Romania to endorse the strategy and action plan. “With this project ending, the most important thing is to continue to work in the same direction, to build on the foundation that the project helped to set up,” says Ionescu. “Cooperation between different institutions from the Danube Delta sub-basin is crucial and should be strengthened, especially through other integrated projects.”

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

“The strategy looks deeper into people’s needs, while at the same time considering nature’s conditions; it is both a visionary document and a tool which can be applied on long term,” says Camelia Ionescu, of the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme.

The Directorate General for the Environment is keen on sharing the knowledge and best practices with our partners in third countries. A good opportunity in this respect is our participation in the work of international commissions like the ICPDR.



## Pavel Misiga on the EU dimension in water policy

As Danube countries work to meet the goals of the EU Water Framework Directive, cooperation proves to be the key to tackling shared challenges in water management.



Protecting water resources and ecosystems is one of the cornerstones of environmental protection in Europe. The stakes are high, the issues cross national boundaries and concerted action at EU level is necessary to ensure effective protection. Pavel Misiga, the new head of the unit for water at the European

Commission, speaks about the tools to meet the Danube region's water management challenges and the importance of countries working together – through EC programmes and organisations like the ICPDR – to secure these precious resources for the future.

**Danube Watch:** Mr Misiga, the ICPDR community is looking forward to working with you and your team in your new role as EC Head of Unit for water. Your home country Slovakia is a riparian one strongly shaped by the Danube. What is your personal relationship with this river?

**Misiga:** I have very close personal relationship with the Danube. I grew up in Bratislava, in the city suburbs close to the river. I spent a lot of time as a boy playing in the inundation forests and as a teenager on canoe trips down the river. My first working experience, as a young hydrogeology and applied geophysics graduate, was also closely connected with the Danube. I worked in the area of water infrastructure assessment and hydrological and environmental monitoring in the Danube region.

**Danube Watch:** Where do you see the most pressing areas for action at the EU level and how does the Danube Basin fit into this? Where do you personally see priorities for the EC?

**Misiga:** EU Member States have been through a long process establishing river basin management plans and making the programmes of measures operational to achieve good status of waters in Europe. The final deadline for achieving those goals – 2015 – is rapidly approaching therefore the upcoming second river basin management plans will hold a mirror reflecting where we are with the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in Europe. The most urgent task is therefore the implementation of effective measures, which may not be easy in the current economic context. Also integrating water policy objectives into other policy areas is a key challenge because without involving agriculture, industry, households, hydropower, navigation and other stakeholders it will not be possible to deliver the right measures.

We need more effort in the regions exposed to too much or too little water as well. Huge areas of Europe are prone to water scarcity and droughts at least seasonally. There is a need to establish water accounts and allocate the available water resources based on them considering the ecosystem needs. In other areas, recurrent floods destroy property and undermine people's wellbeing. In addition, 2015 is also the year of implementing the first flood risk management plans – a crucial step in the coordination between flood protection and river basin management via natural water retention measures, for example.

The challenges and opportunities in the Danube Basin are similar to those in other basins, but thanks to the work of the ICPDR the integrated planning process is well advanced and gives a good basis for the achievement of the objectives. However it will still depend on the Danube countries to implement the plans adopted.

**Danube Watch:** The ICPDR coordinates the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and Floods Directive on a basin-wide level. Several countries that are not EU member states but are politically committed to work towards the implementation of both direc-

tives. It is a challenge to comply with the legal regime, especially with regards to investments. What does the European Commission do to help non-EU countries in their efforts to align with the *acquis communautaire*?

**Misiga:** The EU provides funds to candidate countries or potential candidate countries through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The IPA aims to support candidate countries and potential candidates in implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required to bring the countries closer to EU values and to progressively align with the EU *acquis communautaire*. The IPA is made up of different components, like assistance for transition and institution building, cross-border cooperation, regional development (transport, environment, regional and economic development), human resources and rural development. For the period 2014–2020, IPA II sets a new framework for providing pre-accession assistance. The most important novelty of IPA II is its strategic focus. Country strategy papers made for each beneficiary for the seven-year period will provide for stronger ownership by the beneficiaries through integrating their reform and development agendas.

A new initiative called Horizon 2020 allows for financing research, development and innovative activities in the period 2014–2020. Horizon 2020 will be open to the association of acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates and selected international partner countries that fulfil the relevant criteria (capacity, track record, close economic and geographical links to the EU, etc.).

The Directorate General for the Environment makes funding available through the LIFE fund including operating grants to environmental NGOs that are also available for EU candidate countries. Under the LIFE fund integrated projects that follow the river basin planning approach can be financed.

We are also keen on sharing the knowledge and best practices with our partners in third countries. A good opportunity in this respect is our participation in the work of international commissions like the ICPDR.

**Danube Watch:** The Balkans have suffered from devastating floods this year. What role do you see for the ICPDR in managing flood risks in the future – and where do you see opportunities for closer cooperation with the EC?

**Misiga:** The devastating floods that hit Serbia and Bos-

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**The challenges and the opportunities in the Danube Basin are similar to those in other basins, but thanks to the work of the ICPDR the integrated planning process is well advanced and gives a good basis for the achievement of the objectives. However it will still depend on the Danube countries to implement the plans adopted.**  
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nia and Herzegovina are still fresh in our memories. The international community demonstrated their solidarity, contributed and took part in common efforts, providing both countries with immediate assistance, including rescue teams, expertise and first necessity products, not least through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. With a view of responding to both countries' call and to supporting both countries in their efforts, the European Commission, France and Slovenia took the initiative to convene an International Donors' Conference under the motto 'Rebuilding Together'. Delegations of over 60 countries and 23 international organisations, as well as representatives from the civil society and private sector, gathered in Brussels in mid July 2014.

