

**ICPDR** IKSD

International Commission  
for the Protection  
of the Danube River

Internationale Kommission  
zum Schutz der Donau

# Shared waters – joint responsibilities

## ICPDR Annual Report 2016

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**2016** represented an important milestone in the outstanding international cooperation that has characterised the 20-year history of the ICPDR. Marking the start of a new period of basin-wide effort, it will ensure the world's most international river basin is cleaner, healthier and safer.

Demonstrating the political support to work together to achieve this long-term goal, a new 'Danube Declaration' was adopted at the 2016 Ministerial Meeting in Vienna. It sets out a framework of commitment and strong ownership by the 14 contracting parties and the European Union.

This Annual Report depicts the broad spectrum of ICPDR activities during 2016, illustrating its ever-broadening remit as necessitated by the multi-functional and multi-faceted nature of the Danube river itself.

As ICPDR President, I had the privilege to lead the development process during 2016. The ICPDR demonstrated its ability to mobilize and coordinate national expertise and stakeholder involvement, as well as the broad community of observers within river basin development. It successfully embarked on updating and implementing the Danube River Basin Management Plan and the region's first Flood Risk Management Plan.

Although one year passes so quickly within the longer time span of ICPDR history, the Czech Presidency of 2016 contributed significant added value. Adopting an active approach, the goals of the Presidency were threefold: to intensify communication with and among member countries; to create, maintain and extend international partnerships; and to prioritise and address particular river basin issues.

For example, as part of the priority to implement the new basin-wide management plans, we initiated a more intensive dialogue with the agriculture sector. As part of this, cooperation with external partners such as the EU and the Food and the Agriculture Organisation (FAO) was further enhanced.

In addressing the importance of droughts as part of the long-term challenge of climate change, we shared the Czech experience of combating this emerging global phenomenon.

Furthermore, I wish to convey my appreciation for the excellent cooperation and support I experienced at all levels during my term, particularly from member countries and their governments, and last but not least by the ICPDR Secretariat.

The Danube River Basin is in a good position to reach its strategic sustainability goals for 2016–2021 via its active, open and dedicated governance. I wish the subsequent EU Presidency in 2017 all success in achieving this.



**Peter J. Kalas**

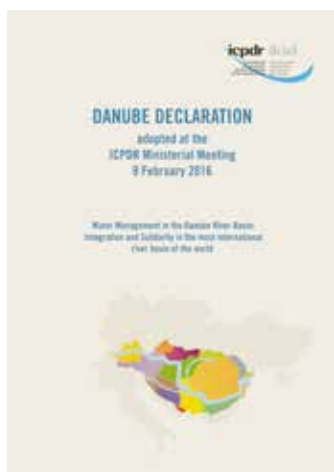
2016 ICPDR President  
Prague, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2017

# ICPDR highlights in 2016

Major advances were made towards the ICPDR's vision for cleaner, healthier and safer waters. The 2016 Danube Declaration reaffirms and substantially builds on the commitments made in the original 1994 Danube River Protection Convention.

## Among the numerous ICPDR initiatives in the Danube River Basin (DRB) in 2016, several highlights stand-out:

- The ministerial adoption of the [2016 Danube Declaration](#): providing the vision and political gravitas to steer the region towards sustainable integrated management. Extending previous objectives, it also delivered high-level commitment across all 15 countries – EU and non-EU alike. It reiterated the ICPDR as the DRB's principal coordinating mechanism for transboundary water management.
- Joint publication and ministerial endorsement of the [Danube River Basin Management \(DRBM\) Plan – Update 2015](#) and the first [Danube Flood Risk Management \(DFRM\) Plan](#). Endorsed in the *Danube Declaration*, they set out updated basin-wide priorities and measures up until 2021 – see [p8 & 12](#).
- Adoption of the 2015 [Droughts in the DRB report](#), examining the current meteorological and hydrological situation and highlighting lessons learnt and conclusions for further basin wide and national level activities – see [p8](#).
- New studies on [priority and hazardous substances](#) to deliver a basin-wide overview of *priority substances* and a review of how water quality models could assist in identifying *hazardous substance* hot-spots and pathways – see [p9](#).
- Agreement on a new country-focused approach for preparing and designing a concept for the [4<sup>th</sup> Joint Danube Survey](#) in 2019. This 6-yearly assessment provides the vital overview of the region's water resources – see [p10](#).
- Updates to the [Invasive Alien Species Guidance Paper](#) including an updated *Black List* of invasive aquatics – see [p10](#).



### Danube Declaration

Adopted at the 2016 ICPDR Ministerial Meeting, the Danube Declaration outlines the path towards a cleaner, healthier and safer Danube River by 2021.



### Public Consultation for the two plans

Both plans were developed with a range of public consultation measures.



### Drought Report

The ICPDR Droughts report summarizes the main impacts on water-related sectors and includes an overview of measures, which were taken by the individual Danube countries.

