

Minutes of the 17th Steering Group meeting EUSDR, PA4 - To restore and maintain the quality of waters

DATE: 16 April 2019

VENUE: Water Research Institute, Bratislava, Slovak Republic

Main objectives of the meeting were:

1. To discuss the recent activities related to PA4 and give information on the planned events and projects
2. To present the information by the new Danube Strategy Point including the news about the upcoming Annual Forum 2019 in Bucharest
3. To inform the participants about the activities within EUSDR PA5, ICPDR, ISRBC and Carpathian Convention
4. To inform the participants upcoming calls for project financing – alignment of funding
5. To inform about the implementation status of projects submitted within the first and second DTP call
6. To discuss the revision of the PA4 Action Plan

The meeting was attended by the SG members of the following Danube countries: CZ, HU, AT, DE, SK, BiH, HR, RO and by the representatives of ICPDR, ISRBC, DSP, CC and GWP (the detailed list of participants is attached).

The meeting was moderated by PAC SK Assistant Ms Andrea Vranovská.

AGENDA

09:30 – 10:00 Registration

10:00 – 10:15 Welcome by PAC4 SK, PAC4 HU, NC SK

10:15 – 10:40 Information on PA4 activities, future plans and events (PA4 SK)

10:40 – 10:50 Information on PA5 “Environmental risks” activities and future plans (PA5)

10:50 – 11:10 Information on PA7 “Knowledge Society” activities and future plans (PA7)

11:10 – 11:30 Information on ICPDR activities and future plans (ICPDR secretariat)

11:30 – 11:40 Coffee break

11:40 – 12:00 Information on ISRBC activities and future plans (ISRBC)

12:00 – 12:20 Carpathian Convention activities and future plans (CC)

12:20 – 12:45 Danube Strategy Point presentation and information on 8th EUSDR Annual Forum in Bucharest (DSP)

12:45 – 13:00 Information on the alignment of funding (PA 4HU)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

14:15 – 15:00 Fitness Check of WFD (Ms Bettina Doeser, DG Enviro)

15:00 – 16:15 PA4 Action plan revision (PA4 HU+SK)

16:15 – 17:15 PA4 related projects outputs:

- DanubeSediment (short video), JoinTisza, Camaro-D, DriDanube
- Simona, Danube Floodplain, Measures and Dareffort (PA 4HU)
- adopted: DEEPWATER (PA 4 SK)
- submitted: Danube Hazard (ICPDR secretariat), WATERFOREVER (PA 4 SK)

17:15 – 17:30 Closing session (PAC4 SK, PAC4 HU)

Ms Andrea Vranovska (PA 4 SK Team) and **Mr Balazs Horvath (PAC HU)** warmly welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda of the meeting. They expressed the hope for smooth cooperation, large number of projects, rich macro-regional support, mutual cooperation between countries and stakeholders.

Ms Andrea Vranovska gave the short review on the PA 4 activities and events since the last SG meeting. She also mentioned plans for the upcoming period shortly, to the main issues as Action Plan revision and PA4 relevant projects were devoted the separate items in SG Agenda. Among others she emphasized that the workshop about cooperation with other macro-regional strategies was planned to be held on 17 April 2019 here in Bratislava back to back the 17th SG meeting; however, the workshop was postponed to the autumn period, since not all MRS representatives were available in April.

Representative of PA7 apologised her participation in the last minute because of health reasons.

Mr Balazs Horvath presented the PA 5 activities and the status of the Action Plan revision which is being faced by all priority areas at the moment. From 8 original actions they shrank the number to 6 new actions. He mentioned the following PA 5 projects: JointTisza, Camarod, Floodplain, WaterRisk project (early warning facilitation), Darrefort, Inter Flood Course project (harmonizing flood risk management methodologies), MunicipAid (interlinkages of policies, gaps and examples of implementation, and deploy pilot activities to build the recommendations into practice), Revital I (revitalisation of Solotvino to prevent further pollution of the Upper Tisza Basin), Darenet (funded by Horizon 2020 – support of flood management practitioners to deepen and broaden their research, development and innovation related collaboration). PA 5 organized EU level workshop on hydromorphology on 4-5 December 2018 in Budapest. PA 5 participated in the preparation of the Journal of Environmental Geography (scientific journal) where interesting articles about climate change adaptation are.

