

## **Minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Steering Group meeting EUSDR, PA4 - To restore and maintain the quality of waters**

**DATE: 25-26<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

**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 Danube Strategic Project Fund, Seed Money Facility and EUSDR Strategic Projects
3. To present the information about the upcoming Annual Forum 2017 in Budapest and the Hungarian presidency within the Danube Strategy
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

The meeting was attended by the SG members or their substitutes of the following Danube countries: CZ, HU, BIH, SK, and by the representatives of ICPDR, DSP and GWP (the detailed list of participants is attached).

The meeting was chaired by PAC SK Assistant Ms Andrea Vranovská. The minutes were taken by Ms Alena Kurecová (PAC SK Assistant).

## AGENDA

### 1st day – 25 April 2017

- 12.00 – 13.00 Registration of participants, light lunch
- 13.00 – 13.30 Warm welcome of participants and introduction of new PAC4 HU  
(PAC4 Vladimír Novák, PAC4 Balázs Horváth, NCP SK Michal Blaško)
- 13.30 – 13.50 State of play in EUSDR implementation (Andrea Vranovská on behalf of EC)
- 13.50 – 14.20 State of play and future activities of DSP, information on stay of play of  
“EUSDR Strategic Projects” (Violeta Popova)
- 14.20 – 14.35 Hungarian EUSDR Presidency – information update (Balázs Horváth)
- 14.35 – 14.55 Plan of activities of ICPDR for 2017 (Adam Kovacs)
- 14.55 – 15.10 Plan of activities of Sava Commission for 2017 (Alena Kurecova on behalf of  
Sava Commission)
- 15.10 – 15.25 Information on state of play on PA4 activities and plans for 2017, current  
contract and reporting to DTP (Andrea Vranovská)
- 15.25 – 15.45 DTP Capitalization strategy and PA4 involvement (Zsuzsanna Kocsis-  
Kupper)
- 15.45 – 16.00 Coffee Break
- 16.00 – 18.00 Excursion to Čunovo water structure
- 18.00 – 21.00 Dinner - Čunovo location (bus from WRI)

### 2nd day – 26 April 2017

- 9.30 – 9.50 Information on upcoming calls for project financing (Zsuzsanna Kocsis  
Kupper)
- 9.50 – 10.10 Information on DSPF projects (Alena Kurecová)
- 10.10 – 11.30 Projects update:  
JoinTisza and Danube Sediments (Diana Heilmann)  
DriDanube (Jana Pangrácová)  
Dream (Tomáš Sokol)  
Sturgeon 2020 (Cristina Sandu)  
Microplastics (Franco Borgogno)
- 11.30 – 11.50 Coffee Break
- 11.50 – 12.35 Information on stay of play of “Seed Money Facility” (Alena Kurecová)  
Information on planned projects preparation (tour de table)
- 12.35 – 13.00 Events for 2017 - ICPDR, PA4  
Miscellaneous  
Farewell (Vladimír Novák, Balázs Horváth)
- 13.00 – 13.30 Light Lunch

## Welcome, Introduction, Agenda

Priority coordinators **Mr Vladimir Novak (PAC SK)** and **Mr Balasz 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 Horvath apologized **Mr Gabor Jenei (NCP HU)** for his absence at the meeting. **Mr Michal Blaško (NCP SK)** mentioned the meeting of National Contact Points which was organized in Budapest in February 2017 where the Annual Forums 2016 and 2017 were discussed in connection with the goals of present Presidency of Hungary in EUSDR dealing especially with energy. Next he mentioned the projects JointTisza (LP-Hungary), Danube Stream (LP-Austria), Danube Project (LP-Slovenia), and Danube Sediments (LP-Hungary) which are the proof that cooperation is really successful in the Danube Region. He expressed the hope that PA 4 team will cooperate fruitfully. Final decision about the Danube Strategy Point existence has not been made yet, however, it is expected at the next NCP meeting in June 2017.