## The ICPDR also provided participation, partnership and guidance in activities throughout the DRB and across the world:

- Drafting of an [Accidental Pollution Risk in the DRB](#) report comprising updated maps, analyses and recommendations for ameliorating potential risk hot-spots – see p11.
- Developments in the [DanubeGIS](#) including publicly accessible web maps; specialist access to DRBM and DFRM layers using standardised protocols; and steps toward full integration of other key databases – see p13.
- Basinwide, an estimated 25,000 people got active on the 13<sup>th</sup> [Danube Day](#) – see p14.
- Participation in the [Danube Sturgeon Task Force](#) saw progress on key initiatives including the *STURGENE* genetic diversity project and the planned *MEASURES* project to enhance aquatic bio-corridors for migratory fish species in the DRB – see p8.
- Close [cooperation with the EU](#) is pivotal to the ICPDR's work, particularly on inter-linkages between the EU *Water Framework Directive (WFD)* and *Floods Directive (FD)*. The ICPDR and [EU Strategy for the Danube Region](#) continued to coordinate activities in 2016 – see p8–13.
- Strong partnership in the successful [DanubeSediment](#) bid for EU *Danube Transnational Programme (DTP)* funding. The ICPDR also supported several projects in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call – see p8, 12 & 15.
- Participation in the [JOINTISZA project](#), which received DTP funding to start work on further enhancing linkages between RBM and flood risk prevention at the Tisza sub-basin level – see p15.

### Ministerial Meeting 2016

High-ranking representatives of the 15 ICPDR contracting parties adopt the 2016 Danube Declaration on 9 February 2016 in Vienna.



### DanubeSediment

In [DanubeSediment](#), 14 partners from nine countries have come together to improve water and sediment management as well as the morphology of the Danube River.



### Danube Art Master

Jointly organised by the Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP CEE) and the ICPDR, the competition encourages children to have a closer look at their local rivers and reflect on what the environment means to them.

# World class expertise: the operational and institutional framework

Since its creation in 1998, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River has brought together representatives from the highest ministerial levels, technical experts and members of both civil society and the scientific community to improve the state of the Danube and its tributaries.

**The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is the largest international body of river basin management experts in Europe. Its mission is to promote and coordinate sustainable water management for the benefit of all the people of the Danube River Basin.**

## The structure of the ICPDR

In 1994, the Danube countries signed the [Danube River Protection Convention](#) and established the ICPDR in 1998. The ICPDR is made up of [15 Contracting Parties](#) (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and the European Union) who have committed themselves to implementing the Danube River Protection Convention. The ICPDR serves as a forum for coordination on water management issues in which the Contracting Parties agree on legal, administrative and technical measures to keep the Danube and its tributaries clean, healthy and safe.

The ICPDR is steered through an [Ordinary Meeting Group](#), which establishes policy and strategy, and a [Standing Working Group](#) that provides guidance and prepares decisions. Furthermore, Expert Groups, Task Groups and representatives of stakeholder groups provide the scientific and technical basis for the ICPDR's work.

[Expert Groups \(EG\)](#) are a vital part of the structure of the ICPDR. They address the requirements specified under the Convention and those related to implementation of the [EU Water Framework Directive \(WFD\)](#) and the [EU Floods Directive \(FD\)](#).

## The Expert Groups comprise:

- River Basin Management Expert Group (RBM EG)
- Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group (MA EG)
- Pressures and Measures Expert Group (PM EG)
- Flood Protection Expert Group (FP EG)
- Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group (APC EG)
- Information Management and GIS Expert Group (IMGIS EG)
- Public Participation Expert Group (PP EG)
- Strategic Expert Group (S EG; ad hoc)

## Expert Groups Chairpersons

Group name	Name	Nominated by	Organisation
RBM EG	Knut Beyer	Germany	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety
RBM EG	Marija Šimunović	European Union	European Union
MA EG	Franz Wagner	Austria	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
PM EG	Elena Tuchiu	Romania	Romanian Waters – National Administration
FP EG	Károly Gombás	Hungary	North-Transdanubian Water Management Directorate (ÉDUVIZIG)
APC EG	Yurii Nabyvanets	Ukraine	Ukrainian Research Hydrometeorological Institute
APC EG	Janez Polajnar	Slovenia	Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia
IMGIS EG	Dragana Ninković	Serbia	Institute for the Development of Water Resources - "Jaroslav Cerni"
PP EG	Susanne Brandstetter	Austria	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management – Department IV – Water
S EG	Knut Beyer	Germany	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety



**Task Groups (TG)** are established under the responsibility of the permanent expert groups and comprise delegates from existing expert bodies or additional specialists. They include professionals specifically needed for a particular task. Task groups have been formed to deal with issues concerning hydromorphology, economics, groundwater management and nutrients.