.....  
**Cooperation among the countries and regions concerned is essential in order to face these challenges. For example, actions aimed at preventing or reducing nutrient or hazardous substances pollution of the Danube have a limited impact on the improvement of the water quality of the river if they are taken only by some of the riparian countries.**  
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As a follow up, the European Commission will call a regional meeting later this year in order to support the development of a regionally integrated strategy on flood prevention and management. This meeting will gather the countries of the region, international financial institutions, the river commissions and other relevant stakeholders. One of the objectives would be to put the existing structures (river commissions and EU macro-regional strategies) in the centre of regional action on flood prevention. This means that countries should commit to engage even more actively in the river commissions. With regards to the European Commission in particular, we are participating to the extent possible in the ICPDR meetings, expert and task groups. We see this as an additional opportunity to discuss with Member States as well as non-Member States issues that influence the implementation of the EU acquis and policies.

**Danube Watch:** Three years after its launch, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region is in full gear. The ICPDR contributes to the objectives of several priority areas, most importantly PA4 (Water Quality) and PA5 (Environmental Risks). What do you think is the biggest achievement of the EUSDR with regards to water to date – and where is the biggest challenge for the future?

**Misiga:** In my view, the biggest achievement so far is the establishment of a solid structure where the Danube region countries can work together tackling shared key challenges, based on politically agreed priorities in many different areas including the protection of the environment.

The EUSDR has a strong focus on water aspects, be they navigation, water quality, flood protection or biodiversity. The Strategy is meant to make better use of existing structures like for example the technical

expertise of the ICPDR and to help mobilising funds. After three years of implementation, the first concrete results of cooperation in the framework of the EUSDR are already visible.

Cooperation among the countries and regions concerned is essential in order to face these challenges. For example, actions aimed at preventing or reducing nutrient or hazardous substances pollution of the Danube have a limited impact on the improvement of the water quality of the river if they are taken only by some of the riparian countries. In this regard the activities developed in the framework of the ICPDR, e.g. related to the implementation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan or of the European Transnational Cooperation South East Europe Danube parks project, are good examples of joint and coordinated activities benefiting, among others, the water quality of the Danube River.

Getting results involves getting programming right: the Danube Strategy is already being included in all partnership agreements and operational programmes. The new financing period is an opportunity that must be seized to make sure that important projects coming from the Strategy are implemented on the ground.

As the implementation of the Strategy develops, the next key challenge will be to integrate environmental aspects and water management into other related policy areas. There are several signs that this is achievable if all stakeholders are involved in a cooperation based on mutual trust but building such cooperation takes time. However, I believe that we are on the right track.

#### PAVEL MISIGA

Pavel Misiga has served as the head of the Water Unit at the European Commission's DG Environment, Directorate C (Quality of Life, Water and Air) since summer 2014. He started his work for the European Commission in 2003, first at DG for Regional Policy, where he was responsible for the implementation of environmental projects financed by the Cohesion Fund, and later at DG Environment as the head of the Environment and Industry unit.

Previously, Mr. Misiga worked as an environmental consultant, activist and government official in his home country Slovakia. He served as adviser to the State Secretary for Environment and later he represented Slovakia in the EU accession negotiations dealing with issues related to the environment. Mr. Misiga holds degrees from Comenius University, the London School of Economics and Princeton University.

# UN Watercourses Convention enters into force

Following key principles of international law, a new tool to improve transboundary water cooperation world-wide will strengthen cooperation and prevent potential conflicts over shared water resources.



*Transboundary waters – physically shared between two or more countries – are some of the most important and vulnerable freshwater resources on the planet. Although transboundary water cooperation raises major practical and political issues, states have a responsibility to work together to manage them in a sustainable and integrated manner.*

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**Taken together, experts see the UN Watercourses Convention and the opening up of the UNECE Convention as entry points into a new era in transboundary river basin management, especially for parts of the world where there are currently no appropriate water management mechanisms in place.**

**This year, the ICPDR is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 1994 signing of the Danube River Protection Convention. However, other basins are less advanced: with 60% of the trans-boundary river basins in the world lacking any international cooperation mechanism, improvements in waterway governance are urgently needed. Last August may have seen a turning point for the UN Watercourses Convention (UNWC).**

Seventeen years since its adoption in 1997, this August the UNWC finally entered into force. The UNWC constitutes a global legal mechanism for facilitating the equitable and sustainable management of transboundary rivers and lakes around the world. The Convention's principal objective is to strengthen cooperation between states over their shared water resources following key principles of international law and prevent potential conflicts.

With the required number of contracting parties ratifying the convention, there is now a new tool to improve transboundary water cooperation world-wide. This step follows the 'opening up' of the UNECE Water Convention last year to include countries from outside the UNECE region.

Taken together, experts see the two conventions as entry points into a new era in transboundary river basin management especially for parts of the world where there are currently no appropriate water management mechanisms in place.

**A new element for multi-level water governance.** "Global and regional framework conventions operate as integral components of the legal governance of shared freshwater, laying out basic standards that ensure some coherence across the entire international legal system, while supplementing and reinforcing basin-specific agreements," explains WWF water law expert Flavia Rocha Loures in a comment published in the summer issue of Stockholm Water Front (#3/2014). "In this context, the UNWC offers a clear, stable, global framework for cooperation and is thus a crucial element of the multi-level legal governance of transboundary waters."