Mr Adam Kovacs had a presentation about the ICPDR activities. He informed about the JDS 4 official launch which will be held on 27 June 2019 in Budapest. Hungary is the current presidential country of the ICPDR and the president Mr Peter Kovacs is a very active person. Priorities of the HU presidency are the following:

- Strengthening the financial framework, sponsoring system and partnership
- Strengthening the water security
- Supporting further implementation steps of WFD and FD
- Supporting specific activities like JDS 4

Ms Edith Hoedl informed about latest publications, events and social media activities. There are the following publications available: Interim Report on JPM Implementation 2018, Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2018. ICPDR is very active in the field of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn). At the moment they are elaborating so called community feedback (guidelines) what to do in case of getting negative comments or unknown stuff.

- **EU WFD implementation** – Interim Report on JPM is ready, first draft of SWMI including sediment quantity aspects as sub-item under the HYMO SWMI will be presented in spring 2019 at ICPDR EG and TG meetings in May 2019. Climate change adaptation, water scarcity and droughts are potential candidates for new SWMIs to be discussed. Reporting templates for the DRBMP update 2021 will be finalised in spring 2019 in order to start data collection in autumn 2019 + questionnaires on EC national assessments with relevance for international level
- **Integration issues** – The Mixed Environment Transport External Expert Team (METEET) is looking for new environmental experts. ICPDR will appreciate help from PA 4 in this matter. Knowledge base on key social and economic drivers of hydropower development

in the Danube River Basin is currently being prepared and a first draft will be presented to the RBM-49 in May 2019. ICPDR Hydropower Workshop will be organized at the beginning of the year 2020. Guiding principles used on national level are available now in Bosnian, Croatian, Czech, German, Slovak, Slovenian and Ukrainian languages.

- **Sturgeon activities** – EU Grant Feasibility Study analysing options for fish migration at Iron Gate I & II started in November 2018: ICPDR coordinator, RO and RS co-beneficiaries; first Steering Committee Meeting was on 12 February 2019, Kick-Off Meeting was held from 8 to 10 April 2019 in Kladovo (Serbia). Project on Ex-situ facilities upstream Danube shall finance an ex-situ feasibility study for the upstream Danube including the identification of potential locations for ex-situ facility in Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. MEASURES project dealing with monitoring and restoring aquatic bio-corridors for migratory fish species in the DDB was kicked off on 1st October 2018 and will be implemented until May 2021. New rules and procedures were drafted for the Danube Sturgeon Task Force.
- **Waste water** – Waste Water Strategy for the DRB is being developed and will be supported within the 3rd phase of the Danube Water Programme (run by World Bank and IAWD) which could offer some financial means for waste water strategy development that will be finished by 2021 at latest. IAWD will be responsible for technical issues and the World Bank for strategy development. There is a need for identifying other co-funding institutions and co-implementers.
- **Agriculture** – ICPDR plans to finalize the Guidance Document on Sustainable Agriculture at the end of 2019. Elaboration has 2 steps – analysis of the knowledge base and guidance with recommendations. This document can be used to help the Danube countries to design new CAP Strategic Plans. ICPDR has elaborated a Position Paper on the new CAP proposal which will be discussed with Heads of Delegation and submitted to the Romanian Presidency in the upcoming time. By summer 2019 the zero draft of the Guidance Document will be ready and updated version will be submitted to HoDs. An Agricultural Workshop will be organized in Budapest on 5-6 November 2019. It is very challenging to make water and agriculture experts talk and sit together. EUSDR will be involved in the workshop preparation and the representatives of PA 4 projects (Camaro-D and Dri-Danube) should be invited there. At the workshop the Guidance Document will be discussed and it will be presented at the Ordinary Meeting at the end of the year 2019 for approval. European Commission is very active on water and agriculture, they have organized many workshops on this topic (e.g. workshop in Romania and Spain).
- **Hazardous substances** – waste water treatment plants monitoring exercise is being performed within the SOLUTIONS project, there have been 400 substances analysed and final results are still being awaited. By the end of March 2019 there will be results for 200 more substances. Assessment will also be made on how dangerous these new emerging substances are. Campaign within JDS 4 is expected based on SOLUTIONS results. JRC will also support the analyses from WWTPs effluents. In terms of the Danube Hazard project preparation, the Expression of Interest has been developed for the 3rd call of the Danube Transnational Programme. The project intends to cover the whole territory of the DRB.
- **Accident Prevention** – The Draft Risk Assessment Report is being finalized at the moment, last year there was a very critical discussion on this. It will be published in 2019 after data revision and fine tuning. Besides the technical report, two public brochures on accident prevention will be developed. Within the tailings management initiative a capacity building project will start in March 2019 to organise demonstration training events on TMF safety. Target countries of the first phase are Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. The second phase will be focused on the Sava Region. This exercise is designed for operators and authority

inspectors. Costs for all participants will be covered and about 40 people in total are expected.