**The Task Groups comprise:**

- Hydromorphology Task Group (HYMO TG)
- Economics Task Group (ECON TG)
- Ground Water Task Group (GW TG)
- Nutrient Task Group (NU TG)

**Task Groups Chairpersons**

Group name	Name	Nominated by	Organisation
HYMO TG	Veronika Koller-Kreimel	Austria	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
ECON TG	Cristian Rusu	Romania	Romanian Waters – National Administration
GW TG	Andreas Scheidleder	Austria	Umweltbundesamt GmbH – Federal Environment Agency Austria
NU TG	Franz Überwimmer	Austria	Office of the Upper Austrian Government

**ICPDR Observers**

Water management is a community responsibility and the active involvement of stakeholders is a core principle

in the work of the ICPDR. 23 organisations have taken the opportunity to become observers to the ICPDR:

- |                                                                                    |                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Black Sea Commission (BSC)</b>                                                  | <b>Global Water Partnership (GWP/CEE)</b>                                                            |
| <b>Central Dredging Association (CEDA)</b>                                         | <b>International Association for Danube Research (IAD)</b>                                           |
| <b>Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians</b> | <b>International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD)</b> |
| <b>Danube Civil Society Forum (DCSF)</b>                                           | <b>International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO (IHP/Danube)</b>                                   |
| <b>Danube Commission (DC)</b>                                                      | <b>International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC)</b>                                             |
| <b>Danube Competence Center (DCC)</b>                                              | <b>RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands</b>                                                                 |
| <b>Danube Environmental Forum (DEF)</b>                                            | <b>Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)</b>                            |
| <b>Danube Parks</b>                                                                | <b>VGB PowerTech e.V.</b>                                                                            |
| <b>Danube Tourist Commission (Die Donau)</b>                                       | <b>viadonau</b>                                                                                      |
| <b>European Anglers Alliance (EAA)</b>                                             | <b>World Wide Fund for Nature – Danube-Carpathian Programme (WWF DCP)</b>                            |
| <b>European Barge Union (EBU)</b>                                                  |                                                                                                      |
| <b>European Water Association (EWA)</b>                                            |                                                                                                      |
| <b>Friends of Nature International (NFI)</b>                                       |                                                                                                      |



# River Basin Management: a sustainable future for the Danube

Following the 2016 publication of two principal instruments for the region's integrated basin-wide management, the River Basin Management Expert Group (RBM EG) shifted attention to updating knowledge, priorities and strategy for the next management cycle.

## 2016 saw the ministerial endorsement and publication of the Danube River Basin Management (DRBM) Plan – Update 2015, along with the first Danube Flood Risk Management Plan and 2015 Drought Report.

The [DRBM Plan – Update 2015](#) allowed evaluation of the progress made since the first Plan in 2009. This facilitated the development of 2015–2021 objectives, as outlined in the Plan and developed in line with the second cycle of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). Among the achievements highlighted were a 50% reduction in organic urban wastewater emissions since 2005; 10% and 30% declines in nitrogen and phosphorus emissions respectively; construction of 120 fish migration aids; and at least partial reconnection of 50,000 ha of wetlands and floodplains.

The [2015 Droughts in the DRB](#) report was adopted by the ICPDR. Published in 2017, it examines the meteorological and hydrological situation; its impacts and current measures; and outlines conclusions at national and Danube basin levels.

2016 saw progress on key initiatives regarding the [Danube Sturgeon Task Force](#). The *STURGENE* project to preserve genetic diversity in the Middle/Lower Danube, completed under EUSDR START, surveyed ex-situ facilities; enhanced support for conservation; and proposed next steps. The *planned MEASURES* project aims to contribute to DRB sturgeon corridors through habitat conservation. Other activities included a *LIFE Sterlet Project* on the Upper Danube and a monitoring study below the Iron Gates. High level Romanian and Serbian water and hydropower representatives met in Vienna to discuss Iron Gates fish migration. A feasibility study on technical designs, monitoring and stakeholder involvement was produced. Romania and Serbia are exploring funding opportunities for its implementation.

Plans were made to update the 2012 [ICPDR Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation](#). Germany, Austria and Serbia are the lead countries, with the University of Munich once again involved. Countries agreed to update the knowledge-base in 2017. A workshop is planned for early 2018, with a revised strategy ready for adoption in December 2018.

[Coordination with and between EU strategies and directives](#) is at the centre of much RBM EG activity. Inter-linkages between the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Floods Directive (FD) continue to shape the workload. The ICPDR and *EU Strategy for the Danube Region* continued to coordinate activities. The *JOINTISZA* Project succeeded in obtaining *Danube Transnational Programme (DTP)* funding. It aims to strengthen sub-basin cooperation between RBM planning and flood risk prevention in the Tisza River Basin.

The [Economics Task Group \(ECON TG\)](#) reassessed priorities for 2016–2018 regarding economic aspects of the EU WFD and FD.

The [Hydromorphology Task Group \(HYMO TG\)](#) made preparations for a workshop on the relationship between hydromorphological alterations and the response of biological quality elements in rivers, to be held in November 2017. A workshop on the designation of *Heavily Modified Water Bodies and Good Ecological Potential* is planned for 2019.

The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the [Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability](#) saw introduction of the concept of *Good Navigation Status* and the METEET pilot exercise for which a pool of environment and transport experts will be set up. Areas requiring technical assistance in the next period were identified.