In line with coordination between the UNWC and other established legal instruments, Rocha Loures also emphasises the UNECE Water Convention – as well as the need to develop institutional structures to support the implementation of the UNWC. This is also where regional organisations such as the ICPDR fit in:

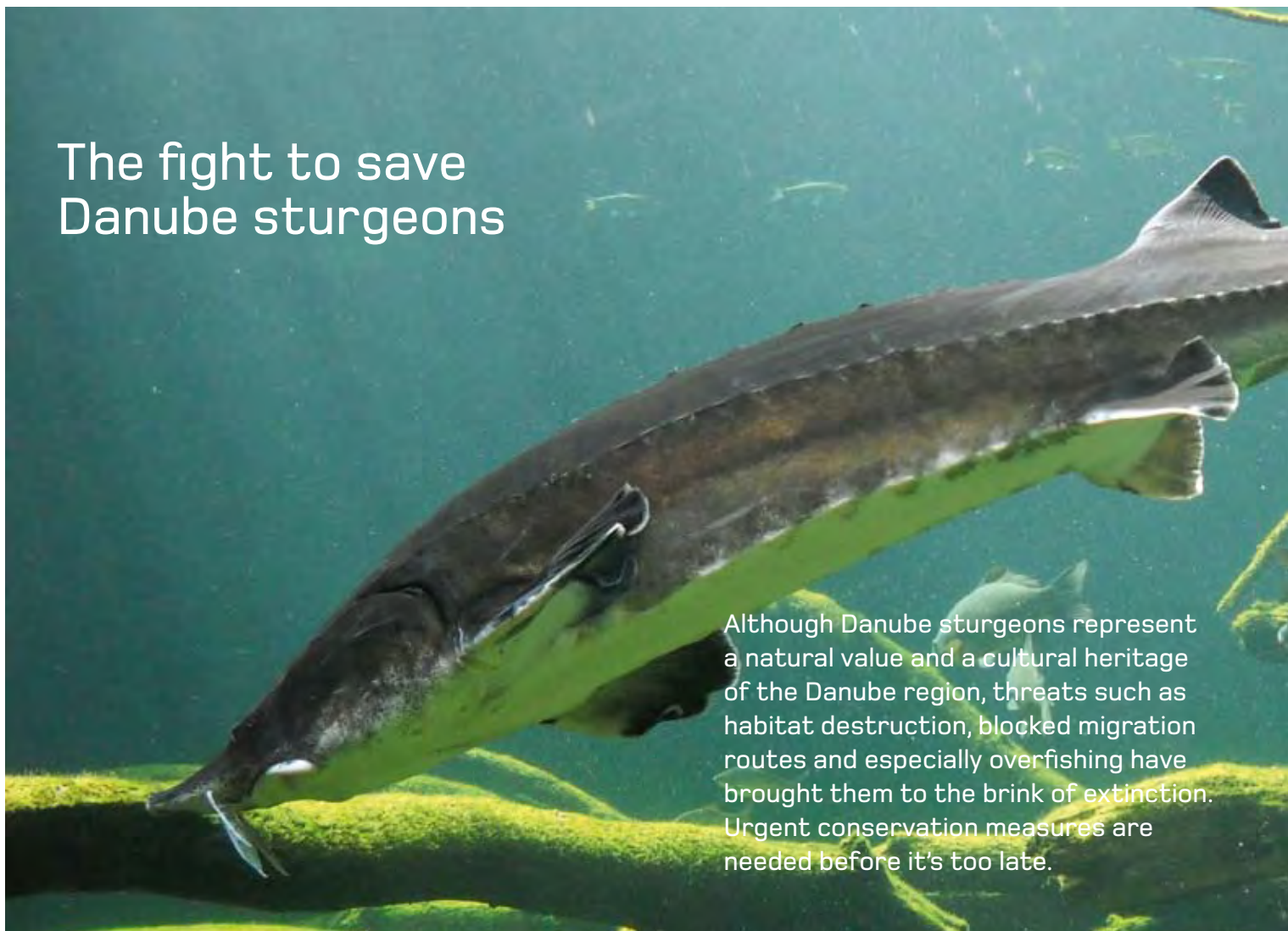
advanced river basins offer learning opportunities for basins that are now developing water management mechanisms. The ICPDR has traditionally close ties with the UNECE Water Convention and considers it its 'mother convention'.

The ICPDR receives more than a dozen study visits by water management bodies and academics every year and the ICPDR is frequently showcased in international conferences. This reflects the recognition of the ICPDR as one of the most developed transboundary basin organisations in the world. UNWC is highly welcome as a tool to formalise good practices in water management and the ICPDR will continue to promote and support such valuable tools globally, offering inspiration and lessons learnt from the Danube experience.

**Learn more about the UN Watercourses Convention at [www.unwatercoursesconvention.org](http://www.unwatercoursesconvention.org).**

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

# The fight to save Danube sturgeons



Although Danube sturgeons represent a natural value and a cultural heritage of the Danube region, threats such as habitat destruction, blocked migration routes and especially overfishing have brought them to the brink of extinction. Urgent conservation measures are needed before it's too late.

**Present at the time of the dinosaurs, sturgeons have changed very little over their 200 million years on Earth. Until the 20th century, six sturgeon species inhabited the region, supporting the livelihoods of many communities along the Danube and some migrating from the Black Sea up as far as Germany to reach their spawning grounds. Today, five sturgeon species are critically endangered – with one of these already extinct in the Danube – and one is considered vulnerable. Without the concerted action of dedicated individuals across the Danube Basin and support of the Danube countries, these ancient species might just disappear.**

“Along the Danube River, there are a lot of stakeholders,” says Cristina Sandu, Coordinator of the Danube Sturgeon Task Force at the Institute of Biology Bucharest,

Romanian Academy. “Drinking water, industry, agriculture, hydropower, navigation, flood protection, tourism, etc. – all these add new pressures on the aquatic environment, and hence, a wise prioritisation between water uses and nature conservation is needed.” For Danube sturgeons, this prioritisation comes in the form of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, which seeks to integrate existing EU policies across the Danube Basin. One of the targets of Priority Area 6 of the Danube Strategy is to “secure viable populations of Danube sturgeon species and other indigenous fish species by 2020”.

