

## Summary Minutes 22nd Steering Group Meeting of EUSDR PA4 19 October 2021, virtual meeting

The objective of the meeting was (1) to provide information on recent activities of EUSDR PA4 -PA5, ICPDR, ICSR, EU, DSP, Carpathian Convention, Global Water Partnership, (2) to introduce results of starting and ongoing projects in relation to the PA4 Action Plan, (3) to discuss financial possibilities in the current and upcoming programming periods and (4) to share ideas on new project ideas in order that partners be found from a wide range of Danube countries.

The meeting was hosted by PA4 HU with assistance provided by DSP for the virtual platform. Over thirty participants were present at the meeting: representatives from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia participated as well as delegates of the European Commission, the Danube Strategy Point (DSP), EUSDR Priority Area 5 (environmental risks), the ICPDR, the Sava Commission (ISRBC), Carpathian Convention (CC), Global Water Partnership (GWP), WWF and the Danube Hazard m3c, IDES, Tidy Up project representatives were present at the meeting. Detailed list of participants is attached in Annex 1.

### Opening of the meeting

**Mr Horváth, PAC4 HU** opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The agenda was adopted.

The national coordinator of **EUSDR Hungary, Mr Viktor Oroszi** welcomed the participants present at the event. Mr Oroszi highlighted that it is an important period this year: public consultation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP) is ongoing, coordinated by the ICPDR and this document will pave the way for the new period. The programming of the different Interreg programmes will also end soon, new calls will appear, and we will see the results of the embedding effects. Mr Oroszi expressed his appreciation for the SK presidency, especially for the embedding support and noted that soon all PACs will have to support the embedding process. After the Annual Forum (AF) in Bratislava at the end of October 2021, Ukraine will take over the EUSDR presidency, as the first non- EU country. Mr Oroszi finally pointed out that there will be a [Planet Sustainability Expo](#) organised in Budapest in between 29 November - 4 December, supporting transfer of smart solutions of water management to green industry. Hope to meet several SG members there and it is planned by HU PACs to present the PA2, 4, 5 & 6 of EUSDR at the Planet Sustainability Expo.

**Ms Danka Thalmeinerova** on behalf of Mr Havlicek PAC SK also welcomed the participants and expressed that Slovakia would like to be prepared for new ideas and mentioned that SK is about to complete its EUSDR presidency: all members are welcomed to register the AF. She also welcomed that there is an item on new ideas in the current SG meeting, as time is running, and new proposals are to be opened: we all need to be prepared.

### 1. EU news

**Mr Johan Magnusson from DG Regio** mentioned a recent annual Interreg event held on 7-8 October 2021 and recommended to see the [weblink](#), where all the recordings are available. He explained that the meeting was a hybrid meeting and it focused on dialogues and practical issues. At the event a very interesting dialogue was held, and it was highly innovative as there were drawings used, to show the key points. To the item of embedding, he stated that we were progressing quite well and work together. As a result, we have managing authorities' network, have a very good platform to stand for with

important tools as DSP produced the tools, but now we need to use it. Legal provisions are adopted: Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR) supports embedding: in Article 22 on Content of programmes.

The EC screens all the draft programmes that Member States (MS) submit to the EC. This is a process we are working together, all players in the Strategy will need to work on it. He stressed that the EC wants MS to specifically mention what they want and with links to the specific objectives. Several countries did not send their drafts yet, but there are positive examples: received the AT draft programme that is a good example, and also good drafts were submitted by Hungary: the OP for Environment and Energy efficiency is an excellent example.

Finally, Mr Magnusson mentioned that he took over coordination of all the MRS and in 2022 there will be MRS days organised, probably at the first trimester. The EC will would like to have more discussion with the audience.

#### Questions/Comments:

**Mr Horváth, PAC4 HU:** What is the planned date of the MRS event?

**Mr Magnusson, EC:** Febr -March 2022.

**Mr Horváth, PAC4 HU:** The Zero Pollution Action Plan is very important; do you see possibilities for PA4?

**Mr Magnusson, EC:** It would make sense if PA4 would come into the process but would need to check with DG ENV on this.