# Pressures and Measures: assessing challenges, targeting priorities

Updating our understanding of the pressures affecting the Danube environment and the effectiveness of measures designed to alleviate them is vital to achieve long-term sustainable management.

**Eliminating untreated wastewater emissions, limiting eutrophication and reducing threats from hazardous substances are among the key basin-wide goals. To this end, updating data on pollution and modelling emissions are essential as is the integration of EU policies into national and basin-wide strategies.**

The [Pressures and Measures Expert Group \(PM EG\)](#) promotes ways to achieve the objectives set out in the Danube River Basin Management (DRBM) Plan, focusing on organic, nutrient and hazardous substance pollution. Following publication of the 2015 Update, the PM EG agreed to prioritize narrowing of the knowledge gaps on hazardous substances; enhancing the consistency of urban wastewater and industry assessments; and data harmonization processes.

Regards [hazardous substance emissions](#), work began on a preliminary study to investigate how water quality models could be used to identify emission hot-spots and transport pathways. This will be used to prepare a basin-level project on pollution sources. Discussions on how to link this with the next Joint Danube Survey recommended that monitoring of influent and effluent from wastewater treatment and industrial facilities be included. Work also began on a report examining how best to adapt the *Trans-National Monitoring Network (TNMN)* to facilitate regular monitoring and modelling of hazardous substances at representative stations.

A basin-wide overview of [priority substance](#) emissions, discharges and losses is under preparation, utilising the now substantial information collected in national inventories. Cooperation was strengthened with the EU FP7 *SOLUTIONS Project* (2013–2018), which is examining legacy, present and future emerging chemicals that pose risk to water bodies. The PM EG suggested that focusing on a group of substances of high importance would usefully facilitate DRB modelling.

To improve compliance with the EU [Urban Wastewater \(UWW\) Treatment Directive](#) and assist non-member states with infrastructure and management issues, a 2017 finance and capacity-building workshop was approved. Topics will include identifying financing priorities; mobilising funds; options for enhancing design, operation and maintenance of facilities and local management capacity building.

Towards further [data harmonization](#), final steps were taken in integrating the emissions database with *DanubeGIS*. All *UWW (Urban Wastewater)* and *PRTR (Pollutant Release & Transfer Regulations)* datasets have been uploaded and validated, with online maps available on agglomerations and PRTR sites. External experts will have access to the complete datasets.

The [Task Group on Nutrients \(NTG\)](#) worked towards elaborating a *guidance document on sustainable agriculture* to reduce nutrient emissions. Aimed at promoting the decoupling of agricultural intensification from increasing surface water emissions, it will provide decision-makers with policy tools, programmes and targeted measures for joint implementation by water and agricultural sectors. The NTG introduced the objectives at EUSDR and EC workshops on cooperation between the sectors. A preliminary study was initiated to capture base-level information on economic drivers; legal and financial mechanisms; pollution-reducing agricultural practices and development scenarios. A lead consultant was appointed and a national questionnaire drawn up.

The PM EG continued close cooperation with the [EC Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#). The NTG discussed enhancements to the *MONERIS* database (*Modelling Nutrient Emissions in River Systems*). Given the positive findings of the JRC project comparing *SWAT*, *MONERIS* and *GREEN* models in 2015, and the well-established, transparent nature of *MONERIS*, the NTG agreed its retention at the basin-level was appropriate.

# Monitoring and Assessment: quantifying problems... and progress

Ongoing water assessment is a vital part of our work: ensuring water is fit for consumption and targeting action to enhance chemical, ecological and quantitative status.

**The Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group (MA EG) is responsible for water quality assessment including the Joint Danube Survey. Its remit includes operation of the Trans-National Monitoring Network (TNMN) and Analytical Quality Control (AQC). 2016 priorities were planning the 4th Joint Danube Survey (JDS4); finalising guidance on Invasive Alien Species (IAS); addressing knowledge gaps; and TNMN revisions.**

Planning for JDS4 saw agreement on a new approach requiring a more active involvement from Contracting Parties. In a reversal of previous arrangements, national experts will undertake most of the surveying and analysis, with the Core Team acting as coordinator and advisor. This coordination, along with *Biological Quality Element* workshops, will ensure optimal coherence.

The changes enhance logistical effectiveness by focussing on gaps and increasing pan-basin technical cooperation, training, harmonisation and national-international linkage. Non-EU countries will be more involved as chemical monitoring will cover the basin. It dispenses with the ship survey, instead supporting flexible, economic sampling methods.

The *IAS Guidance Paper* was significantly updated by Serbia and Hungary. Revisions included the *IAS Danube* list of non-indigenous taxa; results of *IAS-RAP-Danube* tests (a specific *Risk Assessment Procedure* for evaluating invasiveness); and draft *Black List* of the Danube invasive aquatics.