“The Danube Strategy is really excellent because it provides a dialogue platform to bring all the people together and discuss the same issues,” says Sandu. “It’s important to work together to identify balanced solutions that allow both economic de-

velopment and biodiversity conservation along the Danube River.”

**The Danube Sturgeon Task Force.** To meet the goals of the Danube Strategy, sturgeon experts, NGOs and representatives of national governments and the ICPDR established the Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF) in 2012. The DSTF coordinates the conservation of native sturgeon species in the Danube River Basin and the Black Sea by implementing the Sturgeon 2020 programme, which combines environmental protection with the social and economic development of local communities.

The DSTF aims to mobilise support for sturgeon conservation across the entire catchment area. While efforts in the Middle and Lower Danube focus on preserving the remaining wild individuals and their key habitats and restoring river connectivity at the Iron Gates



© WWF/Jutta Jabri

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*Because of the complex demands on their habitats, sturgeons are considered a 'flagship species'. By preserving the habitats and dynamics that satisfy the needs of this species, it is possible to protect the living spaces of many more species.*

and Gabčíkovo dams, in the Upper Danube the focus is on habitat restoration and building functional fish passes to allow migrants to reach their historical habitats. Among other activities, the DSTF's recent work has focused on preparing several pilot projects to conserve natural habitats and facilities outside natural habitats, establish eco-tourism activities and communicate the needs of sturgeons to the greater public.

As part of public awareness-raising activities, the DSTF organised a public event

to celebrate World Fish Migration Day, together with the National Museum for Natural History 'Grigore Antipa' in Bucharest, WWF Romania, the International Association for Danube Research and the Institute of Biology, Bucharest, Romanian Academy. Hosted by Grigore Antipa Museum, World Fish Migration Day aimed to raise awareness of the worldwide decline of migratory fish species as a result of overfishing, habitat loss and the need to restore river connectivity to allow migratory movements between various habitats as part of the natural life-cycle. The event included a sturgeon exhibition in the museum and an aquarium with living sturgeons; two presentations on sturgeon life, threats and measures to conserve the species and contests and activities for children.

**Sturgeons at the Iron Gates dams.** The first Danube River Basin Management Plan, published in 2009, called for a feasibility study on the possibility of sturgeon and other important species migrating upstream and downstream through the Iron Gates dams. Funded jointly by the Dutch 'Partners for Water' programme,

the ICPDR and the participating institutions, a project to monitor the behaviour of sturgeons at the Iron Gate II dam ran from November 2013 to May 2014, led by Radu Suciú and sturgeon experts from the Sturgeon Research Group (SRG)/Danube Delta National Institute (DDNI) Tulcea. The results of the monitoring project will be crucial for the development of functional fish migration aids at the Iron Gate II dam.

To monitor the area, acoustic receivers were installed at the Iron Gate II hydropower plant and the hydropower plant on the Gogoşu secondary branch of the Danube. Although significantly low water levels during the spring migration meant few adult sturgeons entered the Danube from the Black Sea, sturgeons were captured and tagged with a tracking device. The results of the monitoring demonstrated that adult sturgeons born before and after the dam was built in 1984 still migrate to the Iron Gate II dam.

Furthermore, the project showed that the strong water current from the dam's turbines significantly affects sturgeon behaviour. The monitoring of an adult male beluga sturgeon which spent nearly a week at the dam found it to swim repeatedly to the water's surface – highly unusual for sturgeons. This was attributed to the very strong water current produced by the turbines (475 m<sup>3</sup>/sec/turbine) with an output depth of 9 metres, so that the highest water flow is found in the lower part of the river, forcing the sturgeons to use the top 2–3 metres of the water to maintain their position in the river.

Overall, the project provided the basis for proposing location and construction style of fish pass entrances. Another outcome of the project was a workshop organised by the Fisheries Department of FAO Rome and held in Tulcea, Romania in May 2014. The workshop was dedicated to tagging and tracking sturgeons in the Lower Danube River and drew participants from Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia. Discussions at the workshop revealed the true complexity of the monitoring study and experts at the workshop – from Austria, Norway and the Netherlands – rated the study one of the most difficult ever attempted in a large river system. One of the recommendations of the workshop was to conduct a one-year preparatory project to test, combine

In November, WWF released 11,000 sterlets into the Danube River as part of a 50,000-strong sturgeon restocking programme. This is the first restocking of endangered sturgeons performed by a non-government organisation in Bulgaria, after years of scientific research, climatic and biological challenges.

and adapt existing radio and acoustic telemetry equipment to achieve the resolution required to locate ideal sites for the entrance to future fish passes. Fortunately for sturgeons, the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg is considering funding such a project.

trolling sturgeon fishing, sturgeon aquaculture and caviar processing and trade. The two-day workshops and practical training courses included information on sturgeons, fisheries control, aquaculture production, illegal caviar trade, national and international regula-

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*Despite surviving on Earth for millions of years sturgeons face numerous threats to their survival - such as habitat destruction, overfishing and blocked migration routes. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, sturgeons are more critically endangered than any other species.*



© SRG / DDNI Titicea

**Putting a stop to sturgeon poaching.** A Life+ project ‘Joint actions to raise awareness on overexploitation of Danube sturgeons in Romania and Bulgaria’ is targeting fishing communities, law enforcement agencies, decision makers, sturgeon breeders and caviar processors and traders in Bulgaria and Romania to stop the overexploitation of Danube sturgeons. Implemented by WWF in Austria, Bulgaria and Romania, the project is aligned with the Action Plan for the Conservation of the Sturgeons in the Danube River Basin, adopted by the Council of Europe in 2005. The project began in 2012 and will wrap up next year, with the goal to significantly reduce the illegal fishing of sturgeons in Bulgaria and Romania.