**Adam Kovacs:** ICPDR is considering joining the Stakeholder group.

## 2. Information about EUSDR PA4 and PA5 ongoing activities

### 2.1 Updates on the Slovak EUSDR Presidency

**Ms Kurecova PA4 SK** provided a short information about the SK presidency and stressed its important topics: climate change and biodiversity protection, digitalization and innovation.

Ms Kurecova listed the events held within the Presidency; the most important ones were the following:

- The [Climate Change Adaptation Conference](#) in Bratislava/online (hybrid version), as the thematic event of EUSDR Slovak Presidency, was organised on 27 September 2021.
- The [Innovation and Digitization Conference](#) in Bratislava/online (hybrid version) was organized on 22 September 2021. 100 people, presenters were online.

She also reminded participants to attend the upcoming events:

- The **Annual Forum** will be held on 27-28 October 2021: Information can be found here: <https://danube-region.eu/danube-events/10th-annual-forum-of-the-eu-strategy-for-the-danube-region/>, and just before the AF on 25-26 October 2021 will be the **8<sup>th</sup> Danube Participation Day**. Information can be found here: <https://danube-region.eu/danube-events/10th-annual-forum-of-the-eu-strategy-for-the-danube-region/>

The next presidency will be Ukraine focusing on infrastructure and communication.

#### Questions/Comments:

**Mr Horváth, PAC4 HU:** the Climate Conference was very efficient and professional, appreciate its organisation.

**Mr Magnusson, EC:** Participated at the digitalisation conference, which was a very good conference and recommends everyone to listen to the recordings and recommended members to participate in Bratislava at the AF.

## 2.2 EUSDR PA4

Mr Horváth PAC4 HU together with Ms Vranovska from the SK PA4 team presented information about the main PA4 activities since the last SG meeting as follows:

Finalised studies:

[Water retention in urban areas in the Danube Region](#)  
[Preparatory study on sewage sludge management in the Danube Region](#)

Mr Horváth mentioned that the Fish migration leaflet is being finalised.

Ms Heilmann further added that the technical draft was consulted with ICPDR, the WE PASS, the DTP Measures project experts and with DSTF. The Drinking water leaflet text is also ready. The Danube cards were prepared with a graphic designer, 300 copies also for future use. There are 4 maps included in the cards, the phenomena and conditions for water, the human use, fauna and flora, river regulation issues and pollution issues. The descriptions of the cards would be uploaded to the PA4 website.

Mr Horváth reported that PA4 organized or participated at the following events since the last SG meeting:

- Workshop on sewage sludge management in the Danube Region - 10 June 2021.
- PA 5 online SG meeting- 17 June 2021.
- ICPDR Standing Working Group online meeting- 23-24 June 2021.
- Webinar “How to get the needs of migratory fish into Danube river basin management plans”. co-hosted by the MEASURES project, the DSTF and WWF - 28 June 2021.
- The ICPDR stakeholder online workshop 29-30 June 2021.
- Trilateral meeting – 9 September, online.
- PAC/NC meeting – 13 September 2021, online.
- Tid(y)Up project event: Plastic roundtable – 13 September 2021, Tokaj, HU.
- 4th SK-HU CBC Danube Conference – 16 September 2021, Komárom, HU.
- DWP Beyond scarcity webinar – 20-21 September 2021, online.
- Litter Trap in the Danube river – 21 September 2021, Budapest.
- Danube Hazard m3c project 2nd Advisory Board meeting – 23 September 2021, online.
- Climate Change Adaptation Conference – 27 September 2021, Bratislava.
- ICPDR PM EG meeting – 6-7 October 2021.

Mr Horváth highlighted that several project events were very effective, such as the Tokaj roundtable of Tidy Up in September, where the organisers asked participants about what stakeholders can do related to plastic waste in rivers.

Ms Vranovska mentioned that an international workshop as platform for knowledge and best practice sharing related to **pharmaceuticals in the Danube Region** will be held on 7 December 2021 online, the first announcement was distributed.