- **Climate change adaptation** – ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change which will be fully taken into account in the preparation of the DRBMP and DFRMP Update 2021 has been finalized in December 2018.
- **Joint Danube Survey 4 information** – provision of comparable and reliable information on selected water quality elements. On 28 June 2019 the ceremonial event (start of JDS 4) will be organized in Budapest. Reporting will be performed by the end of 2020.

Mr Klaus Arzet, Germany, remarked that crosscutting issues of the ICPDR and PA 4 are really important for PA 4 activities in general and mainly now at the time of the Action Plan revision, since most of the ICDPR topics are located in the new PA 4 Action Plan. Mr Balazs Horvath (PAC4 HU) said that the European Commission organizes the workshop on pharmaceuticals on 13 May 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. Mr Konrad Stania, Austria, remarked that the 8th Annual Forum of the EUSDR is taking place at the same time as the Standing Working Group Meeting of the ICDPR and it is impossible to attend both meetings.

Mr Samo Groselj informed about the Sava Commission activities. He presented the cooperation between the PA4, PA5 and ISRBC based on information exchange. He mentioned the projects submitted within the 3rd call of the Danube Transnational Programme (WACOM, Danube EcoTourism) and he presented the list of external projects. Within the public participation activities he underlined the 8th Sava Youth Parliament which takes place from 31 May till 1 June 2019 held in Sotla/Sutla River Basin (SI/HR) with the central theme “let’s cooperate for water”. The content includes the following issues – how to reconcile different interests among water users and how young people would solve potential conflicts among different stakeholders at local, regional and transboundary level. ICRBC priorities are the following: preparation of the 2nd Sava RBM Plan, finalization and adoption of the 1st Sava FRM Plan, securing post-project functioning of Sava FFWS, securing a proper functioning and maintenance of the Sava GIS and Sava HIS as well as their further upgrade in line with all other objectives and areas of cooperation of the FASRB, implementing the Protocol on Flood Protection, Protocol on Sediment Management and Protocol on prevention of pollution caused by navigation, reaching an agreement on possible amendments to FASRB and final harmonization and signing of Protocol on Emergency Situations to FASRB, Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Sava River Basin, sustainable development issues (tourism...).

Mr Sandor Szalai informed about the activities of the Carpathian Convention. His presentation was comprised of climate connected issues, mountain connected issues and projects, meetings and publications. Development of a Carpathian webpage under the European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT) has been started and continuously developed. This is the European Commission initiative aiming to support Europe in adapting to climate change by providing/sharing available information on the topic. Carpathian Convention contains the Article on Climate Change. Carpathian Convention offers support to reduce the knowledge gaps in the draft version of the ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. ICPDR organized the workshop on climate change adaptation in Belgrade, Serbia on 27-28 March 2018. The Secretariat was invited to participate in the seminar on Mountain Dimension of cooperation at the EU level organized by the European Commission, especially DG Regio, on 9 November 2018 in Brussels, Belgium. The objective of the one-day workshop was to discuss on policies, projects and governance that contribute to the development of mountainous areas in the EU. The Secretariat is closely monitoring the developments related to the Macroregional Strategy for the Carpathians, which is led by the Polish Government. During the Economic Forum in Krynica, Poland, 5 September 2018, the Declaration of Intent to Create the EU Macro-Regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region was signed by Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Ukraine. The Carpathian Convention was

