

## **Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> Steering Group meeting EUSDR, PA4 - To restore and maintain the quality of waters**

**DATE: 24-25 October 2018**

**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 about the new Danube Strategy Point
3. To present the information about the latest Annual Forum 2018 in Sofia
4. To inform the participants about the activities within ICPDR and ISRBC
5. To inform the participants about DTP capitalization strategy and upcoming calls for project financing – alignment of funding
6. To inform about the implementation status of projects submitted within the first and second DTP call
7. 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, BG, RO and by the representatives of ICPDR, ISRBC, DSP and GWP (the detailed list of participants is attached). HR was present only at the joint session of PA 4 and ICPDR.

The meeting took place at the invitation of the PAC SK Mr. Vladimír Novák and was moderated by PAC SK Assistant Ms Andrea Vranovská.

## AGENDA

### 24 October 2018, Water Research Institute

- 12:00 – 13:30 Common session with ICPDR RBM EG  
PA4 Action plan revision (Balázs Horváth)  
Gaps, Remaining Challenges and Future Tasks until 2027 in order to provide input to the EUSDR PA4 Action Plan revision (ICPDR Secretariat)  
Information on the financing possibilities for projects (Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper)
- 13:30 – 14:30 Lunch break
- 14:30 – 14:45 Welcome by PAC4 SK, NC SK, PAC4 HU (Vladimír Novák, Michal Blaško, Balázs Horváth)
- 14:45 – 15:00 Information on PA4 activities (including conclusions on workshop on Art. 4(7) WFD) (Andrea Vranovská)
- 15:00 – 15:20 Macro-regional strategies and water related activities (Attila Fürstand)
- 15:20 – 15:35 DanubeSediment project (Péter Bákonyi)
- 15:35 – 15:55 Information on PA7 “Knowledge Society” activities and future plans (Lubica Pitlová)
- 15:55 – 16:15 Information on ICPDR activities and future plans (ICPDR Secretariat)
- 16:15 – 16:35 Coffee break
- 16:35 – 16:55 Information on ISRBC activities and future plans (Samo Grošelj)
- 16:55 – 17:05 Information on 7th EUSDR Annual Forum in Sofia (Alena Kurecová)
- 17:05 – 18:00 Information on PA4 projects:  
- JOINTISZA (Balázs Horváth), Dri-Danube (Jana Pangrácová), CAMARO-D (Hubert Siegel)  
- adopted by DSPF – Danube Hazard (Ádám Kovács)  
- submitted: Norway Grants - WATERFOREVER, INTERREG Central Europe  
- Trimonitor; EARTH; Plastic Cup; DEEPWATER, WETLANDMONITOR;  
(Andrea Vranovská)
- 19:00 – 21:00 Dinner in Bratislava

### 25 October 2018, Water Research Institute

- 9:30 – 10:00 Information on PA4 projects:  
- adopted by DTP: Simona, Danube Floodplain, Measures, DAREFORT (PA4 HU)
- 10:00 – 10:20 Information on Danube Strategy Point (Mihaela Florea)
- 10:20 – 12:20 PA4 Action plan revision (PA4 + ICPDR proposal will be sent to SG members prior to 16SG meeting) (Balázs Horváth)
- 12:20 – 12:40 Coffee break
- 12:40 – 12:50 PA4 future plans and events (Andrea Vranovská)
- 12:50 – 13:00 Closing session, farewell (Vladimír Novák, Balázs Horváth)

### Common Session PA4 + ICPDR

This introductory session was moderated by **Mr Balazs Horvath (PAC HU)** and **Mr Knut Beyer** who is the Co-chair for the ICPDR RBM expert group.

It started with the presentation of **Mr Balazs Horvath** about the PA4 Action Plan revision. He set the scene for the discussion, explained why the PA 4 Action Plan should be revised and he also introduced the timetable of the Action Plan revision set up by EC which is really ambitious (by mid-2019). As the revision of the Action Plan requires additional analysis, the discussions started at the level of the Priority Area Steering Groups, however all EUSDR stakeholders should be involved. Therefore PA4 considered important to inform and include into the revision process ICPDR expert groups that was the reason to organise common session. ICPDR session allowed for a more general discussion and the detailed Action Plan revision was discussed and presented at the PA4 SG meeting.

The aim of the common session was to focus on and identify the gaps and challenges which might be possibly included in the upcoming Action Plan of the PA 4.