- *Mr Horváth mentioned that there are ongoing discussions with the ICPDR and the World Bank to jointly organize a funding workshop in December 2021. Members will be informed asap.*

The following events are further planned:

- European Parliament SeaRICA Intergroup on Danube plastic – 4 November 2021, online.
- **PA6 SG on Ecological connectivity** – 11 November 2021, online.
- **We Pass final conference** – 17- 18 November 2021, online.
- [Planet Sustainability Expo](#)– 29 November - 5 December 2021, Budapest.
- **PA4 Pharmaceuticals conference** – 7 December 2021, online.
- **PA4 Financial webinar** – xxx December 2021, online.

### 2.3 Sewage sludge workshop

**Mr Horváth** provided a short summary of the successfully organized [Workshop on sewage sludge management in the Danube Region for a greener EU held on 10 June 2021](#). It was a partner event of the EU Green Week organized in cooperation with the ICPDR, World Bank and Sava Commission and linked to the ongoing review of the EU Sewage Sludge Directive. 84 participants from 17 countries participated: all Danube countries except UA and MD, national and international bodies (EIB, GWP-CEE) and policy makers including non-Danube Basin countries (ES, IE, LT, SE, NO, AL).

It will be difficult to use one solution in Europe as there are several different practices and solutions differ in countries. It is acknowledged that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, but a mix of treatment solutions can be the most appropriate aligned with national, local particularities. Better integration of regulations, policies on waste, water and sludge management in line with the green deal initiative could result in a more efficient legislation promoting achievement of common goals. A revision/update of EU Sewage Sludge Directive could play an important part in achieving this objective.

- *There will be a follow up, Mr Horváth asked SG members to let us know in case you have ideas on how we can continue.*

*After the presentations the short new movie on the PA4 achievements in the past 10 years was presented.*

#### Remarks:

**Mr Egerer, CC:** I wanted to thank you very much for this short film, would like to ask for the link as would like to upload it to the UN website and to the CC.

**Mr Horváth PAC4 HU:** As soon as the official version is available, will share with you the link.

*Please visit the movie here: <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jfqY92aUFbQ>*

### 2.4 EUSDR PA5

From EUSDR PA5 **Mr László Balatonyi PAC5 HU** introduced a short presentation on the main PA5 tasks under the revised Action Plan. He mentioned that one LoR was adopted since the last PA4 SG meeting: “Development of a real-time, high-resolution geo-monitoring system and methodology to support water management decisions” on 21/07/2021. He emphasised the PA5 preparedness and response activities and mentioned that together with ICPDR would like to continue the tailing facility project for the next DTP call. Mr Balatonyi highlighted the [Beyond Scarcity: Water Scarcity and Drought Risk Management in the Danube Region](#) event organized by GWP, WB and IAWD held on 20 September, where EUSDR PA4 and PA5 also participated. He mentioned the TAIEX TRATOLOW Regional Workshop on synergies between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, that a webinar was organised on 27 & 28 September 2021. (TRATOLOW stands for Transition towards Low Emissions and Climate Resilient Economy in the Western Balkans and Turkey.) He mentioned that the cooperation with ICPDR continues, and it will focus on preparation of the update and publishing of the update of the Flood Risk Management Plan for the Danube River Basin Districts (DFRMP) and development of projects supportive to the implementation of this DFRMP. He mentioned that the PA5 SG will be organized at the end of November 2021, and it will also focus on tailing management facility proposal.

#### Questions/Comments:

**Ms Alena Kurecová, PA4 SK:** We received the contribution for the preparation of the leaflet for water retention, thank you very much for the PA5 support.

**Ms Andrea Vranovská, PA4 SK:** Some countries provided information for water retention already, and we really appreciate it.

- *I would like to ask other countries to please share your experiences with us, especially Ro, BG and Md.*

**Mr Balatonyi, PAC PA5:** The Darrefort project also finished, two more countries are missing, in the frame of the Flood Protection Action Group involving BiH and Montenegro in the future work.