represented at the UNFCCC COP14 within the side event on Mountain adaptation, which gathered high level representatives of mountain regions from across the world and feature the launch of two adaptation reports including the global state of mountain adaptation. The Carpathians was represented by Poland, the Minister of the Environment. The side event called “Mountain adaptation: Vulnerable peaks and people” took place on the International Mountain Day, 11 December 2018. Euromontana is the multi-sectoral association for cooperation and development of mountain areas and cooperates with CC. Euromontana’s mission is to promote living mountains, integrated and sustainable development and quality of life in mountain areas. Carpathian Convention WG on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development had a back-to-back meeting with the Euromontana Conference. CC cooperates/participates in the Danube Transnational Projects. It is ASP in JoinTisza, it has narrow cooperation with DriDanube and participates in Transgreen and Connectgreen projects. Forum Carpathicum was organized in Eger, on 15-18 October 2019. It covered a wide range of topics related to sustainability in the Carpathians, including land cover and land-use change, renewable energy, climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation, and connections between water and forests. CC agreed with the ICPDR to prepare a common project proposal on water connected problems. At the end Mr Szalai introduced the publication “Outlook on climate change adaptation in the Carpathian Mountains” and he also presented the content of it.

Ms Mihaela Florea informed about the Danube Strategy Point activities and the 8th Annual Forum which will be held in Bucharest in June 2019. Related activities are divided into 5 work packages – Action Plan revision, evaluation and monitoring, communication, capacity building and miscellaneous. Within the AP revision, there are currently inputs from PACs being summarized. Evaluation of the EUSDR will be done via external provider based on consultations with SG Danuval, there was the public procurement performed – tender via the EUSDR website. There were 3 applications submitted and the winner was the Metis Company. In terms of monitoring, new reporting tool for PAs and SGs was developed. Communication plan was approved in February 2019. There was organized the online webinar on 5 March 2019 to improve the communication strategy. The number of followers recently considerably increased on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. “This week story” activity started with PA 4 projects and every week there is another project presented. Events can be added to EUSDR calendar anytime. There will be organized capacity building workshops for PACs, there were already identified the topics relevant for PACs. Toolkit for the non-EU countries will be developed in 2020. Miscellaneous work package includes the implementation report 2016-18. 8th EUSDR Annual Forum will be organized in Bucharest, Palace of Parliament, on 27-28 June 2019. Expected number of various participants is 600 – 800. RO presidency has launched an open call on AF8 experts. The programme of the event will contain also DTP session and macro-regional session. There will be also an exhibition “success stories of MRS cooperation across the Danube Region” and the Danube Participation Day.

Ms Bettina Doeser from DG Regio of the European Commission gave the presentation about the Water Framework Directive Fitness Check. The year 2019 was crucial in terms of water. 74% of ground water bodies achieved good water status, surface water bodies’ ecological status is problematic. Recommendations at EU level and also at national level indicated that the implementation needs to be accelerated. There is necessary to find link between identifying pressures and corresponding measures just like it is done in the Flood Directive. Climate change impact has to be reflected in the next planning period. Vienna Water Conference which was organized last September was the kick-off for the fitness check, it covered WFD, FD and all associated directives keeping water at the top of the agenda. Mr Balazs Horvath asked about the next steps in connection with pharmaceuticals and

negotiations with regard to the Multi Financial Framework. Pharmaceutical strategy concept is finished and it has number of actions (e.g. rules what to do with unused antibiotics). European Commission organizes the workshop on pharmaceuticals on 13 May 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. Ms Doeser is not directly involved in the process of the MFF, EC teams are currently in the process of studying water legislation.

Ms Mihaela Florea spoke about the EUSDR Action Plan revision. She introduced the new approved time frame. Input from PACs and NCs is expected by 26 April 2019 based on the template which was distributed among PACs. Consolidated input by DSP is expected by 14 May 2019 and its structure was explained in detail. Final endorsements are expected on 23-24 May 2019 on PAC/NC meeting in Bucharest. In June 2019 draft version of the Action Plan will be ready, in September 2019 the AP will be circulated and in October 2019 it will be published.

Mr Balazs Horvath had the presentation about the PA 4 Action Plan Revision process. He summarized up all the steps done so far. In 2018 the first draft of the Action Plan was designed and there was organized the common meeting with the ICPDR about challenges in the next 10 years which need to be solved. He spoke in detail about all considerations behind the new draft proposal including new emerging substance, pharmaceuticals, hazardous substances, climate change adaptation, and drought and water scarcity. Now there are 7 Actions compared to previous 14 and there are some difficulties to identify measurable indicators.

