



**DANUBE REGION**  
**strategy**  
Water Quality



**PA<sub>4</sub> Action Plan**  
**revision**

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# Why EUSDR Action Plans revised?



- EUSDR targets revised in 2016 but Action Plan remained the one of 2010 – priorities evolve, Actions and Projects need to be updated, transformed or replaced. Action Plan is “rolling” and should be regularly reviewed in light of new, emerging needs and changing contexts
- The EUSDR implementation to be enhanced: **political commitment** and development of **joint transnational projects**
- Re-boosting the EUSDR **politically** and **involving non-EU countries** more strongly
- Emphasis on **monitoring** in order to be able to assess how well the planned objectives have been met. This requires more clearly defined indicators and targets better linked to the Action Plan
- Multiannual Financial Framework and cohesion policy legislative package **post-2020** under discussion, revision of EUSDR Action Plan should take them into account to align the priorities of the Strategy to EU policies

# Issues to be considered



## Consultation phase – PA Steering Groups and PACs

### □ **Guidance from EC (issues to be considered):**

- the needs for revision of the Action Plan through assessing the current implementation
- challenges in the next 10 years
- topics/challenges that could be addressed jointly with other PAs
- align the priorities of the EUSDR to the policy objectives included in the new cohesion policy legislative proposal for 2021 – 2027
- integrated projects with strategic impact and importance for the Danube region

# Considerations behind the new draft proposal



- Past action implementation experience
- Considering developments since 2010
- Challenges for the next 10 years: discussion in a common session of ICPDR RBM EG and EUSDR PA4 SG in October 2018
- More political: fewer number of actions, headlines related to EU (future) policies (e.g. WFD, MFF, Cohesion policy proposal)
- Consideration of new EU results: assessment of the 2nd RBMPs, strategic approach to pharmaceuticals etc.
- Covering a limited set of issues compared to the first draft
- New targets, actions and potential projects identified
- Comments received from PA4 SG during the discussion of the first draft in October 2018 and afterwards in writing

# Cohesion policy proposal – 5 policy objectives



- 1) a **Smarter Europe**, through innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support to small and medium-sized businesses;
- 2) a **Greener, carbon free Europe**, implementing the **Paris Agreement** and investing in energy transition, **renewables and the fight against climate change**;
- 3) a more **Connected Europe**, with strategic transport and digital networks;
- 4) a more **Social Europe**, delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights and supporting quality employment, **education, skills**, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare;
- 5) a **Europe closer to citizens**, by supporting **locally-led development strategies** and **sustainable urban development** across the EU.

# Cohesion policy proposal – policy objective 2)

- Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks: floods (including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures)
- Adaptation to climate change measures and prevention and management of climate related risks: others, e.g. storms and drought (including awareness raising, civil protection and disaster management systems and infrastructures)
- Provision of water for human consumption (extraction, treatment, storage and distribution infrastructure, efficiency measures, drinking water supply)
- Water management and water resource conservation (incl river basin management, specific climate change adaptation measures, reuse, leakage reduction)
- Waste water collection and treatment
- Commercial, industrial or hazardous waste management
- Promoting the use of recycled materials as raw materials
- Rehabilitation of industrial sites and contaminated land
- Nature and biodiversity protection, green infrastructure

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# 1 Organic pollution

- Wastewater treatment and sewer **projects** that are still to come in the Danube River Basin are numerous
- In the old EU MS, investments needs will be shifted towards the proper **maintenance and rehabilitation** of the existing infrastructure
- In new and non-EU MS **financing** infrastructure projects, **tariff setting and affordability**, establishing proper **legal framework** and **restructuring** the utility sector are issues of high importance
- **Capacity** should be strengthened at national and local **administration** level as well as at **utility** level to improve financing, operation and technology of the wastewater infrastructure and services

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## 2 Nutrient pollution

- Efforts are needed to **enhance wastewater treatment** technologies and to better align the goals of **water and agricultural sectors**
- **Win-win strategies** and solutions should be developed and promoted accompanied with proper funding mechanisms in order to **decouple** nutrient pollution and water demand from agricultural development
- Knowledge gaps on **measure efficiency** need to be closed
- **Awareness raising** is needed related to the link between agricultural practices and biodiversity, agro-environmental measures should be made more **attractive**
- **Technical & financial support** and **appropriate information** on modern technologies and tools should be provided for farmers to improve agricultural practices



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# 3 Hazardous substances pollution

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- Further investigations are needed to **close knowledge gaps** on monitoring of hazardous substances in surface waters, determining sources and pathways of hazardous substances emissions, quantifying water emissions and loads and implementing mitigation measures
- There is a need to more comprehensively evaluate the **measure efficiency** and help the whole region implement the practices that work best
- **Capacity building** is needed to improve safety management at industrial facilities storing large amount of dangerous chemicals, particularly in the mineral processing, energy and chemical industries