### 3 Update on ongoing activities in relation to the PA4 Action Plan: Information about the ICPDR, Carpathian Convention, Sava Commission, DSP ongoing activities

#### 3.1 ICPDR activities

**Ms Hödl** provided information about the following activities:

**River basin management:** The ICPDR is currently finalising the DRBMP Update 2021; public consultation was ongoing until the end of September 2021. A related stakeholder workshop was organised in June 2021, the final report is available. Ms Hödl mentioned that the ICPDR has received comments from 165 individuals and 10 institutions on the DRBMP Update 2021; 232 filled questionnaires from the public on both plans were received (DRBMP and DFRMP Update 2021). All comments received were discussed in ICPDR EG and TG meetings in autumn 2021. The RBM EG will discuss the revised draft at its RBM-44 meeting that will be held from 27-28 October 2021, online. The work will continue towards the DRBMP Update 2021 approval at the Ordinary Meeting in December 2021 and endorsement is expected at the Ministerial Meeting in February 2022.

**We Pass Project and other Sturgeon projects:** Ms Hödl mentioned that the Final Conference of the We Pass project is planned for 17-18 Nov 2021, as online meeting. The We Pass 2 project is based on a call of the European Parliament, the same partners as of the We Pass project are continuing the work until 2024 under a German company (CDM Smith). She further mentioned that the MEASURES project came to an end, and she is happy that results of the project can be found in the draft DRBMP Update 2021.

**Navigation:** The 12<sup>th</sup> Joint Statement Meeting was organized from 15-16 September 2021, online. The final report is available on DANUBIS. The next METEET training mission will be organized in Ukraine from 25-26 November 2021.

**Water balance:** This important activity is led by HU and RS. The RBM EG was asked for nominations of water balance experts. On 7 October 2021 a water balance meeting was held with the aim of discussing all next steps towards the preparation of a project proposal for a Danube wide water balance, including the establishment of a core drafting group of experts working on this proposal in autumn 2021. Confirmed members of the core drafting group are coming from HU, RS, RO and AT. The first meeting of the core drafting group will be on 20 October 2021. She stressed that the Danube countries are very thankful that Hungary worked on a report on different model's suitability report that is available on DANUBIS. Thankful that HU and RS are guiding activities related to the water balance.

**Mr Kovács** continued reporting on ICPDR activities as follows:

**Hydro task group:** PM EG also feeding up the process. Further contributed with additional updates and technical details for hot spots mapping. Now have the **MONERIS** results: on 8 September 2021 received 5-6 hazardous submission emissions maps as a result and they are unique. It is a good development, a lot of data was received, all pollution chapters were updated. ICPDR built a vision scenario that it is in the DRBMP 2021 Update and lot of scenarios are already included. Good signal that supported by DTP

can have an added value of those projects, because it would be the first time, we will have emission estimates on a basin wide level.

Mr Kovács mentioned that the ICPDR was also very active on hazardous, agriculture topics as follows:

**Sewage sludge:** ICPDR was very happy with the results of the Sludge workshop held in June 2021 and appreciates cooperation with PA4 in that regard. It was important to see the different approaches. Mr Kovács encouraged colleagues to download the report from the PA4 website. Mr Kovács further mentioned that the recommendation on wastewater management was submitted to EC in the public consultation process in the frame of the UWWT revision. The next workshop is planned to be organized deflated to sustainable financing in the upcoming months, preparations are ongoing, information will be shared shortly.

**Hazardous substances** C3Hazard project: some activities are in a good pipeline, ongoing inventory, results will be available next year. several capacity building activities will be organized in 2022. Important project as a preliminary basin wide report. As the DRMPB Update 2021 will be approved in February 2022, so unfortunately only the preliminary results of the C3Hazard project would be included.

**Agriculture:** Guidance and sustainable agriculture report was finalized. [The Agricultural guidance](#) document is available at the ICPDR's website. Mr Kovács stressed that the ICPDR wants to keep the agriculture in the agenda and currently discussing related next steps, how the guidance document could be updated.