After the welcome speeches, there was round table introduction of every participant.

## Presentation about the activities of the European Commission (DG Enviro)

**Ms Andrea Vranovska (PA 4 SK Team)** gave the presentation on behalf of Ms Marija Simunovic about the activities of the DG Enviro since she could not participate in the meeting.

## Presentation about the activities of the Danube Strategy Point

**Ms Violeta Popova (DSP)** gave the presentation about the activities of DSP, which are divided to 4+1 work packages. First work package contains general support to EUSDR till July 2017 and horizontal activities in which also other institutions cooperate. On 3-4 May 2017 there will be organized the workshop for horizontal exchange among EUSDR priority areas in Vienna. Main organizers are Priority Area 1A and 6 and DSP. This workshop is expected to provide possible synergies between 2 or more priority areas, avoid double work, share experience and best practices, give information about 2 rounds of strategic projects and advise how to improve coordination and cooperation. Second work package deals with communication, on the website there is a joint calendar displaying the events of EUSDR. Third work package deals with reporting where DSP is developing and finalizing issues regarding monitoring and reporting. Fourth work package is designed for linking the EUSDR with the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP), Seed Money Facility (SMF) and PACs contracts. DSP provides help for preparing Progress Reports to DTP. SMF priorities shall be communicated with DTP about the scope and details (deadline July 2017). Fifth work package is technical and management package dealing with final reports for the European Commission, review of technical assistance exercise, lessons learnt, summary of DSP projects and closure of their contract with the European Commission.

Next Ms Popova informed about EUSDR Strategic Projects where the 1<sup>st</sup> round happened in 2016 – 29 projects were received from 3 priority areas (1A, 9, and 10). Most projects were mature investment projects, more than 80% of projects were with approved funding, and only 2 projects were without funding. Projects were divided into 4 groups:

A – approved (9 projects)

B – they need a little fine tuning – better presentation of the strategy (5)

C – with future potential, very early scope (2)

D – not to be considered as strategic, cross-border, bilateral or single partner (13)

The second round of EUSDR Strategic Projects happened in 2017 and was closed on 31 March 2017. The purpose of this initiative is to harmonize and interlink the projects with already approved funding and to support the communication and visibility in line with the Embedding Exercise (DTP-EUSDR). She stressed that finding future financing possibilities was not the primary focus of EUSDR Strategic Projects initiative. It was designed for the strategy to reach one harmonised approach for all priority areas.

### **Presentation about the Hungarian EUSDR Presidency**

**Mr Balázs Horvath** introduced the events related to EUSDR Hungarian Presidency. The Hungarian Presidency will organize 6<sup>th</sup> EUSDR Annual Forum, financed together with the European Commission and in close cooperation with the Danube Transnational Programme, on 18-19 October 2017 in Budapest with a focus on energy, transportation and clean connectivity issues. As a general approach, the Presidency and the European Commission plan to prioritise the following three aspects:

- Give the possibility for successful and promising projects to promote themselves during the Forum,
- Create a stimulating networking platform where potential project partners can discuss among themselves,
- Focus on presenting ways in which neighbouring non-EU countries (Ukraine, Serbia, Moldova, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina) can better cooperate with the Strategy.

The thematic construction of the Forum will be framed by a pre2020 and post2020 approach standing on three pillars: 1) energy security, 2) infrastructure development and 3) clean connectivity.

The official website of upcoming Annual Forum will be activated soon. Annual Forum will be organized with side events. There are two official side events just before the Annual Forum. One is the General Assembly of the Danube Chamber of Commerce Association held on the 16th and 17th of October and the second is the yearly conference of the Council of the Danube Cities and Regions that is to be held on 17 and 18 of October in Budapest. The participants from both events will be invited to 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum. PA 4 can be included in the forum in terms of cooperation with non-EU countries. He assured the participants that there will certainly be the scope to present the actions of PA 4.