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# 4 Hydromorphology

- Insufficient **harmonization between different policy areas e.g. agriculture and water protection**; sometimes contradictory requirements for different financial aids and subsidies
- There is still a significant lack of sound scientific and technical information regarding the **planning of measures for fish protection in downstream migration**; knowledge gaps exist regarding monitoring for pressures related to downstream fish migration
- Generally gaps remain regarding the **interconnection between hydromorphological measures and ecological status** or changes/improvements in ecological status
- Insufficiently harmonised or total **lack of documentation of water abstractions**
- **Property rights disputes with land** suitable for implementation of measures

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# 5 Groundwater

- In order to achieve the WFD environmental objectives until 2027 it is necessary in addition to the ongoing measures **to encourage deliberate and effective water consumption by the civil and industrial consumers**. The most critical obstacle to achieve the good status of the water bodies in both chemical and quantitative terms is the **overexploitation of the water resources**
- Mitigation of overexploitation and of uncontrolled, inappropriate water uses with governmental tools is **less effective without involving citizens**
- The focus has to be given to **raising 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

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# 6 Monitoring

- Need to further **harmonize monitoring practices (especially for BQE)** across the Danube countries
- **Lack of analytical instruments and methods** in certain areas preventing a full assessment of the chemical and ecological status

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# 7 Sturgeon conservation

- The ICPDR recognises that Danube sturgeons are “living fossils” representing a natural heritage of the Danube River Basin and endorsed Danube sturgeons as **flagship species for the Danube River Basin to advance broad public awareness and political commitment for the Danube sturgeons and the ecosystem of the Danube River Basin** as a whole
- Need to foster sturgeon conservation activities including **protection of habitats, restoration of fish migration routes and ex-situ conservation measures**

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# 8 Financing of JPM

- Greater emphasis on **financing measures for reaching WFD objectives from EU funds** would be beneficial
- Funding instruments are **very demanding as concerns administrative processing and require difficult approval procedures**
- Gaps in **monitoring, licensing and controlling capacities**
- The main challenges to implementation lie in the speed and the acceptance of measures. When measures are implemented on public property and financed through public funds implementation can be relatively fast. When there are **private stakeholders involved and these are expected to accept restrictions** or even to contribute financially to the measures, processes can become long and drawn out, costing public administration a lot of effort without much benefit for the aquatic environment.

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# 9 Integration issues

- Need for continued close cooperation with different sectors, such as
  - **flood risk management,**
  - **inland navigation (Joint Statement meetings),**
  - **hydropower development,**
  - **agriculture and**
  - **climate change adaptation**
- through regular meetings and Workshops

## PA4 SG comments

- First draft good starting point but...
- ...Number of topics is too broad but still should be comprehensive
- ...Better start from the old action plan
- Fewer number of actions and more political actions are good
- DRBMP should explicitly be referred, alignment with ICPDR activities important
- Raising awareness and stakeholder involvement important, mainly of IWRM
- Do not separate water quality from ecosystems
- Should focus on transnational actions
- Should preferably be measurable
- ...



# Procedure



- Discussion in PA4 SG on 16 April 2019
- Written feedback expected by 18 April
- Final document delivered to EC, EUSDR RO Pres and DSP on 26 April
- Discussions at political (NC) level from May
- EC proposal in summer, finalization in autumn 2019





# What to discuss now?



- Is the proposal acceptable, good basis for future work?
- Are targets, actions, projects OK? Other proposals?
- Are indicators useful? Do you know others / better ones?



# Priority Area 4 „Water Quality” („Integrated water / river basin management”)



- Strategic objective: link integrated river basin management to the development of the Danube Region

## 1. Water quality management

- Water for human consumption
- Waste water treatment
- Water pollution prevention and reduction

## 2. Water resource conservation

- Water in the circular economy
- Climate change adaptation measures
- Water for ecosystems

## 3. Cooperation

- Active involvement of and dialogue with all stakeholders
- Territorial cooperation at different levels
- Enhanced knowledge base
- Information related to financing water needs, assistance to project generation

## 4. Other proposals



# 1. Water quality management

- Water for human consumption
  - ▣ protection and pollution reduction at source;
  - ▣ resource efficiency;
  - ▣ cost recovery;
  - ▣ safe supply via water quality early warning and safeguard zones;
  - ▣ managed aquifer recharge
  
- Waste water treatment
  - ▣ construction and maintenance: investment needs;
  - ▣ big and small settlements;
  - ▣ focus on non-EU countries;
  - ▣ strategic approach with EIB to fill the gaps;
  
- Water pollution prevention and reduction
  - ▣ monitoring and measures to prevent and reduce
    - hazardous substances pollution,
    - organic pollution,
    - nutrients pollution,
    - emerging pollutants: plastics and micro-plastics, pharmaceuticals, PFOS etc.