**Accident prevention-tailings management:** The **TMF recommendations** were prepared and released. Mr Kovács pointed out that the ICPDR is cooperating with EUSDR PA5 on TMF issue, to organize a follow up project with their disaster Working Group. Currently ongoing PA5 discussion to continue the topic and identifying the partners, will prepare a proposal for the upcoming DTP call.

#### **Questions/Comments:**

**Mr Balázs Horváth PAC4HU:** I welcome the cooperation and many common issues with ICPDR, also to the connection of PA5.

**Mr Klaus Arzet:** A request for Ms Hödl, to please outline the major responses on the DRBMP Update 2021.

**Ms Hödl, ICPDR:** Comments were received from 10 institutions and 165 individuals. It was interesting to see that the majority of comments have been addressed to HYMO related issues. In the revised DRBMP Update 2021, text on the management objectives/agreed actions on Danube basin wide level related to HYMO have been amended due to the comments received in public consultation.

**Mr Kovács, ICPDR:** indeed, interesting experience that for the Plan we felt that pollution was not attractive, spotlight was on the HYMO. A lot has been invested and done. Agriculture remains as an important issue, also received some comments on better dialogue with the agriculture sector. The new challenges: plastic, microplastic, hazardous are rising. It was an interesting experience that sturgeons/HYMO issues were more discussed, compared to previous cycles. The accident prevention received some attention.

**Mr Arzet:** Thank you for the detailed reply. Indeed, it is our responsibility to focus on these topics.

**Mr Horváth PAC4HU:** These developments reflect also to the Green Deal.

### 3.2 Sava Commission (ISRBC) activities

**Mr Grošelj:** The most important activities are related to **Sava River Basin Management Plan** development and the Sava 2nd RBM planning cycle's status is: Draft SRBMP accepted by PEG RBM (46th PEG RBM, September 15, 2021). After the confirmation of the Sava Commission, public consultation will start in November 2021, until March 2022 and then in October 2022 there will be the Meeting of the Parties.

**Sediment:** Report on Executed dredging for 2020 and Report on Planned dredging for 2021 to be adopted by the ISRBC October 2021. Now working on the **Outline of the Sediment Management Plan for the Sava River Basin** (supported by UNESCO), meeting with the national experts will be on 20 October 2021 and after that will submit the outline to the RBM group. In mid Nov 2021 a final workshop will be organized, the outline will be finalized and to be adopted by the ISRBC.

**Water Contingency Management in the Sava River Basin – WACOM project:** The project shall be finalized by 2022, currently developing the toolbox. National workshops in BA, HR, SI and RS were held in May/June 2021. Regional workshops SI/HR, HR/BA, BAS/RS held in September 2021. Theme: preparation of tabletop exercises (to be held in May 2022)

**Sustainable Historic Environments holistic reconstruction through Technological Enhancement and community-based Resilience- Shelter project:** data related to important cultural heritage sites in the Sava Basin are collected and currently preparation of the flood risk analysis and elements of the preliminary flood risk assessment is ongoing.

*Upcoming meetings:*

- Testing of the methodology of flood impact analyses on the CH -Nov, 2021
- 5th Sava Open Lab Stakeholders Workshop - Nov-Dec, 2021 (tbc)

**Sava - Drina River Corridor integrated development programme** (WB, 2019). ESCP in accordance with WB ESF, public consultation was finalized in June 2021. Final approval expected in late autumn 2021.

Mr Groselj further informed about the ISRBC's public participation issues as follows:

**9th Sava Youth Parliament** was held in Banja Luka (BA) on 8-9 October 2021 in hybrid form. Theme: Let's protect our cultural heritage! The competition for secondary schools and youth (19-25 years) is open at ISRBC website. Basic aim: to learn about threats that cultural-historical sites in the Sava River basin face in a case of floods. The event was supported by UNESCO Venice Office through the Shelter project.