**The ICPDR Secretariat (Mr Adam Kovacs, Ms Edith Hödl and Mr Igor Liska)** had a presentation about the ICPDR input to the EU Danube Strategy revision of Action Plan based on gaps, remaining challenges and future tasks until 2027, which were derived from the discussions in the frame of the elaboration of the Interim Report on the Implementation of the Joint Program of Measures in the Danube River Basin according to Article 15 of the Water Framework Directive.:

- **Organic pollution** (i.a. necessary wastewater infrastructure projects, maintenance and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure, capacity building for administration and utilities)
- **Nutrient pollution** (i.a. enhancing waste water treatment technologies, win-win strategies (solutions) for farmers and aquatic ecosystems, closing knowledge gaps in the efficiency of measures, awareness raising, technical and financial support and appropriate information on modern technologies and tools)
- **Hazardous substances pollution** (i.a. closing the knowledge gaps, more comprehensive evaluation of measures efficiency, capacity building to improve the safety management of industrial and mining facilities)
- **Hydro-morphology** (i.a. harmonization between different policy areas, e.g. agriculture and water protection, planning the measures for fish protection in downstream migration)
- **Groundwater** (i.a. encouraging deliberate and effective water consumption by civil and industrial consumers, overexploitation of water resources – serious problem)
- **Monitoring** (i.a. harmonizing monitoring practices, lack of analytical instruments and methods which makes a big space for improvement and collaboration)
- **Sturgeon conservation** (i.a. sturgeon is a flagship species in the Danube River Basin, protection of habitats, restoration of fish migration routes and ex-situ conservation measures)
- **Joint Programme of Measures** (i.a. financing measures from EU funds to reach objectives of the Water Framework Directive, there are demanding administrative processes and difficult approval procedures, gaps in monitoring, licencing and controlling capacities)
- **Integration Issues** (i.a. close cooperation in different sectors needed – flood risk management, inland navigation, hydropower development, agriculture and climate)

change adaptation – though regular meetings and workshops)

After the presentation of the ICPDR Secretariat, there were the following suggestions/comments from the auditorium:

- To include SWMI (significant water management issues) into this cooperation, and to consider sediment and climate change adaptation as potential new SWMI (*Ms Cristina Sandu, Sturgeon Task Force*)
- To make the funding in the future more open and less bureaucratic. It is difficult to finance the Joint Programme of Measures because all available financial mechanisms do not support any investments (*Mr Samo Groselj, Sava Commission*)
- To have common water management plan and measurable deliverables (*Mr. Konrad Stania, Austria*)
- To specify how close the old structure of the Action Plan will be followed (*Ms Jane Korck, Germany*)
- To add emerging substances (*GWP*)
- To reconsider public awareness in connection with ground water protection (*GWP*)
- To address more general problems in the Action Plan (*Mr Christian Schilling, Austria*)

Draft of the Action Plan should be ready two weeks before the meeting of EUSDR National Coordinators and Priority Area Coordinators in Vienna organized by the newly formed Danube Strategy Point (6-7 December 2018), so the written comments from the countries should be sent by 15 November 2018. The ICPDR Secretariat will – based on the presentation given - a draft document (2 pages) on gaps, remaining challenges and future tasks until 2027, which will be presented to the Heads of Delegations during ICPDR Ordinary Meeting from 11-12 December 2018 in Vienna. Moreover, a short presentation of Action Plan revision status by PAC4 is planned during the meeting.

**Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper (PA 4 HU team)** had a short presentation about financing, mentioned the available and open financial mechanisms, and also reminded that the Danube Transnational Programme will soon open its third Call and she also introduced the financing brochure prepared by PA4.

The first ever joint session of ICPDR and EUSDR PA4 was welcomed. The event was fruitful and allowed for even better cooperation and synergy.

### **PA4 SG meeting – Day 1**

Priority coordinators **Mr Vladimir Novak (PAC SK)** and **Mr Balazs Horvath (PAC HU)** warmly welcomed the participants. They expressed the hope for smooth cooperation, large number of projects, rich macro-regional support, mutual cooperation between countries and stakeholders. **Mr Michal Blaško (NCP SK)** also mentioned in his speech the new Action Plan where we should go from words to actions and fully use the newly created tool Danube Strategic Point which was designed for this exercise. He assumed many challenges in front of us.