14 SG meeting of PA 4 will be held back to back the Annual Forum joint event with PA 5 and PA6. He mentioned also other events on 23 May 2017 Macro regional strategies beyond 2020 seminar will be held in Brussels, on 13-14 June 2017 there will be NCP-DTP meeting in Belgrade, Serbia and on 1-3 September 2017 there will be DanubePest Festival in Budapest, Hungary. NCP-PAC meeting will be held in mid-September 2017 in Budapest, Hungary.

### **Presentation about the ICPDR actions**

**Mr Adam Kovacs** informed about the ICPDR activities in 2017. European Union took the Presidency for the ICPDR in 2017. Mr Peter Gammeltoft is the new president. Mr Kovacs presented EU priorities of the ICPDR Presidency:

1. Better integration with different sectors, close cooperation between water and agricultural sector is of particular importance
2. Ensure a better use of the available EU financial instruments and the implementation needs of the ICPDR Contracting Parties, in particular non-EU States
3. Increasing the visibility of ICPDR outside water community

EC is going to organize many workshops, e.g. workshop on available funding instruments for

non-EU countries; workshop on establishing capacity building mechanism for non-EU countries. Mr Kovacs also mentioned significant water management issues, integration issues with other sectors and waste water management issues. Within waste water management the ICPDR is planning to organize workshop on financing and capacity strengthening in Bucharest in autumn 2017 (28-29 November). The outputs will be a workshop report and potentially a public brochure and the PA 4 will be involved in the preparation of this event. Regarding agriculture he mentioned the preparation of a guidance document on sustainable agriculture where the goal is to find win-win solutions in both spheres – environment and agriculture. This paper will be focused politically and technically. The questionnaire for the Danube countries was prepared and distributed. Two agricultural workshops will be organized in 2018 and 2019 with the assistance of the PA 4. The goal of this agricultural initiative is to decouple nutrient pollution from development of agriculture. Knowledge base for the agriculture will be finalized in autumn 2017, so far the agricultural partners are less represented in the process, there is room for improvement regarding their attendance, the activity should be more appealing for the agricultural sector. Regarding hazardous substances there is still a massive knowledge gap when it comes to pollution. Basin wide model and monitoring is planned. Concerning the accident prevention there is a specific expert group which has been finalizing the inventories of accident risk hot spots. Technical and public reports are being prepared and a project on tailings management facilities is planned in the field of mining and industrial tailing facilities. Sturgeon related activities include the following projects: Life Sterlet Upper Danube; Measures (former Revistur) and Fish Migration on Iron Gates reservoirs. Adaptation to climate change issues were mentioned thorough the ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change which shall be updated by 2018. Sustainable hydropower development was mentioned in connection with the workshop in Vienna which was organized on 28-29 March 2017.

### **Presentation about the ISRBC actions**

**Ms Alena Kurecova** informed about the activities of the International Sava River Basin Commission in 2017 on behalf of its representative Mr Samo Groselj who could not participate in the meeting.

### **Presentation about the PA 4 activities in 2017**

**Ms Andrea Vranovska** had a presentation about state of play on PA4 activities and plans for 2017, current contract and reporting to the Danube Transnational Programme. PA 4 activities are the following:

- Elaboration of Final Reports for DSP PA4 coordination projects for period 03-11/2016 (separate for Slovakia and Hungary) – 12/2016
- Elaboration of Progress Report for the European Commission on PA4 achievements (remaining period 07-12/2016 to be harmonized with the upcoming annual reporting periods from January to December) – 01/2017
- Administration of the new contract with DTP for coordination of PA4 for the period 2017-2019 (HU – lead partner, SK – partner, ICPDR - associated partner) Regarding new PA4 project implementation (technical and financial issues, reporting, deadlines, changes, publicity and dissemination) – participation at DTP event – 24-25 January 2017, Budapest, Hungary
- Participation at DSP event for PAs – meeting on 12-13 January 2017 in Brussels - on