#### Questions/Comments:

**Mr Balázs Horváth PAC4HU:** I congratulate for you and that we will have a sub-base management plan.

### 3.3. Carpathian Convection (CC)

**Mr Harald Egerer** was presenting on behalf the CC Secretariat and summarized that the CC has several documents, publications in connection with water quality. He stressed that now Poland is the president of the CC. He highlighted the Carpathian Convention action to prevent transboundary water pollution, and referred to the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Carpathian Convention and EUSDR PA 04 "Water Quality" signed on 30 August 2016. He also stressed the cooperation with the ICPDR and

the Tisza Group and that the CC was an Associates Partner in the JoinTisza Project. He reminded participants of the cyanides in the Bečva River in 2020 in Moravia and that the cyanide leak poisoned almost 40 km of the Bečva River and the polluter has not been identified yet. In relation to the EU Green Deal Mr Egerer has mentioned that multilateral and transboundary cooperative actions in the Danube Carpathian region is essential and it should be expanded as much as possible to support the member states national authorities in the achievement of environmental objectives.

### 3.4. GWP

**Mr Konstantin Ivanov** introduced ongoing GWP CEE activities in relation to the PA 4 Action Plan and introduced GWP strategy 2020-2025 (goals and cross-cutting issues for a water secure world). He informed the participants that the duration of the Danube Floodplain project was extended to November 2021, the project is focused on reducing the flood risk through floodplain restoration along the Danube River and tributaries. Participants were informed in the „Online course/capacity building“ and related 2 webinars held in 2021 (June and October). He called attention that the Online Winter School Registration is now open.

He provided the information about two more projects TEACHER-CE (JoinT Efforts to increase water management Adaptation to climate Changes in central EuRope) and OPTAIN (OPTimal strategies to retAIN and re-use water and nutrients). Project Circular City Re.Solution was also mentioned to build an interdisciplinary platform for connecting city planners, architects, system designers, economists, engineers and researchers from social and natural sciences.

Mr Ivanov called attention to the following upcoming programmes:

- Danube Water Conference, 18- 21 October 2021, online
- Open Rivers Programme Advisory Group first meeting, 3 November 2021. First grants to be awarded in the spring of 2022.
- Danube Floodplain Winter School, 15-19 November 2021, online.
- GWP network meeting, 12 December 2021, online.

Finally, Mr Ivanov mentioned GWP's ongoing activities: Newly established GWP Taskforces on circular economy and youth in addition to the TF on sustainable sanitation, GWP 25 Anniversary stakeholder interviews, SDG6 Level 2 process in one CEE country, Water Policy Slovakia land management, governance. Slovenian EU presidency desertification. Tisza Group supporting future DTP calls and the Danube Art Master.

### 3.5. DSP news

**Ms. Florea from DSP** thanked the PAs for cooperating and for excellent events we organised together.

The most important highlights of DSP efforts are **support for PACs: needs assessment survey** and related workshops, as the DSP elaborated a Needs Assessment for closer cooperation in SGs, assist in streamlined communication and provides on a regular basis information about MRS.

Focus was also on **embedding** in 2021: the embedding tool has been updated. The update of the EUSDR Embedding Tool Annex 1b, the Overview of the survey results of the EUSDR ERDF/CF MA Network Overview of the surveys conducted among the EUSDR ERDF/CF and IPA/NDICI MA Network are also available at the EUSDR website under [Embedding](#). Ms Florea explained how to use the new tools: with the overview and EUSDR shortlisted topics sheets. She stressed that now MS would need to consider how can the strategic topics of the EUSDR be brought into these programmes and what support is needed from which stakeholders (EC, NC, MAs, DSP etc.).



A new **Monitoring Concept** for reporting on the progress and achievements of the EUSDR was prepared with results for one comprehensive monitoring, no double reporting and strategic decision-making support tool for NCs. Ms Florea mentioned that the **reporting** periods will be implemented as an online tool from 2022 (once in 2 years).

For **Policy/Impact Evaluation** she mentioned that complex research is ongoing by Spatial Foresight from 07/2021 to 04/2022 with a scope of implementation, impact & communication via Desk research, online surveys, and interviews.

**Communication aspects:** Ms Florea mentioned that recently an online media campaign has been organised (including displayed video & banner on 28 news portals in the #EUSDR countries) with significant results: from April to Sept 2021 now there are 19,000 new users of the EUSDR website which is a great achievement. DSP also promoted EUSDR with the help of an interactive movie.