**Ms Andrea Vranovska (PA 4 SK Team)** gave the short review on the PA 4 activities and events since the last SG meeting. Among others she emphasized the organisation of the workshops - “First Macro-regional strategies” workshop on water” held on 19 April 2018 in Budapest and “New experience in implementation of Article 4.7 of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) in the Danube Region” co-organised with ICPDR which was held on 12 September 2018 in Bratislava. The workshops provided a platform to discuss experience and challenges in Danube states as well as opened the new possibilities for cooperation out of Danube region.

**Mr Atilla Fürstand (Trenecon)** had the presentation about macro-regional strategies (Danube, Alpine, Adriatic and Ionian, Baltic) and water related activities. Trenecon was

contracted by PA4 HU to prepare a study in 2018 and as a result they have elaborated the study about macro-regional strategies also based on the dialogues with the different macro-regional representatives. There have been found similarities and slight differences among individual strategies. In all four strategies there are water related issues. Common objectives are focused on mobility, environment and prosperity. Trenecon firstly studied strategies themselves and their action plans to draw the picture about the region; only water related projects were selected and analysed with the budget approximately 1 million Euro. The main idea is to develop common solutions, policy, databases and finances. Priority Area 4 is obliged according to its DTP PAC project description to perform the cooperation with macro-regions. First step in this effort was the workshop which was organized in Budapest in April 2018. The second step was this study about MRS prepared by Trenecon. In the upcoming time further cooperation with other strategies will follow. Cooperation with other regions is really fruitful since the strategies can get inspired from each other, therefore only strengths are being looked for, not weaknesses. This study will be also distributed at EU level and conclusions will be open for further cooperation.

**Mr Peter Bakonyi (TUB-BME)** introduced the current status and new results of implementation in the DANUBESEDIMENT project. He explained the steps taken towards proposing a pragmatic transnational quantitative sediment monitoring network and establishing the sediment budget for the Danube River considering the input of the most important tributaries. From the data gathered during the project implementation, the identification of reaches with surplus and deficit and river bed aggradation and degradation were considered, as well as assessed the sediment-related problems in flood risk management, hydropower generation, navigation, ecology. Based on better understanding of sediment transport and morphodynamic processes in the Danube River, the Danube Sediment Management Guidance (DSMG) and a related Sediment Manual for Stakeholders (SMS) will be developed.

**Ms Ľubica Pitlová (PAC 7)** had the presentation about the activities of the Priority Area 7 “knowledge society”. She provided information about PA7 flagship projects and about capitalisation of project results. PA 7 plays an active role in the capitalization strategy of the DTP projects. PA7, focused on education and innovations, is a horizontal priority area cooperating with many PAs. She provided an example of PA4-PA7 horizontal cooperation – project WATERFOREVER which was submitted within EEA Norway Funds. Moreover, she provided a short overview on the Horizon Europe and Horizon2020 programs for programming period 2021-2027 as an important tools for funding projects in the Danube region.

**Representatives of ICPDR** provided the information about their activities. Interim Report on the Joint Programme of Measures implementation 2018 will be ready in December 2018 for adoption at the ICPDR Ordinary Meeting. Within wastewater management they mentioned the kick-off workshop organized last year in Bucharest where identified challenges were jointly discussed and further activities were outlined for more concrete actions. In terms of agriculture they underlined the Guidance Document on sustainable agriculture. A core expert team has been established to draft the guidance document. The ICPDR will develop a position paper to be submitted to the EU Presidency. There are several workshops planned within this initiative. An EC workshop will be held in Bucharest in February 2019. In addition, an ICPDR workshop is planned to be organised in summer 2019 where the EUSDR support is expected. Another workshop for the Sava countries will be held in February 2019. The topic hazardous substances included the cooperation with the SOLUTIONS Project, the planned point source effluent monitoring campaign within the Joint Danube Survey 4 and the project development on hazardous substances emissions where a preparatory project funded by the DSPF is being implemented. Within accident prevention there were mentioned a risk