After the presentation a rich discussion followed. SG members found the proposal highly acceptable as a good basis for future work. AP draft was displayed on the screen and the changes were done immediately into the document on the basis of the raised comments. The output of this rich and long discussion was the following:

Draft updated Action Plan (17/4/2019)
EUSDR Priority Area 4 'Water quality'

General objective: realization of integrated river basin management measures in the Danube Region in line with the EU Water Framework Directive and with the International Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP) in order to save human health and freshwater ecosystems. Contribute to the implementation of the DRBMP and its Joint Programme of Measures based on the Memorandum of Understanding with ICPDR for the development of the Danube Region.

TARGETS

TARGET 1: Contribute to preventing and reducing water pollution from point and diffuse sources in the Danube Region, especially related to nutrients and organic pollutants, hazardous and emerging substances i.a. by enhancing waste water treatment
(link to Actions 1, 2, 3)

Indicators:

- Progress in water status related to hazardous substances in the Danube river basin
- Percentage of population connected to appropriate waste water infrastructure in the Danube river basin
- Progress in water status related to nutrients in the Danube river basin
- Progress in water status related to organic pollutants in the Danube river basin

TARGET 2: Contribute to protecting of water sources (link to Action 4)

Indicator:

- Percentage of population having access to safe drinking water supply

TARGET 3: Enhance conservation measures of Danube migratory fish species (link to Action 5)

Indicator:

- Number of measures related to conservation of Danube migratory fish species

TARGET 4: Enhance climate change adaptation measures related to water quality (link to Action 6)

Indicator:

- Number of climate change adaptation measures related to water quality

TARGET 5: Assist in elaborating / implementing sub-basin management plans, such as Sava, Tisza and Prut sub-basins as well as a Danube Delta management plan (link to Action 7)

Indicator:

- Progress in elaborating / implementing sub-basin management plans
- Number of related projects

ACTIONS

Action 1 – HAZARDOUS & EMERGING: Promote monitoring, prevention and reduction of water pollution deriving from hazardous substances and from emerging substances (EU watch list candidates as well as Danube basin specific pollutants candidates), especially microplastics-plastics, pharmaceuticals, PFOS

- Close knowledge gaps on **monitoring** of hazardous and emerging substances in surface waters, biota and sediment;
- Determine **sources and pathways** of hazardous and emerging substances emissions;
- **Quantify** water emissions and loads
- **Implement** prevention and mitigation **measures** including a more comprehensive evaluation of the **measures efficiency**
- Contribute to improving quality of **sediments**

Potential projects:

- Harmonize knowledge on hazardous water pollution, including emission pathways, coordinate prioritization of transnational measures and management strategies, improve expertise and skills in controlling and managing water pollution
 - o e.g. DanubeHazard project
- Carry out targeted monitoring campaigns in the Danube river and in its tributaries
 - o e.g. Joint Danube Survey; Joint Tisza Survey; Trimonitor project
- Raising awareness, prevention and clean-up of plastic pollution
 - o e.g. Plastic Cup
- Contribute to the EU plastics strategy e.g. microplastic monitoring in the Danube Region and its link to saving the Marine environment; impact of microplastics on ecosystems, especially on migratory fish species
- Macro-regional cooperation on hazardous substances e.g. cooperation with EUSBSR on pharmaceuticals
- Contribute to the activities related to the EU Strategic approach to pharmaceuticals

- Measuring and assessing sediment quality in surface waters in a comparable way in the Danube Region
 - o e.g. SIMONA project

Action 2 – WASTE WATER: Continue boosting major investments in building, upgrading, maintaining and rehabilitating urban wastewater treatment facilities across the Danube Basin and promote alternative collection and treatment of waste in small rural settlements, including measures to build capacity at the regional and local level for the design of such infrastructure

- Identify means to finance **infrastructure projects** especially in EU Member States joined after 2007 and non-EU countries
- Focus on investments in **maintenance and rehabilitation** of the existing infrastructure
- Enhance **knowledge** on wastewater treatment **technologies** also considering emerging substances
- Assist in strengthening **capacity** at national and local **administration** level as well as at **utility** level to improve financing, operation and technology of the wastewater infrastructure and services

Potential projects:

- Assess investment needs in waste water technologies in the EU Member States joined after 2007 and non-EU countries including needs for maintaining the new investments
- Contribute to the implementation of the EIB strategic approach on waste water investments in the Danube Region to fill the gaps
- Monitoring waste water effluents from potential hotspots to detect emerging pollutants e.g. pharmaceuticals
- Prepare e-learning material to waste water administration and utilities

Action 3 – WATER & AGRICULTURE: Promote prevention and reduction of organic pollution, promote nutrient retention, smart irrigation and water reuse, foster and develop an active process of dialogue and cooperation between authorities responsible for agriculture and environment to ensure that measures are taken to address nutrients pollution and ensure smart water use

- **Decouple** pollution and water scarcity from agricultural development
- Improve water demand management in agriculture by **smart irrigation** and **water reuse** in order to reduce water abstraction needs
- Make agro-environmental measures more **attractive**
- **Provide appropriate information** on modern technologies and tools to **improve agricultural practices**
- Close knowledge gaps on **measures efficiency**
- **Raise awareness** related to the link between agricultural practices, water and soil quality and biodiversity
- Contribute to **CAP national action plans**

Potential projects:

- Promote sustainable agricultural practices including buffer strips and sustainable use of pesticides
- Raising awareness about the importance of good water quality and soil moisture

- Support the implementation of the ICPDR guidance document on sustainable agriculture
- Promote smart irrigation and water reuse in line with the EU proposal on the minimum requirements of water reuse in agricultural irrigation
- Provide information about prevention and mitigation measures related to overexploitation

Action 4 – DRINKING WATER: Promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply

- Contribute to **resource efficiency** and encourage deliberate and **effective water consumption and a water saving culture** by the civil and industrial consumers
- Raise public awareness towards the **environmental friendly, economic, efficient and safe water uses** as well as **strengthening the environmental consciousness** of the public using social media, information materials and targeted guidance documents
- Promote water protection and pollution reduction **from the source to tap**, according to the proposed revision of the Drinking Water Directive
- Ensure safe drinking water supply via **water quality early warning and safeguard zones**

Potential projects:

- Promote managed aquifer recharge
 - o e.g. DEEPWATER project
- Focus on microbiological water quality: i.a. investigation of antimicrobial resistant micro-organisms, maybe related to surface water
- Establish basin-wide real-time monitoring in order to ensure early warning of drinking water suppliers about pollution putting in risk safeguard zones
- Raise awareness about resource efficiency, water saving culture, effective water consumption and uses

Action 5 – MIGRATORY FISH: Promote measures to enable fish migration in the Danube river basin

- Advance broad **public awareness and political commitment for the Danube sturgeons** as flagship species for the Danube River Basin and **the ecosystems and biodiversity of the Danube River Basin** as a whole
- Foster sturgeon conservation activities including **protection of habitats, restoration of fish migration routes and ex-situ conservation measures**
- Close knowledge gaps concerning **monitoring of pressures and planning of measures for fish protection in downstream migration**

Potential projects:

- Create ecological corridors for migratory fish species and initiate protection measures along the Danube and its main tributaries
 - o e.g. MEASURES project
- Link ecological status of waters to hydro-morphological measures carried out in order to restore ecological corridors for migratory fish
- Raise public and political awareness on Danube sturgeons as flagship species for the Danube River Basin
- Find solution to restore fish migration at the Iron Gates, contribute to the implementation of the full feasibility study

Action 6 – CLIMATE CHANGE: Promote measures to adapt to climate change impacts in relation to water quality

- Implement water quality measures of the **ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change**
- Promote measures to control **water abstraction and groundwater overexploitation**
- Promote the establishment and maintenance of **green infrastructure** and **natural water retention measures** (NWRMs)
- Promote water related measures in **urban planning**
- Raise awareness about the importance of **soil moisture** and **soil water retention capacity** in soil fertility under changing climate conditions

Potential projects:

- Assess water quality elements of national climate change strategies towards transnational solutions
- Assess national water balance calculation methodologies towards a transnational methodology including ecological flow
- Assess methodologies of prioritization of water uses and their usability under different climate change scenarios
- Promote natural water retention measures (NWRMs) in urban areas, agriculture, hydro-morphology and forestry to improve water quality, e.g. via wetland reconnection, re-meandering and restoring the ecological functionalities
- Promote managed aquifer recharge
 - o e.g. DEEPWATER project