DSP support to PACs, reporting, DSP visions for future period, EC report on MRS, EUSDR Strategic Projects concept, Technical Assistance for PACs through DSP – need of PAs horizontal cooperation and exchange

- Organization of Trilateral Meeting – PA4 HU, ICPDR and PA4 SK – 5 April 2017 in Bratislava – planning PA4 activities for 2017, HU EUSDR Presidency information, synergy with ICPDR actions/events
- Participation at ICPDR NTG and PM meetings (21-23 March 2017, Fruska Gora, Serbia) – PA4 was provided information on nutrient pollution reduction projects in Romania and in Upper-Austria (STOBIMO), on capacity building and financing in wastewater sector, SOLUTIONS project, planned modelling activities on hazardous substances emissions, Guidance document on sustainable agriculture: rationale, objectives and concept, questionnaire on agriculture
- Participation at ICPDR ECON meeting (6-7 April 2017, Bratislava, Slovakia) – PA4 was provided information on data collection for Interim Report on the Implementation of the Joint Program of Measures (2018) and Danube River Basin Analysis Report Update (2019)

### **Presentation about the Capitalization Strategy**

**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. 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 – CAMARO-D, DriDanube, JOINTISZA and DanubeSediments. PACs will coordinate this initiative voluntarily, there is no 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.

### **Presentation about the upcoming calls for projects financing**

**Ms Zsuzsanna Kocsis-Kupper** gave the information about current financing possibilities. EUSDR is continually trying to create a fertile space and atmosphere for stakeholders through different kinds of networking. There are several useful sources e.g. TAF DRP, START, DSPF, SMF and Euro Access which is an online tool for searching. When people look for suitable financial mechanism, there is no specific heading for water, it is hidden under the environment. Water programs are the following: Horizon 2020, Interreg Europe (3<sup>rd</sup> call is opened from 1 March – 30 June 2017), Interreg Central Europe (new call September 2017), and Danube Transnational Programme (new call spring 2017). Success rate in Horizon 2020 is 14% and in Life Programme it is 10%. Life Programme has 60% co-financing rate for environmental projects, which means that 40% shall be provided from other sources (in the

case of protected species co-financing could reach 75%). The programme is focused neither on research projects, nor funding large infrastructures. New call was opened in April 2017. IPA (instrument for pre-accession assistance) is available for Pre-accession countries.

### **Presentation about the Danube Strategic Project Fund**

**Ms Alena Kurecova** presented the information about DSPF initiative operated by the Priority Area 10. This PA already supported many activities like this in the past, e.g. TAF-DRP and START- both of them were presented at PA 4 SG meetings. She offered a short history about the issue. On 15 February 2007 PACs collected all application packs and on 3 March 2017 they sent completed applications to Priority Area 10. In total 56 applications were received by PACs and 37 were approved as relevant and forwarded for pre-assessment to DSPF Advisory Board.

Maximum number of submitted applications per priority area is five. Decision of Advisory Board will choose 15 applications in mid May 2017. PA 4 submitted projects: Danube Hazard (hazardous substances), WAoDR (drinking water and waste water treatment), Cooplands (water management) and WOPTIONS (waste water collection and treatment).

### **Presentation about projects**

**A/ JoinTisza** and **Danube Sediments** were presented by **Ms Diana Heilmann** who provided update on projects implementation. She invited the participants for Hungarian Hydrological Wanderer Assembly in Mosonmagyaróvár on 5-7 July 2017. Danube Transnational Programme will organize this event for Thematic Pole 4 projects from the Capitalization Strategy.

**B/ Dri-Danube** was presented by **Ms Jana Pangracova (GWP)** who introduced the issues of drought risk in the Danube Region which become more and more important because drought and floods affect the Danube River Basin heavily. The project was approved within the 1<sup>st</sup> call of the Danube Transnational Programme. Within the Capitalization Strategy they cooperate with the project JoinTisza in a way that they join the activities they planned.