assessment report for Accident Hazard Sites that is being updated and finalised, public documents on accident prevention and control which are being elaborated, an on-going risk assessment of tailings management facilities (TMF) and a planned project offering TMF training events for inspectors and operators. Joint Danube Survey 4 is the largest river basin monitoring exercise in the world. It wants to focus on the gaps in the river basin management plans of the Danube States. There will be organized harmonization workshops and new approaches for hundreds of chemical compounds will be tested. The environmental DNA will be analysed and monitoring of micro-plastics will be performed. Water Research Institute experts will actively participate in these activities. In terms of the adaptation to climate change the Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change was updated and on 27-28 March 2018 the climate change workshop was organized in Beograd in Serbia. Final substantial comments to the strategy were discussed at the ICPDR RBM expert group meeting on 23-24 October 2018 in Bratislava. The updated strategy will be ready for the ICPDR Ordinary Meeting in December 2018 in Vienna. Sturgeon conservation includes follow-up activities to the Sturgeon Strategy which was adopted in 2017. Measures Project had a kick-off meeting on 1 October 2018 in Vienna and there was organized the Sturgeon Conference on 9-10 July 2018 also in Vienna.

**Ms. Jana Pangracova (GWP CEE)** gave the presentation about the current status of the project DriDanube. There has been the tool developed “drought watch” which is common view on drought development in real time. This tool was tested in 2018 and its use was promoted. Drought methodologies are implemented into this tool. There are 10 countries engaged within the project. There have been established many groups of reporters (farmers, fruit growers, vineyard owners) creating reporting networks about drought impacts. Reporting is voluntarily based but there is an important motivation factor, when reporters report they can use information databases free of charge. The final outcome of the project will be the DriDanube Strategy. Final Conference about the project results will take place on 7-8 May 2019. The interesting movie on project activities was screened during the session.

**Mr Samo Groselj (ISRBC)** informed about the activities, important events and meetings of the International Sava River Basin Commission in 2018. He spoke about sustainable water management, sediments issues, climate change and public participation. The great focus of Sava Commission activities relate to elaboration of Flood Risk Management Plan for the Sava River Basin and development of Flood Forecasting & Warning System (2016-2018). Moreover he informed that Hydrological model of the Sava River Basin and Hydraulic model of the Sava River are available. The data and their interpretation are accessible at Sava GIS ([www.savagis.org](http://www.savagis.org)) and Sava HIS - [www.savahis.org](http://www.savahis.org) websites.

**Mr Hubert Siegel (BMNT)** presented the current status of the project Camaro-D dealing with land use impacts on water regime. There are 14 partners and 9 associated partners in the project. The main objective of the project is to improve land use practices and the main topic is land use planning. The project has high EU relevance because there is displayed the influence of EU policies on spatial planning in relation to Water Framework Directive. The final conference will be held in Vienna hosted by the Lead Partner on 3 June 2019. One of the project added values is that it can be used for the ICPDR Guidance Document.

### **PA4 SG meeting – Day 2**

**Ms Alena Kurecova (PA 4 SK team)** informed about the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum which took place on 18-19 October 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria. It was focused on tourism and cultural heritage. During the forum, a ministerial meeting was held focusing on economic growth and territorial cohesion through investments in tourism, including financial instruments.

Next Annual Forum will be held in Bucharest on 27-28 June 2019 and it will be covering

almost all priority areas. The motto of upcoming Forum - We strengthen cohesion for common prosperity in the Danube region.

**Mr Balazs Horvath** presented the new development of the project JointTisza within which the updated version of the Tisza River Basin Management Plan is being prepared. New element in the project is the climate change consideration. There were developed 7 maps for groundwater bodies. First discussion of the Joint Programme of Measures for the Tisza River Basin was taken in Szolnok in Hungary in September 2018. There will be climate change meeting organized in Szolnok, Hungary in 27-29 November 2018 regarding climate change and shared vision planning. There was organized Pet Cup in Hungary, this year 10 tons of plastic waste was collected. The project is getting international character, since many countries participated in this event.

**Mr Adam Kovacs** informed about the project Danube Hazard. The project proposal was submitted to the DSPF in the spring 2017. The project is aimed at setting transnational consortium and preparing a large project proposal for the Danube Transnational Programme. The project staff developed two background documents and currently the fine-tuning of the proposal is ongoing and the targeted hazardous substances and pilot catchments are being selected at the moment. Main objectives of the big project will be improving the database on hazardous substances, validating emission models, conducting capacity building activities and developing a guidance document how to cope with hazardous substances. Support of PA 4 is expected in relation to this project.

**Ms Andrea Vranovska** shortly informed about the projects Deepwater, Trimonitor, EARTH, Plastic Cup and Wetlandmonitor which were submitted within the Interreg Central Europe and project Waterforever submitted within EEA Norway Grants.

**Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper** provided the information about the capitalization strategy which was originally introduced by the Danube Transnational Programme for the purpose of finding out potential synergies among projects successfully adopted in the first call and also in the second call. It is foreseen as a continual process that enables utilization of results produced by actions implemented by the projects. Benefits of capitalization include knowledge management, placement of results into context and transformation of achievements into durable values. DTP successful projects are divided into Thematic Poles and each Thematic Pole is devoted to a different field (e.g. water) and contains related projects. Leader of the thematic pole should be one Lead Partner of the projects and Priority Area Coordinators coordinate a thematic pole. Within the Thematic Pole 4 there are grouped 4 projects accepted within the first DTP call – CAMARO-D, DriDanube, JOINTISZA and DanubeSediments. The PA4 PAC is coordinating this initiative voluntarily, there is no separate budget for joint events, so the project representatives will be invited to PA 4 events (SG meetings, stakeholders' conferences, etc.) There is a capitalization effort of drought management methodologies between the projects JointTisza and DriDanube. DTP Secretariat suggested to include into this initiative also the projects which are not in the pole, and PA4 already invited other projects to SG meetings as well. The second group of projects (submitted and accepted within the second DTP call) includes the following: Simona, Floodplain, Measures and Dareffort. In the future a specific call devoted only to capitalization is expected.

**Ms Mihaela Florea (DSP Pillar Officer)** gave the information about the unit Danube Strategy Point organized recently. They function for less than a month and they were established by the separate call within the DTP in 2018. There are two main partners of the DSP project having one mission which is to support the EUSDR. Lead Partner is the City of Vienna and Project Partner is Romania. Associated partners are national coordinators only for organizing the EUSDR annual forums. Duration of the DSP project is 40 months from September 2018 till December 2021. Budget is approximately 3, 6 million Euro. Aim of the project is to encourage

cooperation, to make the strategy visible, to prove the added value of the strategy, to assure the coordination between stakeholders and funds, to provide communication and promotion by means of various leaflets and brochures, to develop capacity building towards PACs and EU states and to perform monitoring. Team offices are located in Vienna (4 people) and Bucharest (4 people) led by Mr Rudolf Schicker (DSP New Head). DSP New will actively participate in the revision of the PA Action Plan exercise. She has announced that DSP new organises the meeting of National Coordinators and Priority Area Coordinators on 6-7 December 2018 in Vienna, among other issues to discuss the status of action plan revision in priority areas.

**Mr Balazs Horvath introduced** the discussion about the PA 4 Action Plan revision. He explained why the Action Plan should be revised and that it is a rolling target. Danube Strategy is being re-boosted politically at the moment. Strategy shall be measurable and visible, therefore there shall be appropriate monitoring of the success and progress. However, political level and measureable outputs are difficult to combine. The strategy has to be duly embedded into the Multiannual Financial Framework for the upcoming period. The timeline of the Action Plan revision is really challenging and the consultation phase has already been launched. Priority Areas should start from the existing action plans and consider what challenges they can see for the next ten years. It is also important to identify problems which can be addressed jointly among individual priority areas and prepare integrated projects covering more priority areas. The progress within EUSDR was last time assessed in 2016 when targets were updated. PA 4 has 5 targets, 14 actions and 66 milestones.

The PA 4 targets are the following:

- 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*

The first target seems to be very general. Regarding the second one, there are already projects related to this topic and more involvement of stakeholders is needed. Concerning the third one, what shall we do when the Danube Delta Analysis is finished? The fourth one has already been done. Last but not least there are some projects concerning the fifth one.

New cohesion policy proposal includes 5 policy objectives:

1. Smarter Europe
2. Greener Europe (**PA 4 might be located somewhere here**)
3. More connected Europe
4. Social Europe
5. Closer Europe to citizens

He presented his own proposal/ideas for the Action Plan comprised of 3 basic issues and 1 optional (if the participants would like to add new topic):

### **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**

When we discuss every single issue in details, we can get the following picture:

- 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

Mr Balazs Horvath introduced also the procedure of the Action Plan revision. First discussions happened at the SG meeting with SG members who will send written feedback/comments before **15 November 2018** as it was agreed at the common session with ICPDR. Following the comments the next draft will be prepared by **22 November 2018** which will be shared with PA 4 SG, ICDPR and PACs – NCs at the DSP meeting in Vienna (6-7 December 2018).