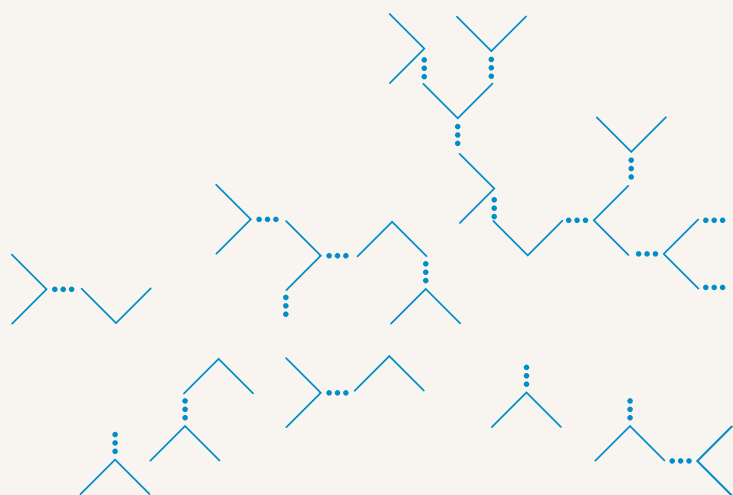
The MA EG reviewed [priority substances](#) and [specific pollutants](#) (causing failure to achieve *good chemical status* and *good ecological status* respectively). An overview report will be prepared in 2017.

Prioritising the [Danube River Basin Specific Pollutants \(DRBSPs\)](#) list was carried out within the *SOLUTIONS* framework using the *NORMAN* methodology and various criteria options. A revised list will be supplied in 2017.

The TNMN will report on [mercury in fish](#) in 3-year cycles in future. A template for data collection is being finalised. To review best practice on reducing [plastic particles pollution](#), a questionnaire was prepared. The data will be collected and evaluated in 2017.

The ICPDR published the [2014 TNMN Yearbook](#). 2015 data on Danube loads were also approved and submitted to the Black Sea Commission.

The [Groundwater Task Group \(GW TG\)](#) continued analysis of [transboundary groundwater bodies of basin-wide importance](#) and began finalising *GW Guidance* revisions. A 6-yearly TNMN data template was developed (2015 reference year) to collect the monitoring data for the second RBM planning period.



# Accident Prevention and Control: reducing risks and responding to emergencies

The rapid execution of the ICPDR Accident Emergency Warning System, along with identification and action at risk sites, and planning cross-border emergency responses, result in a cleaner, safer Danube environment.

**The work of the Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group (APC EG) comprises testing and maintaining the Accident Emergency Warning System (AEWS) and updating inventories of accident risk spots (ARS) and contaminated sites (CS). Focus in 2016 also turned to assessing and recommending improvements at tailings management facilities.**

The [AEWS test](#) for functionality and 24/7 operability took place in October and found the system was working as expected, without technical problems. Most of the 14 *Principal International Alert Centres* (PIACs) reacted within 10 minutes, and all within 18 minutes, well within the 3-hour requirement.

On [accident prevention planning](#), countries provided ARS and CS data for an *Accidental Pollution Risk in the Danube River Basin* report. To be published in 2017 once all country data

has been submitted, it will include updated maps, detailed analyses and recommendations for measures to ameliorate problems at potential risk hot-spots in each key sector.

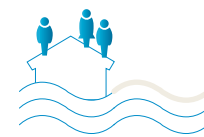
Regarding [emergency planning](#), a *Transboundary Emergency Plan for the Danube River Basin* is to be elaborated. Based on one developed for the River Oder, the rationale is to minimise both the risk and adverse impact of cross-border accidents by setting out the basin-level strategic framework and procedures in a concise report. The ICPDR produced a draft outline to be developed fully once outputs from the *Accidental Pollution Risk* report are available in summer 2017.

Progress was made towards improving safety at the large number of [tailings management facilities \(TMFs\)](#) across the Basin. Following a Ukrainian pilot project on risk assessment and mitigation and a TMF seminar, it was agreed that TMF issues should become an APC EG priority. Activities are to include a basin-wide assessment of safety conditions and recommendations, with training courses and projects in priority countries. First steps involve national discussions, to be facilitated by a country questionnaire in early 2017.





# Sustainable flood protection across the Basin



The ICPDR's Action Programme for Sustainable Flood Protection and its Danube Flood Risk Management Plan encourage movement away from defensive action against hazards in favour of proactive, sustainable and dynamic management of flood risk.



**The work of the Flood Protection Expert Group (FP EG), to understand, map and mitigate flood risk, forms the foundation for integrated basin-wide flood protection. Implementing the EU Floods Directive (FD) is central to its remit. Following publication of the first Danube Flood Risk Management (DFRM) Plan, next steps focussed on projects that contribute to its objectives and support the implementation of measures.**

The FP EG reviewed the status of [proposed FRM projects](#) listed in Annex 2 of the DFRM Plan. These projects include the [DanubeSediment](#) Project which was successful in applying for EU *Danube Transnational Programme (DTP)* funding for 2017–2019 implementation.

A number of project proposals are under preparation: The [Danube Floodplain](#) project focussing on floodplain restoration as a win-win solution for river basin management and flood risk management; the [DANICE](#) project on ice conveyance investigation and ice management and the [DAREFFORT](#) project on improving the cooperation of flood warning systems.