## 2. Water resource conservation

- Water in the circular economy
  - ▣ water demand management: smart irrigation, water balance, limit abstractions;
  - ▣ water re-use;
  - ▣ leakage reduction;
  - ▣ water saving culture
  
- Climate change adaptation measures
  - ▣ natural water retention measures (NWRMs) in urban areas, agriculture, hydro-morphology and forestry to improve water quality
    - measures wetland/floodplain reconnection,
    - re-meandering,
    - buffer strips;
  - ▣ water related urban planning
  
- Water for ecosystems
  - ▣ ecological flow,
  - ▣ river and habitat continuity with indicators and flagship species like sturgeon;
  - ▣ green infrastructure;
  - ▣ nature and biodiversity protection,
  - ▣ sediment management

# 3. Cooperation



- Active involvement of and dialogue with all stakeholders
  - with national and regional, urban and rural decision makers, public authorities;
  - with sectors (agriculture, industry, mining, hydropower, navigation etc.);
  - with the general public including awareness raising and education
  
- Territorial cooperation at different levels
  - at EU level and with non-EU countries taking into account the regional differences;
  - with other macro-regional strategies;
  - at EUSDR level with other PAs;
  - at Danube level with ICPDR based on the MoU by contributing to the implementation of DRBMP and its JPM;
  - at sub-basin level considering Danube tributaries (e.g. Sava, Prut, Tisza);
  - at river section level (upstream, middle, downstream, Danube Delta);
  - at OP level;
  - at trans-boundary project level with targeted result collection, capitalization, enhancing synergies;
  - including surface and groundwater as well as Marine coastal zones (impacts on Black Sea);
  - with other international commissions and organization related to water protection
  
- Enhanced knowledge base
  - improvement of databases and information platforms;
  - active involvement, information dissemination and best practice exchange, distribution of results;
  - use of research, development and innovation input
  
- Information related to financing water needs, assistance to project generation
  - alignment of funding and dissemination of related information
  - contribution to setting up project consortia, issuing Letters of Recommendation

## 4. Other proposals

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## The ,targets' of PA 4

1. **Achieve the management objectives** set out in the Danube River Basin Management Plan;
2. **Reduce the nutrient levels** in the Danube River to allow the recovery of the Black Sea ecosystems to conditions similar to 1960s;
3. **Elaborate a Danube Delta Analysis Report** as a step towards completion of the Delta management Plan;
4. **Elaborate, adopt and implement sub-basin management plans**, such as Sava, Tisza and Prut sub-basins
5. **Secure viable populations** of Danube sturgeon species



# PA4 actions (1-4)

- **Action 1:** “To implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan”
- **Action 2:** “To greatly strengthen cooperation at sub-basin level”
  - Project ideas: “To complete and adopt Danube Tributaries' River Basin Management Plans” and “To complete and adopt a Management Plan for the Danube Delta”
- **Action 3:** “To continue to invest in and support the information collection systems already developed by ICPDR”
  - Project ideas: “To carry out the next Joint Danube Survey by 2013 and to complete the development of the existing Danube GIS Database” and “To establish and complete the Sava GIS”
- **Action 4:** “To continue boosting major investments in building and upgrading urban wastewater treatment facilities across the Danube Basin, including measures to build capacity at the regional and local level for the design of such infrastructure”
  - Project idea: “To implement the Blue Danube cooperation project to exchange technologies, experience and personnel in the field of urban waste water treatment”

## PA4 actions (5-8)

- **Action 5:** “To establish buffer strips along the rivers to retain nutrients and to promote alternative collection and treatment of waste in small rural settlements”
- **Action 6:** “To 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 agricultural pollution”
- **Action 7:** “To legislate at the appropriate level to limit the presence of phosphates in detergents”
- **Action 8:** “To treat hazardous substances and contaminated sludge with the newest and best available technology and to develop and promote remediation measures for hazardous producing or abandoned industrial sites and waste deposits”

## PA4 actions (9-12)



- **Action 9:** “To assure the proper control and progressive substitution of substances that are considered problematic for Danube Region”
  
- **Action 10:** “To reduce existing water continuity interruption for fish migration in the Danube river basin”
  - Project ideas: “To make the feasibility study for restoring continuity at the Iron Gates”; “To carry out an assessment for restoration of the sediment balance in the Danube” and “To examine biodiversity and environmental status of sediment, water and biota in the Sava River Basin”
  
- **Action 11:** “To promote measures to limit water abstraction”
  
- **Action 12:** “To strengthen general awareness and facilitate exchange of good practice in integrated water management issues in the Danube Basin among decision-makers at all levels and among the population of the Region”



## PA4 actions (13-14)

- Action 13: “To promote measures aimed at reducing knowledge deficits, developing and transferring tools, methods and guidelines concerning the safeguarding of drinking water supply”
- Action 14: “To further strengthen Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) practices on the Western shores of the Black Sea”