He consequently opened the discussion based on the following questions:

- Need to change anything?
- Is yes, what?
- Need to be „integrated“?
- Does the proposed structure make sense?
- Are topics OK or need to be extended / reduced?
- What are the priorities?
- What actions, projects can be associated?
- Is the procedure OK?

Mr Balázs Horváth stated that so far everything is open, the aim is to reduce the number of actions. European Commission is at the moment not able to digest as many actions as 14. Actions should represent a political commitment for something including more issues, they shall be more general than specific. Therefore, the old plan should be used as a basis but the actions should be reorganized, regrouped or shortened, and new emerging ideas should be included in the new Action Plan. We should take into consideration that water quality is a very tiny part of the integrated river basin management. Therefore, maybe the name of the priority area should be changed to “water status”. In terms of terminology the link to the Water Framework Directive has to be maintained. Maybe the focus should be put on smaller rather than bigger areas of scope and on easily implemented actions rather than those difficult. Although completed actions will be deleted, the link to them has to be maintained.

ICPDR requested from EUSDR PA4, a short 5 minute presentation about the Action Plan revision status for the Ordinary Meeting in Vienna. As some actions are not realistic but very optimistic and since we do not know now how concrete the actions should be, EUSDR PA4 should not propose very concrete actions but rather general ones.

So there still remains the question, whether to stick to old or to create a new Action Plan. The fact is that already implemented actions do not have a real assessment. PA 4 should focus on transnational rather than national/local issues, however, sometimes it is not easy to distinguish between them. Focus on pollution reduction should be ranked among priorities and also cross-cutting issues and water quantity should be included in the Action Plan. Possible renaming of the priority area to “water status” or “water quality and quantity” or “integrated water management” should be discussed with Priority Areas 5 and 6, since for example sturgeon issues and floods are equally included in them. All is the matter of coordination.

During the discussion, Ms Edith Hoedl, ICPDR, informed that the document on gaps, remaining challenges and future tasks until 2027, will be presented to HoDs during the Ordinary Meeting in December 2018; the EUSDR PACs, in close coordination with EUSDR national coordinators, will be asked to take these needs on board in the revision of the EUSDR Action Plan. The ICPDR stressed that the original Action Plan should be revised and the new plan should be developed in the sense that the planned activities should address basin-wide needs, should be fully in line with the ICPDR strategic plans and projects, should provide real added value and should have measurable progress. Instead of over-ambitious concrete actions the new plan should focus on the challenges and gaps and should provide support for projects, capacity building activities and other strategic initiatives. Mr Konrad

Stania, Austria, mentioned that the PA4 actions should keep the strong link with ICPDR activities and suggested to include the comprehensive actions which are need. He stressed to integrate the water for industry and water for ecosystems to be included and opened the issue how to measure the progress of the action plan filling. Ms Jane Korck, Germany, suggested to originate from old Action Plan by regrouping/rewording original actions and to update them into current needs. She proposed to prepare the action plan in more efficient form. Mr Daniel Volek, Czech Republic, declared that they would not comment the Action Plan at this stage, but they would send their comments to the first draft. Ms Danka Thalmeinerova, GWP, mentioned to consider transnational aspects in new action plan and opened the issue on priority area's name to be clearly specified – to consider wording “integrated” would be helpful. Ms Cristina Sandu, DSTF, mentioned that there is no clear reference between WFD and Habitat Directive, and declared that sturgeon was crosscutting issue.

**Ms Andrea Vranovska** informed about future plans and events of PA4:

- NC and PAC meeting, 6-7/12/2018, Vienna – Action Plan revision
- Follow up of the first macro-regional strategies' workshop on water, middle April 2019, Budapest
- Workshop on sustainable agriculture, 2019 (joint organisation with ICPDR)
- DTP seminar on governance, preparation of the call – 15/01/2019, Bratislava
- Study on water related activities of the macro-regional strategies and future potential cooperation areas, end of 2018
- Study on pharmaceuticals in water , 2019
- Cooperation with other macro-regions (Task Force)

### Miscellaneous

**Mr Balázs Horvath** said that it is not sure yet whether the next SG meeting will be held in Bratislava or Budapest. SG members will be informed in time.

### Farewell

In the closing session **Mr Balázs Horvath** and **Mr Vladimír Novak** 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 were uploaded to the PA4 website during the meeting, so all participants could access every item.

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