Furthermore, there are NEW: #EUSDR10 Stories from the Danube Region including articles about successful projects and/or process implemented in 10 years of EUSDR (from Sept 22nd to Dec 8th 1 article per week). Finally, she mentioned the EUSDR app available for Android and iOS and reminded members of the upcoming AF in Bratislava.

#### Questions/remarks:

**Mr Klaus Arzet:** Asked how the numbers compare on page 8 of the presented tool.

**Ms Florea, DSP:** Explained how the tools to be used and mentioned that it is not about the number of projects, but about specific objectives of the programmes. (Page 8 is presenting the situation, but of 69 managing authorities XX will tackle climate topic.)

### 3.6 Financial presentation

**Ms Kocsis-Kupper,** PA4 HU expert provided a short presentation about the current open financial calls. She mentioned the **H2020 - Green Deal Calls** and that they are now mostly related to energy, ie Europe Cluster 5 Destination 3: Sustainable, secure and competitive energy supply Development of hydropower equipment for hidden hydropower 02.09.2021-23.02.2022.

She mentioned that current open calls of the **LIFE Programme** are as follows: LIFE Standard Action Projects (SAP Deadline date 30 November 2021 Brussels time and Strategic Integrated Projects (2 stage: 19 October 2021 and 07 April 2022.) Details are: [https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life/life-calls-proposals\\_en](https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/life/life-calls-proposals_en)

Ms Kocsis-Kupper was also talking about the European Territorial Cooperation Objective **Interreg programs:** about **DTP** she mentioned that DTP programming is still in progress, the finalisation of Programme documents is ongoing. There will be a 2-step procedure: the launch of the first step will be in spring 2022 and the launch of 2nd step: not before late 2022. Final approval is expected not before mid-2023. Please see details at: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/about-dtp/programming-period-2021-2027>.

About **Interreg CE** the call is expected to officially launch on 15 November 2021, the first projects are scheduled to start in December 2022. Please see details at: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/apply/newfunding.html>.

She called attention that for **Interreg EUROPE** the first call is expected in March 2022 and there will be an online event on 24 and 25 November 2021 at 'Europe, let's cooperate!'.

Finally, she mentioned the **International Visegrad Fund** and that the V4 AND V4+ PROJECTS that mostly focus on Regional Development, Environment and Tourism. The procedure is completely online, opens 4 times a year! Details are at: <https://www.visegradfund.org/>

### 3.7. Project ideas

Mr Horváth presented project ideas for future calls and asked the view of the participants.

First, he mentioned the **Hydrological modelling of Water Balance at Danube level**, where HU and SR are taking a lead, with ICPDR establishing the consortium of the future water balance project for the Danube River Basin for submitting it to EU MFF calls at the end of 2021 or the beginning of 2022.

Then referred to the **JOINTISZA 2** project preparations for the “Framework to facilitate the long-term sustainable management of transboundary water resources in the Tisza River Basin”

Other project ideas:

**Drought monitoring** in-situ system development involving satellite remote sensing and geophysical measurements: better calibration of soil moisture monitoring results and **Karstic areas**: Management of karstic water resources (monitoring and hydro-dynamic models) in the Danube river basin trough a showcase of pilot-areas and best practices.

#### Questions/remarks:

**Danka Thalmeinerova, SK:** We support the water balance and also the JointISZA2, will see how we can join the teams who will prepare it. Nevertheless, please note that the SK side do not have capacities to join the Tisza survey, I see that there is still an idea, but unsure how can realize it. The contamination or abstraction of groundwater, focus on pesticides could be another issue.

**Andrea Vranovska, PA4 SK:** I would like to add that DEEPWATER consortium is preparing a new water related proposal to groundwater, not known yet to which funding instrument it will submit the proposal. Maybe revitalization of watercourses from the viewpoint of improving water quality for ecosystems would be important issue in the future, so maybe another topic to consider.