Two workshops were held this spring in Romania and Bulgaria for law enforcement agencies involved in con-

tions and methods of fraud, smuggling and concealment. To support the control work of enforcement officials, the project team produced comprehensive manuals with detailed information on sturgeon biology and species identification, caviar trade, regulations and simple checklists for controlling caviar shipments.

**Speaking up for sturgeons.** To provide a voice for these endangered species in local communities, the project has established sturgeon advocates in Romania and Bulgaria to serve as information sources regarding sturgeon issues in the region. “At the beginning, our Sturgeon Advocates in Romania and Bulgaria made good contacts in some fishing villages, while in others it was rather difficult as fishermen were suspicious and very hesitant to talk about delicate issues like poaching and illegal caviar trade,” says Jutta Jahrl of WWF.





Actions to raise public awareness for sturgeons are vital to securing sustainable fish stocks.

“After two years of project work, there are trustworthy relationships in many communities, and we have got a lot of interesting information and are able to understand the situation of fishermen much better,” says Jahrl.

To make a real difference to fighting the overfishing of sturgeons, the public and industry have to be informed. Project representatives brought a Danube sturgeon information stand – crowned by a 4.5 metre inflatable sturgeon – to the Global Seafood Expo in Brussels. The expo is the world’s largest seafood fare with more than 25,000 visitors. The stand provided information about the threats to sturgeons and the importance of sustainable and legal caviar trade, especially on the CITES labelling to distinguish legal from illegal caviar.

**For more information, please visit [www.danube-sturgeons.org](http://www.danube-sturgeons.org), [www.ddni.ro](http://www.ddni.ro) or [www.dstf.eu](http://www.dstf.eu).**

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

## The Rise of Hydro-Diplomacy

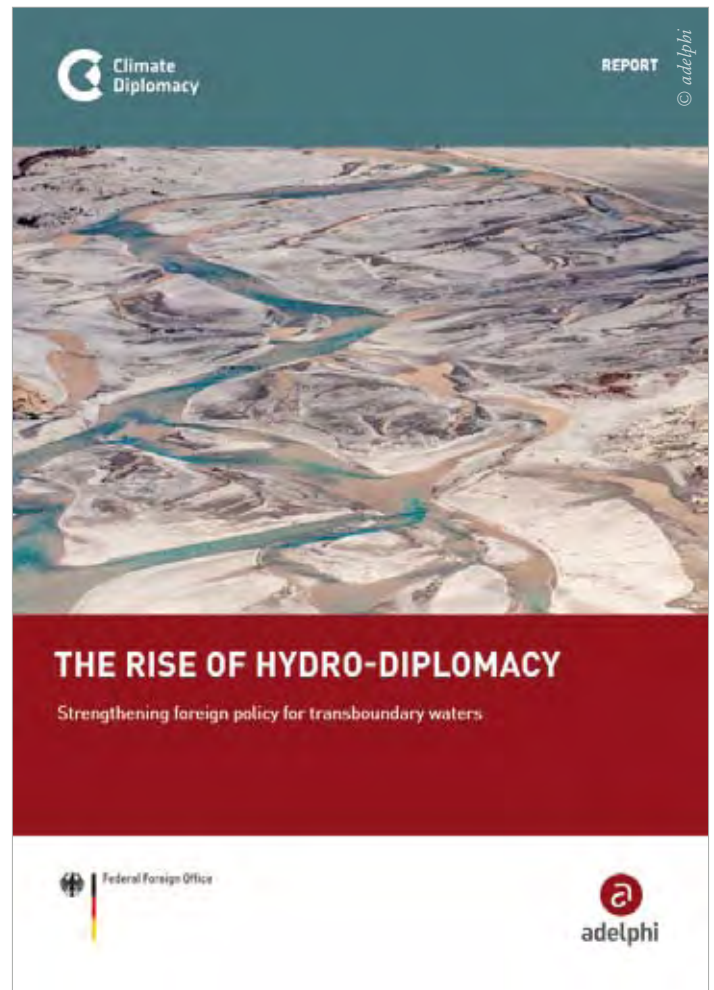
A recent report highlights how transboundary river basins improve inter-governmental cooperation. Long seen as a potential source for conflict, foreign policy experts increasingly recognise water as a means to foster peaceful exchanges between countries sharing river basins.

The report ‘The Rise of Hydro-Diplomacy: Strengthening foreign policy for transboundary waters’ was published by the Climate Diplomacy Initiative of Berlin-based think tank Adelphi and the German Federal Foreign Office, with lead author Benjamin Pohl and a well-rounded team of experts contributing. Its publication coincides with recent milestones reached in legal frameworks: the UNECE Water Convention “opened up” to all countries beyond the traditional UNECE region last year and this summer the UN Watercourses Convention entered into force (see article p. 13).

The report emphasises there is little precedent for major “water wars” in history, but there are many cases where cooperation on water has led to integration and the creation of “islands of cooperation” in otherwise conflict-prone relationships.

The report highlights case studies from around the world, including the Danube River Basin and the ICPDR, to demonstrate the value and importance of cooperation; it then goes into means to enhance this cooperation, ranging from capacity building to funding to institutional frameworks. The report is a valuable resource with thorough reflections on the dynamic and emerging world of transboundary water management.

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



## Putting ship-borne waste in its place

A new treaty on waste management for inland navigation on the Danube aims to create a state-of-the-art and user-friendly solution to protect the river from pollution discharges.

The Danube River may know no boundaries – flowing easily from the Black Forest to the Black Sea. But for vessels navigating on the Danube, sometimes for several weeks, disposing of waste responsibly hasn't been such smooth sailing. With a patchwork of varying international regulations, agreements and recommendations, disposing of waste can be expensive, time-consuming and in some countries plainly impossible. The new International Danube Ship Waste Convention (IDSWC) could harmonise ship waste management systems to protect the Danube from pollution and support inland navigation.