The development of a [Danube Hydrological Information System \(HIS\)](#) was suggested by the FP EG. It will utilise the experiences of the *Sava Hydrological Information System (SavaHIS)* developed by the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC). The ICPDR welcomed the proposal of the FP EG to develop the DanubeHIS; asked the FP EG to agree details of its concept and scope; and requested the ICPDR Secretariat, in cooperation with the FP EG and IMGIS EG, to prepare the relevant policy document for data exchange.





# GIS: mapping out a positive future for the Danube

Developing measures that address basin-wide problems relies on an accurate and current knowledge-base, and one that allows different scenarios to be modelled and evaluated.

**The Information Management and Geographical Information System Expert Group (IMGIS EG) plays a vital role in conceptualising, informing, presenting and supporting the tasks of the ICPDR. It is responsible for the development and maintenance of datasets, maps and online systems such as the ICPDR DanubeGIS website. GIS maps provide a detailed picture of the state of the basin – its utilisation and management – presenting future scenarios and pinpointing areas with optimal potential.**

Much progress was made on [integrating additional data into the DanubeGIS](#). For the PM EG, inventory datasets for *UWW* (urban wastewater) and *PRTR* (Pollutant Release and Transfer Register) were uploaded and finalised. Templates for APC EG datasets for *ARC* (Accident Risk Spots) and *CS* (Contaminated Sites) were implemented. Uploading is underway, with a report expected in spring 2017. Support was also given to the MA EG in identifying and addressing transboundary water bodies with incongruous status assessments across neighbouring countries.

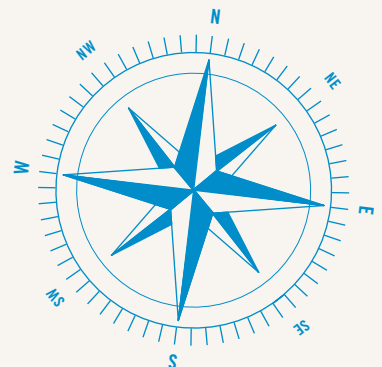
Several milestones were reached in the ongoing [development of DanubeGIS](#). A public section was launched with an easy-to-use map viewer for navigating predefined maps. The layers and maps of final datasets for the *Danube River Basin Management Plan – Update 2015* and *Danube Flood Risk Management Plan* were provided by the DanubeGIS map server. They can also be accessed via OGC-compliant *WMS* (Web Map Services) and *WFS* (Web Feature Services) protocols.

The latter enables users (after self-registration) to download many datasets. Online data request processing enables users to obtain countries' approval for access to classified datasets. A *DanubeGIS User Manual* for ICPDR experts was prepared and reviewed.

With the support of the EC *Joint Research Centre (JRC)*, the Secretariat and IMGIS EG facilitated [integration of ICPDR metadata into the JRC DRDSI](#) (*Danube Reference Data and Services Infrastructure*). This was achieved by customising GeoNetwork open-source software, that is providing an INSPIRE-compliant online metadata editor for country experts, as well as metadata discovery services for public use.

Support was given to the FP EG on the conceptualisation of a [Danube Hydrological Information System \(DanubeHIS\)](#) as an integral part of *DanubeGIS*. It will utilise the experiences of the *SavaHIS* model, where a formal data exchange agreement was accepted by national hydro-meteorological services.

The [DANUBIS](#) ICPDR Information System was re-launched with substantial improvements. Developed in-house using open-source software, it provides better accessibility to documents, calendar and contacts for ICPDR experts.



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# Promoting public participation and communicating the Danube!

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Publicizing information about the Danube River Basin and encouraging involvement is central to the activities of the ICPDR. Actions spread messages about sustainable development, environmental conservation, Danube solidarity and good practice throughout the region.

## The Public Participation Expert Group (PP EG) continued to promote ICPDR activities through an extensive range of integrated communication tools. Priorities included support for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Meeting, Danube Day and sturgeon conservation.

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Meeting, the coordinated communication activities prompted a good response in the media and stakeholder networks. Products included a brochure on the updated Danube River Basin Management Plan; launch of the *Danube Adventure Game*; a *Danube Art Master* film; social media promotions; and a ministerial press conference.

Increasing effort was devoted to [sturgeon issues](#). The *Sturgeon Communication Strategy* positioned its work within the context of the *Danube Sturgeon Task Force*, and was accompanied by a new key visual. A working group was set up to continue its development and all countries were encouraged to engage with it. The *Sturgeon 2020 programme* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) was published: *Danube Watch* news items and a full article (3/2016) were dedicated to it. An eye-catching link – an animated sturgeon – was added to the ICPDR homepage and a large beluga banner served as a backdrop for the Ministerial Meeting’s ‘family photo’.

Launch of the English and German versions of the online [Danube Adventure Game](#) were promoted via ICPDR channels and youth organisations. Other countries will report back on whether national funding for translation and promotion is an available and effective use of resources.