**C/ DREAM** was presented by **Mr Tomáš Sokol (Ministry of Education SR, PA7)**. The project aims are to establish joint research facilities, to enhance knowledge transfer and to develop innovative monitoring and modelling tools in the SK-AT border region. By enhancing knowledge transfer and capacity building between research bodies and universities, the project will lead to an improved cooperation and exchange of expertise between research and innovation actors using newly constructed and upgraded research infrastructures (RI). New monitoring stations as well as innovative monitoring techniques (e.g. operative boat) and modelling tools concerning hydrodynamics, sediment transport, morphodynamics, ecological parameters and remote sensing technologies in river and wetland science will lead to high quality and comparable data derived at the Danube River in the project areas. A guidance document of monitoring and modelling tools will be published and available for the target groups. **Mr Kovacs** asked about the objectives of the project. The short summary on project aims and activities was subsequently added into the presentation. **Mr Horvath** asked about the kind of vessels used within the project whether they can be used for other purposes. The

answer - it is planned just one ordinary rubber boat arranged for the purpose of measurements – not a special vessel. **Ms Kocsis-Kupper** suggested to include this project into our Pole within the Capitalization Strategy.

**D/ Sturgeon 2020** was introduced by **Ms Cristina Sandu**. This is the programme or network connecting many projects which create together a perfect mosaic of water protection since the presence of sturgeon in water means good water quality. Financing is not clear yet, every partial project will be financed through different financial mechanism (e.g. there are some proposals submitted through Horizon 2020). The programme will contribute to the synergies of the EU environmental policy and macro-regional strategies.

**E/ Microplastics** was presented by **Mr Franco Borgogno**. The team from the European Research Institute (ERI) introduced the problem of micro plastics in rivers and oceans. Huge amount of 5250 billion pieces of plastics (269 tons) are floating in oceans and most of them come from rivers. 90% of plastics are less than 5 mm and only 10% of plastics are visible. Bioaccumulation of plastics happens when fish eats plastics and then it is eaten by another fish. One of the solutions can be recycling. ERI team would like to cooperate with PA 4, DTP or other EU institutions. They would welcome to share experience, work together and provide advice not only in the Danube River Basin, classify the hot-spot areas and identify problems. They brought a simple cooperation questionnaire which was distributed among the participants and on the base of this the further development will be set. PA 4 will distribute the questionnaire among all stakeholders. **Mr Kovacs** commented this issue in a way that the ICPDR has the Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group and they started to discuss plastics recently. They elaborated a questionnaire and sent to the countries. Mr Kovacs stressed that the final solution lies in waste management and education and not in water management. There is a project proposal on macro-plastics led by Boku University Vienna submitted for funding.

#### **Presentation about the Seed Money Facility**

**Ms Alena Kurecova** presented the information about SMF tool operated by the Danube Transnational Programme. PA4 SMF priorities were set up in December 2016 in Budapest (12 PA 4 SG meeting) and sent to the DTP. The call has not been announced yet, planned in autumn 2017. On 27 September 2017 in Vienna there will be official launching conference. **Mr Kovacs** asked to synchronise the projects objectives and actions with ICPDR goals and activities. PA4 team explained that the SMF PA4 priorities were approved in cooperation with ICPDR and PA4 SG and mentioned that further wording polishing is expected from DTP regarding prioritization. The evaluation process of the projects is out of reach of PA4, it is up to DTP assessment.

#### **Tour de table – information on planned projects preparation**

**Mr Jiri Chrpa (Czech Republic)** informed that the Czech Water Research Institute and the Czech Hydro-meteorological Institute can be included in projects. At the moment he could not



specify the concrete projects for PA4 and expressed the hope that some relevant projects PA 4 and PA 5 will appear in the future. He announced that the workshop on balancing bioenergy production and sustainable forest management in mountain areas will be organised by PA2 EUSDR and Carpathian Convention in Sopron on 17 May 2017.