The draft of the Convention is the result of a two-year project funded within the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme (SEE) of the European Union. The Convention for Waste Management for Inland Navigation on the Danube (CO-WANDA) looked at existing ship waste management systems to define uniform, harmonised transboundary rules and basic administrative procedures for ship waste handling. The CO-WANDA international project team included experts from Water and Transport Research Institutions, Waterway Administrators, River Information Services and representatives of port authorities, and brought together

*The International Ship Waste Convention lays down realistic and viable rules for regulated collection and deposit of waste within a dense network of waste reception facilities along the entire Danube.*



partners from Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine, led by Austrian waterway company via donau.

“Within the CO-WANDA project all participating countries, including the Republic of Moldova, have responded to the main project challenge – that is to develop an integrated and harmonised approach at the international level to address the full

spectrum of issues related to ship waste management along the Danube,” says Valentina Țapiș, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova. “Drafting the International Ship Waste Convention has been one of the critical steps to which the project has responded along with the other complex and interlinked range of issues addressed throughout its course of implementation.”

**A ship waste management system for the Danube.** The Convention and its guidelines offer barrier-free solutions to disposing of waste, reducing the risk of environmental pollution. The Convention lays down realistic and viable rules for regulated collection and deposit of waste within a dense network of waste reception facilities along the entire Danube. In addition, it introduces a financing system using vignettes for vessels to pay to use the waste services in all countries, based on pilot tests in Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria

and Slovakia. For the future, however, the guidelines recommend implementing the vignettes in stages.

Some 188 ships registered for the Pilot Programme on the Electronic Vignette System, which allowed vessels to dispose of their oily and greasy ship-borne waste at predefined waste collection points, free of charge. During the one year pilot programme from July 2013 to June 2014,



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*The International Ship Waste Convention introduces a financing system using vignettes for vessels to pay to use the waste services in all countries, based on pilot tests in Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia.*

ships disposed of 549 m3 of bilge water, 35 m3 of waste oil and 2.6 tonnes of solid oily and greasy waste.

Most importantly, however, the CO-WANDA project closely involved navigation users. “For us skippers, having user-friendly, quick and economically sound waste-disposal services are important,” says Rudolf Hye, Managing Director, DTSG Donau-Tankschiffahrts-Gesellschaft m.b.H. “We think that in the future such services should be available along the entire Danube. While we don’t want to see exploding costs, we believe that for inland navigation as an internationally operating transport mode, environmental standards should be unified in all participating countries and developed in a practical way.”

**Ensuring the future through international support.** Excellent cooperation has characterised the project from the start, with experts from river information services, waterway administrators, water research institutions and port authorities

making up the CO-WANDA international project team. “The involvement of the international organisations as observers was one of the key factors for the success of CO-WANDA,” says Hans Berger, CO-WANDA Project Coordinator.

As an observer, the ICPDR was invited to join the Advisory Expert Group of the project in order to provide feedback on strategic issues. “The ICPDR has a long tradition of international cooperation in the field of environmental protection, which was one crucial aspect for us,” says Berger. “As for the future of the IDSWC, international commissions in the Danube River Basin will become increasingly important when it comes to official negotiations and further development of the IDSWC.”

Now, it is up to the Danube countries to advance the work conducted within the project and start official negotiations. “While much can and has been achieved, we consider it necessary to further promote the IDSWC among our countries in

**“The harmonisation and adaptation of current ship waste management systems will decrease the risk of illegal discharges and will provide user-friendly and cost-efficient solutions for vessels”, says Hans Berger, CO-WANDA Project Coordinator. “Thus, the Convention will protect valuable river ecosystems and the means of livelihoods for future generations in the Danube region.”**

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the upcoming future and the EU Strategy for the Danube region offers us a good stand for doing so,” says Țapiș “Our joint actions will be founded upon up-to-date scientific knowledge, reliable assessments and good practice management tools and affordable finance models that are accessible for the variety of the national and regional stakeholders involved.”

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



*The award-winning images from André Künzelmann, staff photographer of the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, capture the delicate work of the Joint Danube Survey 3 while encouraging viewers to draw closer to the river and learn more about it. © André Künzelmann, Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung*

## Prestigious award for Joint Danube Survey 3 photo essay

Photographer André Künzelmann was awarded the 'Deutscher Preis für Wissenschaftsfotografie', a prestigious award for science photography for his work on the Joint Danube Survey 3 last year.

The science photography award 'Deutscher Preis für Wissenschaftsfotografie' is given annually by the magazine Bild der Wissenschaft and the press office Brendel. This year's winning photo essay 'Joint Danube Survey 3' taken by André Künzelmann, a staff photographer of the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ), in close cooperation with scientist Werner Brack, last summer during the sampling work of JDS3.

"The photographer has succeeded in capturing the many aspects of scientific work in



cialised in science photography in the past ten years. “Effectively, I had only two days to get an overview on site, and I did not know the crew beforehand. With the tight schedule of the scientists, where every moment was planned out, additional questions and wishes from an ‘outsider’ like me require a degree of mutual understanding. As a photographer, you are under constant pressure in such a situation, because you don’t want to miss the best moments and you may have to catch them under difficult light situations.”

The Joint Danube Survey is the world’s largest river expedition. It catalyses international cooperation from the 14 main

Danube Basin countries and the European Commission. The ICPDR congratulates Mr. Künzelmann for this award in recognition of his exceptional work, thanks the JDS3 crew for their support for this project, and is very happy to have contributed to this success.