13 countries marked the 13<sup>th</sup> [Danube Day](#) flagship event with an estimated 25,000 people ‘getting active for the rivers’. Events ranged from clearing riversides marred by rubbish to sporting, culinary and cultural festivities. Close to 400 organisations held more than 150 events, strengthening the ideals of Danube solidarity, diversity and cooperation.

The [Danube Day 2017](#) motto – ‘Get active for a cleaner Danube’ – represents a change from the catch-all role of previous themes to a more targeted message, to be combined with related country activities. This motto is linked to the [Danube Declaration](#) and is part of a strategy to raise awareness of the Declaration. A one-page summary will be made available in national languages in 2017. The PP EG is also drafting new messages for [JDS4](#), revolved around the ‘cleaner, healthier and safer Danube’ theme and its new country-based emphasis.

Led by Global Water Partnership, [Danube Art Master](#) returns in 2017 after a year’s break. The PP EG recognised its value as a unique product responsible for engaging tens of thousands of children and maintaining relationships with a network of grass-roots NGOs.

Other decisions saw [Danube Watch](#) distribution move towards an online emphasis and the ICPDR [logo](#) modernised to provide a cleaner, more versatile image. Following an intensive study, [cruise tourism](#) opportunities will not be developed as their promotional value was deemed limited.

The PP EG discussed [corporate fund-raising partnerships](#) to support communication and outreach projects. A contractor was recruited to engage new *Business Friends of the Danube*: lists of potential sponsors and ICPDR ‘selling points’ were circulated. These will be developed into a strategy for targeting specific companies.

# Partnership and cooperation: river basin planning in the sub-basins

Forging strong, successful partnerships at the local, national and international scale makes the work of the ICPDR a model for the rest of the world.

**The ICPDR supports the development of sub-basin programmes and partnerships with neighbouring regions. Such cooperation is vital for sustainable integrated river basin management (RBM) in the Danube region. An acknowledged global leader in RBM, it has particular expertise in fostering international cooperation.**

## Sava River Basin (SRB)

Preparation of RBM strategies and management plans proceeded well in 2016 as undertaken by the International Commission for the SRB (ISRBC). The [2<sup>nd</sup> Sava River Basin Analysis](#) was completed, along with the public consultation on the interim overview of [SWMIs \(Significant Water Management Issues\)](#). The [Flood Risk Management \(FRM\) Plan](#) and [Flood Forecasting and Warning System \(FFWS\)](#) will be developed within an *Improvement of Joint Flood Management Actions in the SRB* project. Both project components are ongoing. Sava FFWS establishment was launched in July 2016, while Sava FRM Plan development was launched in March 2017. Phase 1 of the [SavaGIS](#) was implemented successfully with the ICPDR co-funded [SavaHIS \(Hydrological Information System\)](#) being developed as a component of it. Training to improve the operation of [PIACs \(Principal International Alert Centres\)](#) was also supported by the ICPDR.

Other projects involving the [ISRBC](#) included completion of *Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus Assessments in the SRB*, in the *Drina River Basin* along with a US-funded *Strengthening Public Participation and Stakeholder Involvement* project. Activities still underway included: UNESCO's *Towards Practical Guidance for Sustainable Sediment Management*, which uses SRB as a show-case; the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the US support to flood modelling activities in the Sava River basin. Several project proposals

were developed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call of the *Danube Transnational Programme (DTP)*, such as a *Water Pollution Contingency Management System* and *Wetlands Ecotourism* proposals. Other activities concerned navigation development; amendments and new protocols to the *FASRB (Framework Agreement on the SRB)* and participation in implementing the *EU Strategy for the Danube Region*.

## Tisza River Basin (TRB)

A successful [JOINTISZA](#) application was made to the DTP by 12 TRB partners including the ICPDR. This 2017–2019 project, beginning in January 2017, aims to enhance inter-connections between RBM and flood risk prevention at the sub-basin level.

## Prut River Basin (PRB)

Activity focused on new and established projects in Moldova (MD) and Ukraine (UA). EU association agreements with both countries came into force in July, whereby authorities took on a commitment to implement the EU's *Water Framework Directive*. The Prut Basin [EPIRB Project \(Environmental Protection of International River Basins\)](#), which promoted action to foster integrated RBM planning and cross-national monitoring, concluded in September. It will be followed-up by a new [EUWI+ Project \(EU Water Initiative in Eastern Europe\)](#) that supports countries to reach EU parity in water management.

## Danube Delta (DD)

The [ENVSEC DD Project](#) aims to enhance cross-border cooperation and build capacity to support preparation of a DD RBM Plan and will be finalised in 2017.

# Regular Budget and Financial Contribution

## Regular Budget for the Financial Year 2016

Three independent auditors, appointed by the Contracting Parties, audited the consolidated financial statement including the accounting records of the ICPDR for the financial year from 1 January to 31 December 2016.

The Audit Team certified that the Statement of Accounts is correct and the contents, structure and details are in accordance with ICPDR rules and regulations and accounting principles assuring transparency of financial management.

