

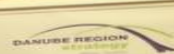


# **EUSDR Priority Area 4: Results of the macro- regional conference Budapest**

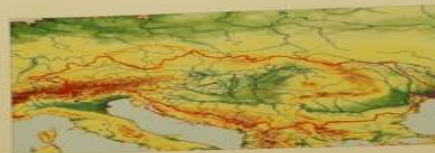
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TRANSBOUNDARY  
WATER ISSUES  
IN A  
MACRO-REGIONAL CONTEXT:  
THE DANUBE BASIN



JOINT  
STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE  
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PILLAR  
„PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT”  
OF THE  
EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION

**11-12. SEPTEMBER 2013. BUDAPEST**



HUNGARY HEGÓ.POL



SZÉCHENYI TERV

# The „scene”



## **Facts of the conference:**

- ✓ 300 participants
- ✓ High level discussions:
- ✓ Ministers and state secretaries:
- ✓ Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bavaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Commission;
- ✓ ICPDR President and Ex. Secretary together
- ✓ Participants were coming from Slovakia, Austria, Ukraine, Moldova, Germany, Croatia, Bosnia, Italy and Hungary.

The representatives of **major international, regional and local water and environmental organisations** were also present, such as the UNECE, the European Commission, the ICPDR, the IDM, the REC, the Sava Commission, the ASEM, the Slovak Water Research Institute (VUVH) and the JRC.

Representatives of **many scientific institutions** as well as environmental and water consultants and experts also participated at the event.



# **The EUSDR provides a comprehensive cooperation platform for macro-regions**

*“Innovation, new models and new strategies, as well as methods to improve the knowledge base and incorporate the contribution of science and innovation to the Strategy”*

the aim of the conference was to provide an *overview about scientific results and innovative methods* which are essential to the implementation of the water-related goals of the EU Strategy for the Danube Macro-region.

Balázs Medgyesy, Opening speech



## **Our Danube Region Strategy has lead us to wider frameworks of cooperation**

*“This strategic cooperation conveys the message of Central European solidarity”*

HE Enikő Győri, Minister of State from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs mentioned that *transboundary cooperation is necessary for the preservation and sustainable exploitation of water*. She recalled that Hungary's rivers and catchment areas extend beyond the borders of our country, so we *need to develop close cooperation with our neighbouring countries* in order to cope with the environmental hardships like flooding or drought, and also to find sustainable ways of water management.

## **Member States must take the Danube Strategy into account as they plan the next generation of programmes under regional policy for 2014-2020**

*“Smart and sustainable growth for the Region is to be ensured, joint monitoring of water quality, development of common databases and common river modelling systems and other coordinated measures are needed for effective, sustainable and joint policy making”*

Mr. Normund Popens, the deputy Director General of the Directorate General Regional & Urban Policy, European Commission pointed that the Danube Strategy is demonstrating that *by working together, we can have a far greater impact* than if we try to tackle problems in isolation and mentioned that when dealing with water management, *the macro-regional approach is self-explanatory*, since water does not recognise borders and its management requires strong coordination and cooperation across the countries.

## **Strong added value of the Danube Strategy: joint responses to common challenges**

*“Enhanced water cooperation across borders is indispensable”*

Ms. Marianne Wenning, the Director from the European Commission, Directorate General Environment welcomed the conference and noted that water is a precondition for human, animal and plant life as well as an indispensable resource for the economy and stressed that *the demand for water is continuously growing in the world*. She mentioned that on present trends about 40 % of global water supply is likely not be met by 2030 and that 47% of the EU water will fail to achieve good status by 2015. She called *to step up our action at all levels*.

## **Commitment of the Danube basin cooperation: need for more inter- sectoral cooperation**

*“If you want to walk fast, walk alone, but if you want to walk further, walk together”*

HE Ermina Salkičević- Dizdarević, Deputy Minister Bosnia and Herzegovina, President International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River noted that the ecosystems of the Danube River Basin are highly valuable in environmental, economic and social terms, and also noted that they are subject to increasing pressure and serious pollution from various sources and welcomed the cooperation among the Danube countries to overcome the environmental challenges.

**Water is a natural resource that cannot be supplemented with anything else**

*“It is necessary to apply sustainable methods in order to preserve the status quo and for the sake of developing water management innovations” Zoltán Illés, State secretary*

**Macro regional and inter-sectoral cooperation is crucial**

*“Sustainable land use, efficient water and land management, protection of biodiversity and flood prevention is necessary.”*

HE Vojtech Ferencz, State Secretary from the Slovak Ministry for Environment further welcomed the conference and stressed that we have to pay *attention to the conservation and sustainable use of the ecosystem*, including the management of riparian forests and the protection of the regional biodiversity.

# Stakeholders will need to approach the PACs with project ideas

Mr. Wolfgang Klug from the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Public Health noted the importance of cooperation in relation to the Danube and mentioned that Bavaria is also a Priority Area Coordinator (PAC) for the Danube Strategy, he specially emphasised that *stakeholders will need to approach the PACs with project ideas* as projects can still be financed in the upcoming financing period.