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



this essay: plants, dead fish, plastic buckets and Wellington boots are equally convincing ingredients of research as the sophisticated laboratory on board for analysing samples,” said the judges of the competition. “The composition of the photos invites the observer to learn more about the river expedition.”

**Constant pressure not to miss the right moment.** “I am delighted about this award, especially as this essay was a particular logistic challenge,” says Mr Künzelmann, a meteorologist by training who has spe-





© Ecological Movement of Moldova

*The winning artwork for the International Danube Art Master 2014 is entitled Friends of the Water and was created from material found on a river bank by Elena Gorobet from Gymnasium nr.19, Elizaveta, mun. Balti, Moldova.*

## Danube Art Master continues to inspire children in the Danube Basin countries

For over ten years, the Danube Art Master competition has been bringing together children from different schools across the Danube River Basin and giving them a new way to experience nature.

The Danube Art Master is a different kind of competition; children do compete against their classmates but look inside and challenge themselves to find a way to present what water means to them and their community. It gives them time to experience the river and its ecosystems; to see the challenges and look for answers. The Danube Art Master competition asks the students to use materials found by the river to create works of art inspired by what they see along its banks. This could mean sculptures, pictures, mosaics or collages made from material such as driftwood, stones or even rubbish dumped along the river.



© Ecological Movement of Moldova

Children aged 6 to 16 are invited to create their own environmental art inspired by the Danube and its tributaries. Every spring schools, NGOs, associations and day centres in 12 Danube Basin countries – Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine – send out a call for entries. Connecting this unique competition with Danube Day celebrations provides an even bigger perspective of the Danube Art Master. The competition demonstrates how children can connect with the water, growing more and more attached to the Danube and becoming aware of the river's challenges.

The Danube Art Master competition demonstrates how children can connect with the water, growing more and more attached to the Danube and becoming aware of the river's challenges. Below, the second place winner Danube - living water by Romana Rumanová, Michaela Mikleová, Andrea Boncseková, Ivana Baňárová, Katarína Csicsaiová, Lucia Pelantová, Martina Takáčová, Erika Nguyen Duy, Diana Manyuczová and Lilian Teskal, pupils at primary school Rozmarínová in Komárno, Slovakia. Right, the award ceremony in Hungary, and below right, the third place winner, Water Footprint - or - What should I choose ... by Lili Csóti, Marcell Hajdu and Boglárka Jelinek from Kaposvári Kodály Zoltán Központi Általános Iskola in Kaposvár, Hungary.



**Looking for inspiration.** The competition is run on two levels. After first selecting winners on a national level and awarding them in their country, an independent international jury reviews all the works submitted and selects the International Danube Art Master, evaluating each work on creativity, links to the water and aesthetics.

This year 503 artworks were received, created by 1016 children from 191 schools in the Danube Basin countries. The jury was amazed by the quality of the works received, as well as the creativity and novel ideas of the participants. This year young artists to reflect upon the idea “Get active for a living Danube”, the official slogan of Danube Day 2014. Children were encouraged to visit local rivers and surrounding areas and to consider what the environment means to them. They were then asked to interpret their thoughts and inspirations through environmental art using materials they found in and around the rivers. “The Danube Art Master is a fantastic way

for young residents of the Danube River Basin to demonstrate their connection to water in a creative way,” said Ivan Zavadsky, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR. “This year it showed particularly vivid examples and I was happy to hear enthusiastic comments from members of the judging panel in the ICPDR countries.”

**Crowning the masters.** The winning artwork for the International Danube Art Master 2014 is entitled Friends of the Water and was created from material found on a river bank by Elena Gorobet from Gymnasium nr.19, Elizaveta, mun. Balti, Moldova. “Sometimes certain events reveal our real personality, the inner self,” said Gorobet, as she discussed her motivation for creating the artwork, which she contributed through the Ecological Movement of Moldova. “The idea of Friends of the Water appeared instantly because water is life! Therefore it must be protected with all its ‘friends’ and ‘members’. Through my artwork Friends of the Water, I tried to represent the undeniable splendour of the

water and of nature in general.”

The second place went to Slovakia for the artwork Danube - living water by Romana Rumanová, Michaela Mikleová, Andrea Boncseková, Ivana Baňárová, Katarína Csicsaiová, Lucia Pelantová, Martina Takáčová, Erika Nguyen Duy, Diana Manyuczová and Lilian Teskal, pupils at primary school Rozmarínová in Komárno, Slovakia. Water Footprint - or - What should I choose ... by Lili Csóti, Marcell Hajdu and Boglárka Jelinek from Kaposvári Kodály Zoltán Központi Általános Iskola in Kaposvár, Hungary won third place.

The competition was organised jointly by the ICPDR in cooperation with the Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP CEE) with support from the Green Danube Partnership with the Coca-Cola system. The national winners were awarded various prizes during Danube Day celebrations in most countries, and the International Danube Art Master received an underwater camera from the ICPDR and recognition from the entire Danube River Basin.

*Gergana Majercakova* is the Communications Officer at the Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe.

← **The Danube Art Master competition is part of the Danube Day celebrations, giving the contest an even bigger perspective. Fold out to see highlights of the 2014 Danube Day celebrations around the Danube River Basin.**

# Danube Day 2014

The 11th Danube Day was a mammoth celebration of the people and rivers of the Danube Basin. The ICPDR-led event paid tribute to 20 years of international cooperation since the signing of the 1994 Danube River Protection Convention. At events in 14 countries, thousands of people raised a smile, a cheer, a paint brush, a paddle or a tapping foot for their rivers. Around 500 government offices, businesses and NGOs organised actions – fostering a sense of Danube pride, solidarity and responsibility. The day was also a time for reflection and commemoration following catastrophic floods in 2013 and 2014.

The ICPDR would like to thank all the organisations involved in Danube Day 2014. Visit [www.danubeday.org](http://www.danubeday.org) to find out more about events and organisers.