## Contributions Financial Year 2016

Contracting Party	Contribution in %	Contribution in Euro	Actual payment in Euro
Germany	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Austria	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Czech Republic	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Slovakia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Hungary	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Slovenia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Croatia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Serbia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Bulgaria	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Romania	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Moldova	1.00	11,656.81	11,656.81
Ukraine	4.50	52,455.62	52,455.62
Bosnia & Herzegovina	4.50	52,455.62	52,455.62
Montenegro	3.00	34,970.41	34,970.41
European Union	2.50	29,142.01	29,142.01
Total – Budget 2016	100.00	1,165,680.47	1,165,680.47

## Expenditure Financial Year 2016

Budget Headings	Approved Budget in Euro	Expenditure in Euro	Balance in Euro
Staff	677,965.00	677,400.41	564.59
Office Running	162,910.00	149,950.15	12,959.85
Publications	112,500.00	100,208.13	12,291.87
Travel	105,500.00	60,733.11	44,766.89
Services	106,805.47	98,912.27	7,893.20
Total	1,165,680.47	1,087,204.07	78,476.40



# Contracting Parties and Heads of Delegations

## Austria

Karl Schwaiger,  
Federal Ministry of Agriculture,  
Forestry, Environment  
and Water Management  
[www.bmlfuw.gv.at](http://www.bmlfuw.gv.at)

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

Boško Kenjić,  
Ministry of Foreign Trade  
and Economic Relations  
[www.mvteo.gov.ba](http://www.mvteo.gov.ba)

## Bulgaria

Emilia Kraeva,  
Atanaska Nikolova,  
Ministry of Environment  
and Water  
[www.moew.government.bg](http://www.moew.government.bg)

## Croatia

Ivica Plišić,  
Hrvatske vode  
[www.voda.hr](http://www.voda.hr)

Elizabeta Kos,  
Ministry of Agriculture;  
as of 16 October 2017 Ministry  
of Environment and Energy  
[www.mzoip.hr](http://www.mzoip.hr)

## Czech Republic

Josef Nistler,  
Ministry of the Environment  
[www.mzp.cz](http://www.mzp.cz)

## Germany

Heide Jekel,  
Federal Ministry for Environment,  
Nature Conservation, Building  
and Nuclear Safety  
[www.bmub.bund.de](http://www.bmub.bund.de)

## Hungary

Péter Kovács,  
Ministry of Interior  
[www.kormany.hu/hu/  
belugyminiszterium](http://www.kormany.hu/hu/belugyminiszterium)

## Moldova

Anatolie Pirlui,  
Andrian Delinschi,  
Ministry of Environment  
[www.medi.gov.md](http://www.medi.gov.md)

## Montenegro

Velizar Vojinovic,  
Ministry of Agriculture  
and Rural Development  
[www.mpr.gov.me](http://www.mpr.gov.me)

## Republic of Serbia

Natasa Milic,  
Ministry of Agriculture  
and Environmental Protection  
[www.minpolj.gov.rs](http://www.minpolj.gov.rs)

## Romania

Ionut Ciprian Iuga,  
Ministry of Environment,  
Waters and Forests  
[www.mmediu.ro](http://www.mmediu.ro)

## Slovakia

Vladimír Novák,  
Ministry of Environment  
[www.minzp.sk](http://www.minzp.sk)

## Slovenia

Mitja Bricelj,  
Ministry of the Environment  
and Spatial Planning  
[www.mop.gov.si](http://www.mop.gov.si)

## Ukraine

Mykhailo Tomakhin,  
Ganna Vronska, Mykola Kuzyo,  
Ministry of Ecology  
and Natural Resources  
[www.menr.gov.ua](http://www.menr.gov.ua)

## European Union

Pavel Misiga,  
European Commission,  
DG Environment  
[www.ec.europa.eu/environment](http://www.ec.europa.eu/environment)

Česká republika /// Slovensko /// Magyarország /// Slovenija /// Hrvatska /// Bosna i Hercegovina /// Crna Gora /// România /// България /// M





**Slovakia**

Ministry of Environment  
[www.minzp.sk](http://www.minzp.sk)

**Romania**

Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests  
[www.mmediu.ro](http://www.mmediu.ro)

**Hungary**

Ministry of Interior  
[www.kormany.hu/hu/belugyminiszterium](http://www.kormany.hu/hu/belugyminiszterium)

**Ukraine**

Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources  
[www.menr.gov.ua](http://www.menr.gov.ua)

**Moldova**

Ministry of Environment  
[www.mediu.gov.md](http://www.mediu.gov.md)

**Bulgaria**

Ministry of Environment and Water  
[www.moew.government.bg](http://www.moew.government.bg)

**Montenegro**

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development  
[www.mpr.gov.me](http://www.mpr.gov.me)

**Republic of Serbia**

Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection  
[www.minpolj.gov.rs](http://www.minpolj.gov.rs)



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## Contact

ICPDR – Permanent Secretariat  
Vienna International Centre / D0412  
P.O. Box 500 / 1400 Vienna / Austria  
T: +43 (1) 26060-5738 / F: +43 (1) 26060-5895  
icpdr@unvienna.org / www.icpdr.org

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