Action 7 – TOOLS: Enhance cooperation, increase and exchange knowledge and secure financing to water quality measures in the Danube Region

- Ensure **active involvement of and dialogue with all stakeholders**
 - o with national and regional, urban and rural decision makers, public authorities;
 - o with sectors (agriculture, industry, mining, hydropower, navigation etc.);
 - o with the general public including awareness raising and education
- Strengthen **territorial cooperation at different levels**
 - o at EU level and with non-EU countries taking into account the regional differences;
 - o with other macro-regional strategies;
 - o at EUSDR level with other PAs, especially with PA 1a on inland navigation, PA 5 on environmental risks, PA 6 on biodiversity and PA7 on education;
 - o at Danube level with ICPDR based on the MoU by contributing to the implementation of DRBMP and its JPM;
 - o at sub-basin level considering Danube tributaries (e.g. Sava, Prut, Tisza);
 - o at river section level (upstream, middle, downstream, Danube Delta);
 - o at Operational Programme level;
 - o at trans-boundary project level with targeted result collection, capitalization, enhancing synergies;
 - o including surface and groundwater as well as Marine coastal zones (impacts on Black Sea)

- with other international commissions and organization related to water protection, e.g. Global Water Partnership (Memorandum of Understanding) and Carpathian Convention (MoU)
- Continue to support ICPDR in **further developing water information systems** in the Danube region
- Strengthen and facilitate **exchange of good practice in integrated water management** implementation in the Danube Basin among decision-makers at all levels and all sectors
- **Identify transboundary funds**, which could finance and invest in measures outlined in the joint programme of measures
- Collect information **related to water related financing needs**

Potential projects:

- Organize stakeholder workshops to bring together the relevant stakeholder communities
- Establish information exchange and common activities and platform with water experts of other macro-regional strategies
- Assist in elaborating / implementing sub-basin management plans, such as Sava, Tisza and Prut sub-basins as well as a Danube Delta management plan
 - e.g. follow-up of JOINTISZA project
 - e.g. Sava RBMP update
 - e.g. ICZM at the Danube Delta
- Organizing capitalization of the results of different water quality related international projects
- Raise general awareness and promote IWRM approach in the population of the Region

The EUSDR PA4 Action Plan contributes to the implementation of the following initiatives at Danube, EU and international level:

- EU water legislation: Water Framework Directive, Priority Substances Directive, Groundwater Directive, Drinking Water Directive and its revision, Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
- EU Resource efficiency roadmap
- EU Biodiversity Strategy
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- EU Plastics Strategy
- EU Circular Economy Strategy
- EU Sturgeon 2020 Strategy
- Paris Agreement on Climate Change
- EU and Danube Climate Change Adaptation Strategies of the EU and ICPDR
- EU Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals
- EU Common Agricultural Policy

SB members will send the final comments by 18 April 2019, then Mr Horvath Balazs will put the finalized draft into the template provided by the DSP and send it to them on 26 April 2019.

Ms. Jana Pangracova (GWP CEE) gave the presentation about the current status of the project DriDanube main outputs. She introduced the web page of the project www.droughtwatch.eu, there is the video tutorial how to use the whole product.

The short video about the Danube Sediments project was played.

Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis Kupper informed that due to time press the presentation on available funding possibilities for new project ideas will be uploaded to PA4 website.

Ms Diana Heilmann gave the information about the JoinTisza project. The final conference will be held on 30 May 2019.

Ms Andrea Vranovska informed about the PA 4 projects Waterforever (unfortunately not chosen for financing) and Deepwater (Central Europe Programme) which is currently in the contracting phase and the kick off meeting will be held in June 2019.

Due to time pressure all presentations could not be heard at the meeting, however, they were uploaded to the PA4 website, so all participants could access every item.

Miscellaneous

Next SG meeting will be held in Budapest in autumn 2019, the most probably back to back MRS workshop which was postponed to autumn this year.

Farewell

In the closing session **Mr Balázs Horvath** and **Ms Andrea Vranovska** thanked the participants for active involvement in the SG meeting and appreciated the engagement of all stakeholders in relation to the new PA4 Action Plan. It was also mentioned that all presentations of the SG will be uploaded to the PA4 website, so all participants could access every item.

The minutes were written by Ms Alena Kurecová (PAC SK Assistant).