**Ms Biljana Rajic (Bosnia and Herzegovina)** introduced the current situation in her country where 90% of drinking water comes from ground water. They have 10 functional wastewater treatment plants. Sarajevo WWTP was destroyed during the war and currently the World Bank is financing the renovation. 10 % of waste water in the country is treated so in this sphere the situation is quite alarming so they have to find investments to cover the rest.

**Hungarian projects** and proposals are the following:

- Danube Flood Plain Proposal led by Romania
- DAREFORT project – hydromorphological data (PA 5, DTP next call)
- Solotvino project (cooperation of HU and UA) – monitoring of mine area
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Carpathian Convention and PA 4 – HU will be the next presiding country of the CC

**Slovak projects** are the following:

- Wetlands project – deals with subsidised area after mining. It is planned to be submitted within Interreg Europe 3<sup>rd</sup> call.
- UNDP Project – under implementation, dealing with building of institutional capacities of the national surface water monitoring system according to Water Framework Directive in Moldova

**ICPDR projects** are the following:

- large project proposal for hazardous substances
- tailing management facilities
- Joint Danube Survey 4 in preparation
- Measures Project (former Revistur) – 2<sup>nd</sup> call of DTP
- Iron Gate Feasibility Study
- Danube Flood Plain Project

**GWP** joined the discussion about projects and informed that the project SANDANUBE is looking for partnership at strong policy level and wants to be submitted within the 2<sup>nd</sup> call of DTP. PA 4 SK team promised to inform all stakeholders about that.

### Events 2017

#### **ICPDR Events:**

- RBM EG Meeting, Brussels, 3-4 May 2017
- Conference on nitrate pollution reduction: Bucharest, 10-13 May 2017
- 15th StWG Meeting, Brussels, 8-9 June 2017
- River Basins Conference on transboundary water pollution: 19-20 June 2017, Vienna (TUVienna and Karlsruhe University)
- ICPDR Workshop on Hydromorphological Alterations and Response of Biological Quality Elements, 23 to 24 November 2017, Vienna
- Waste water workshop, co-organised with IAWD, WB and EU SDR in Bucharest, 28-29 November 2017

- 20th Ordinary Meeting, 12 to 13 December 2017, Vienna

#### **PA 4 events:**

- 11 May 2017 – Financing conference in Budapest for Hungarian stakeholders about sustainable energy, water quality and risks
- 5-7 July 2017 – Hungarian Hydrological Wanderer Assembly in Mosonmagyaróvár, Hungary
- 1-3 September 2017 – PAC/NCP meeting
- Last week of September 2017– Trilateral meeting (PA4, ICPDR, Sava) in Budapest
- 16-17 October 2017 – 14 Steering Group Meeting (PA 5, PA 6 included) in Budapest
- 18-19 October 2017 – 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum in Budapest

#### **Miscellaneous**

**Mr Balázs Horvath** informed about the cross-sector conference on natural conservation and waterways organized by the Danube Stream and Danube Parks Connected in Dunakiliti on 26 – 27 April 2017. Mr Horvath gave there the key note speech about the synergies within EUSDR.

Next issue was discussion **how to make SG members come to SG meetings**. There is the declining rate of participation compared to past meetings. There was the suggestion that NCPs HU and SK should discuss this issue further at the next EC-NCP meeting.

#### **Farewell**

In the closing session **Mr Balázs Horvath** and **Mr Vladimír Novak** thanked the participants for active involvement in the SG meeting, appreciated the fruitful cooperation with all stakeholders in the implementation of PA4 activities and stressed the need for active networking in the performance of PA4 activities within the roadmap. They expressed the hope to see all the participants in 6th Annual Forum on 18-19 October 2017 in Budapest. Everybody was invited to 14 SG meeting in Budapest which will be organized back to back to the Annual Forum.

Presentations of 13 SG: <http://www.danubewaterquality.eu/13th-sg-meeting>