# Science and innovation is only possible with macro-regional cooperation

The former Vice-Chancellor of Austria Dr. Erhard Busek, Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), Austria started the session with a title on *Science and innovation supporting macroregional development agenda* and he mentioned that throughout history the benefits that this biggest artery of Europe has offered with its waters have been equally numerous as they are today.

## **Importance of coordinated international warning systems**

Mr. Ivan Zavadsky, the new Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River presented a topic on the *Danube basin cooperation* and referred to the Danube River Protection Convention (1994, Sofia) highlighting the cooperation mechanisms of the ICPDR with 15 contracting parties

## **Water challenges in Europe and in Asia are similar**

Mr. Peng Qinghui, the Assistant to Secretary General, ASEM Water Resources Research and Development Center, China presented a topic on *the ASEM cooperation mechanisms* and highlighted that the water challenges in Europe and in Asia are similar, such as flood, drought and pollution and that there is a similar gap between water supply and demand in both continents.

# **A constructive dialogue, identification of common interests and political willingness are necessary for development of cooperation**

Dr. Annukka Lipponen, Environmental Affairs Officer, secretariat of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) presented *on the experiences of the UNECE concerning transboundary water cooperation.*



## **There is a need for a Comprehensive Groundwater Utilization Plan for the Danube River Basin**

Dr. Marcel Szabó, the Deputy Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary referred to the issue of *Comprehensive utilization of groundwater resources of the Danube River Basin* and highlighted that *groundwater is often more essential for human welfare than surface waters*, serving as drinking water and means of food production and that *60% of the population in the DRB depends on groundwater sources*, mainly recharged by the Danube



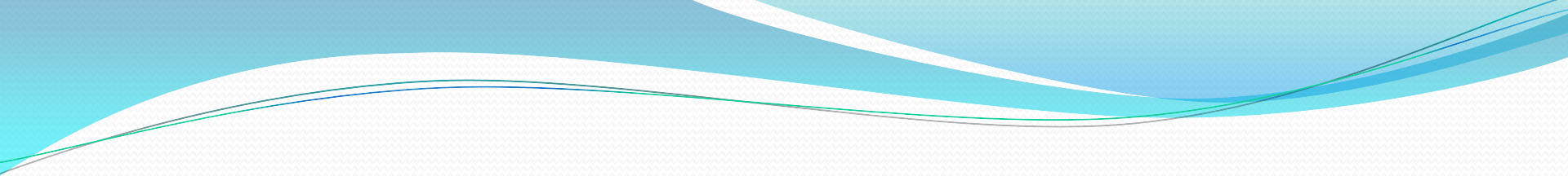
**The most successful projects are cross border/regional activities, multi stakeholder approach, framework type activities, involving stakeholders and partners**

Ms. Marta Szigeti Bonifert, the Executive Director of the Regional Environmental Centre spoke about the *Macro regional co-operation in relation to water issues: the experiences of the REC* and she highlighted the milestones of the REC operation as of 1989, noting that the most *successful projects are cross border/regional activities, multi stakeholder approach, framework type activities, involving stakeholders and partners.*



## **The Danube Strategy can significantly contribute to the implementation of the Blueprint policy options**

Ms. Marianne Wenning, the Director from the European Commission, Directorate General Environment also presented a technical topic with a title *Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources* and she stated that the Blueprint is the new strategy for the protection of Europe's water resources and also one of the priorities highlighted in the Commission Roadmap to a more Resource Efficient Europe.



*„the Danube Strategy can significantly contribute to the implementation of the Blueprint policy options, in particular through ensuring correct implementation of the EU water legislation and facilitating the prioritisation of the required investments and channeling of funds to the identified challenges”* and very much looks forward to the joint collaboration in this challenging exercise.

## **There is close connection between DG Environment policies and the EUSDR**

The final speaker for the policy session was Mr. Péter Kovács, the State Secretary of the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development, who spoke about the *Context of EU water policies and the EUSDR*. He highlighted the international cooperation in the water sector and described the structure of the EUSDR and its connection to EU Strategy 2020. Mr. Kovács called the attention to the fact that there is *close connection to DG Environment policies* as most of Pillar B Actions are covered by Directives of DG Environment and that most of the EUSDR Water Quality (PA 4) Actions refer to the Water Blueprint issues. He also pointed to the *connections of EUSDR to the activities of the ICPDR activities* and to the *activities of the JRC* as the later initiated a *‘Scientific support to the Danube Strategy’*, which main objectives are to gather scientific expertise and data. Mr. Kovács emphasised that the EUSDR can efficiently *contribute to reaching the relevant EU environmental objectives*

# Thank you for attention

The full conference presentations are available at the website:

<http://groupspaces.com/WaterQuality/pages/stakeholder>