## GERMANY 1

Promoting rivers and securing sustainable management were priorities at events in Deggendorf, Neuburg, Ingolstadt, Rottenacker and Ulm. The theme of Bavaria's State Garden Show was the sustainable river: Minister Huber presented a €135,000 smartphone 'Donau App'. While in Baden-Württemberg, a €250,000 upstream fish migration facility was opened at Rottenacker HEP Plant. © 1: Bavarian Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection

## SLOVENIA 8

Around 2000 Slovenes found creative ways to have their say in national youth competitions. In the Ministry/Coca-Cola 'You're My River' contest, they had to research energy issues and then create a song that spoke to the head and heart. The 'Art Master' title went to 5th-formers from Luče for a sculpture symbolising rivers binding us together. © 7: ICPDR

## BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 9

With widespread flooding in May, Ekotim's 'Art Master' contest brought a little cheer to families affected. Instead of a celebration, extra prizes were given to children who'd lost their homes and possessions. Entries supplied a cornucopia of animals; but it was a rubbish-collecting robot that scooped top prize! © 13: Ekotim

## AUSTRIA 2, 3

Vienna's Museumsquartier was transformed into a Danube extravaganza of theatre, science and street performance. Hosted by the Environment Ministry and City of Vienna, children got face-to-face with snakes, amphibians and fish and zoomed around games to win an eco-rally. Across Austria, camaraderie and inspiration were shared in the 'Danube Challenge' and 'Art Master' contests. © 2,3: Danube Day Austria/Matthias Hombauer

## CROATIA 4

With a reduced programme due to flooding, Kopački rit held the main event: an eco-fair, boat trips and youth dance show. Finalists in Green Osijek's 'Art Master' were treated to canoe, sculpture and drumming workshops, and a trip to the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve. © 4: Zeleni Osijek

## THE CZECH REPUBLIC 5

Environment Ministry staff waved goodbye to the 'Danube Day United' flag as it resumed its 14-year tour of the 14 basin countries, travelling next to Germany. A symbol of cross-border solidarity, the flag features 14 fish in national colours.

## HUNGARY 7

A conference on river-basin management issues was held in Budapest by the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Agriculture to raise awareness among professionals and the public. Kopaszi Dam saw games, yoga, theatre, water experiments and great music at an event run by MindSpace and Coca-Cola Hungary. City authorities along with the General Directorate of Water Management and North Transdanubian Water Directorate also brought Danube Day to Győr, where 1200 visitors took part. © 7 Csattos Pál.

## SERBIA 6

Following the devastating floods, the Republic Directorate for Water launched a flood relief campaign with billboards across Belgrade. They announced creation of seven educational Danube Eco Parks for seven cities by 2020. Festivals took place from Banoštor to Negotin including a Romanian-Serbian Bike Fest in Kladovo run by the Danube Competence Centre and local partners.

## SLOVAKIA 9

Boat trips; dance; a wandering water sprite and demonstrations of river search and rescue dogs, electric cars and sturgeon delighted crowds at a central festival in Devín. Organised by Vodohospodárska výstavba and the Environment Ministry, the programme was introduced by celebrity Roman Bomboš.

## MONTENEGRO

A riverbank clean-up in Bijelo Polje brought together residents, fishermen, environmentalists and kayakers from Montenegro and Serbia to clear rubbish from the Lim River.

# DANUBE DAY

## ROMANIA 11

From Oradea to Tulcea, over 150 organisations produced the biggest event of 2014: 110 actions in all 11 Danube regions led by Water Basin administrations, local authorities, Apele Române, Coca-Cola HBC Romania, ECCG and other NGOs. 'Let's Do it Romania!' mobilised an army of volunteers to clear banks across southern Romania; while two members of Cyclomaniac bike club cycled the 2,800 km Danube course in just 18 days! © 11: ABA Jiu

## MOLDOVA 12

Some 700 national and local government officials, NGO representatives and local people gathered for a day of festivities, tradition, science and solidarity in Giurgiulesti near Cahul. In the 'International Danube Art Master' final, the basin-wide crown went to Elena Gorobet from Elizaveta for her elegant, poignant bird sculpture.

## BULGARIA 13, 14

Actions flowed from Vidin to Silistra – in every Danube municipality and Sofia – led by councils, Danube River Basin Directorate, Environment and Water Inspectorates, WWF, CEIE and local NGOs. A 1200-strong crowd at Persina Natural Park enjoyed spectacular fire juggling and a rock concert. Vidin's bridge was a riot of white, green and red as 700 balloons were released for 'Blue Danube Week'.

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.



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# Get active!

## Calling all ICPDR stakeholders

The ICPDR is committed to supporting public participation in its decision making. Why is that? Because we are convinced that public participation leads to broader support for policies and to more efficiency in implementing measures.

The ICPDR involves stakeholders in the entire cycle of activities: from conceptualising policies, to implementing measures, to evaluating impacts. This is particularly true for the two most important work programmes of the ICPDR, the Danube River Basin Management Plan Update 2015 and the first Flood Risk Management Plan.

The ICPDR calls you, the public, to get active and contribute – via a range of public consultation measures in the coming months:

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**Express your view on the draft management plans once they are published on [icpdr.org](http://icpdr.org) (available for a period of 6 months)**  
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**Submit the two online questionnaires that will collect opinions on all major aspects of the management plans**  
**Participate in a stakeholder workshop to discuss the two management plans in detail (planned to be held in Zagreb on 2/3 July 2015)**  
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**Learn more about the management plans through information materials, including a Facebook campaign, online publications and other media**  
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Where can you find further information? All opportunities to contribute to the public consultation measures will be published and frequently updated at:

# [www.icpdr.org/ participate](http://www.icpdr.org/participate)