**Irene Lucius WWF:** The project idea that we are working is related to freshwater restoration in cities, believe that it is of an increasing importance. Water management experts believe that in order to regain public support and understanding of decision makers it would be helpful to prepare and implement a project within cities, would submit to DTP, under climate change adaptation. In discussion with cities (maybe Bratislava, Budapest, Zagreb, Tulcea) hoping to have 10 partners.

**Alena Kurecova, PA4 SK:** There are problems in the Tisza River basin and would like to focus on floods from the water quality viewpoint.

**Balázs Horváth PAC4 HU:** The *Laredar* project tackles more PA5 issues, and it is still under discussion.

- *Would be happy to receive further project ideas, please let us know, also and we would support project ideas with LoRs.*

## 4. Projects

### 4.1. Danube Hazard m3c

**Dr Adrienn Clement** provided a short overview of the Danube Hazard m3c project as follows: the project aims to improve baseline knowledge on the status quo of HS water pollution and on the relevance of different emission pathways, to elaborate recommendations for the national and transnational river basin management plans, to enhance skills and competence regarding inventorying, modelling and management of HS pollution in the DRB.

Dr Clement mentioned that by now almost all partners provided data. especially for those substances which measurements are not mandatory, the observations are scarce, ie. lot of data was obtained from Austria, but less in other countries. She highlighted that monitoring campaigns are executed in 7 pilot areas. The sampling approach was an example: crucial importance to highlight the high flow events as the concentration is different at those times, also to quantify the loads as it has crucial importance.

Results are in line with the expected indicators. Additional commitment of these work packages to define the TNMN monitoring programme.

**WPT1:** Measurement campaigns are carried out over one year in 7 pilot regions, which were selected to cover differences and major aspects of the DRB. Regular measurements were extended: additional analysis at 6 monitoring stations are performed by the countries, but Wessling performs some extra measurements (covered by DH m3c budget).

**WPT2:** Scenarios modelling and assessment in pilot regions: technical model setup, delineation of the 7 pilot regions, subdivided in 34 sub-catchments and collection of basic input data was finalized.

**WPT3:** Transnational HS pollution assessment and recommendations, the basin-scale modelling, modelling done by Deltares is very important and common structure interview collecting information on legislation related policy. Preliminary results of basin-wide emissions, input to the 3rd Danube River Basin District Management Plan: only 8 substances (As, Cd, Cr 6+, Cu, Pb, Hg, Ni and Zn) are monitored by all the countries, though the limit values are different. Policy questionnaire was filled: tool for investigating the existing national policies on managing HS pollution. Providing a common structure for reporting on the national situations and covering a broad range of aspects including regulatory framework, river basin management, monitoring, pollution sources, measures. In the policy questionnaire most countries replied, but Moldova (ENI) Germany (GEA)-ASP is missing.

**WPT4:** Dr Clement mentioned that trainings will be organized in 2022, capacity building is important.

#### 4.2. IDES project

**Dr. Barbara Stammel** on behalf of the IDES (Improving water quality in the Danube River and its tributaries by integrative floodplain management based on Ecosystem Services) project explained that the IDES project is focusing on ecosystem service approach. She mentioned that the project duration is from 1 July 2020 until 31 December 2022 with 11 Project Partners from 7 countries. Dr Stammel explained that floodplains can retain nutrients from the catchment and the river and contribute to improve water quality. Many interests (and legal objectives) in floodplains have modified and threatened natural floodplains, but only intact/active floodplains provide many services to human. She stressed that there is slow progress in implementation due to conflicting human interests in floodplains and thus we need: integration of all interests/sectors. With a synoptic visualization, trade-offs and synergies of measures both for ecology and human society can be identified and by this, different scenarios can be objectively compared. Dr Stammel mentioned that the project would like to develop a tool on how to evaluate the different services which can act as a decision support tool at the regional planning level. The main aim is to Improve water quality management along the Danube and its tributaries by applying an Ecosystem Service based integrative floodplain management (IDES tool). In the first steps, the Project identified floodplains in the Danube region with high potential for nutrient retention (using among others the results of MONERIS), identified 23 Ecosystem services of relevance for water quality and developed evaluation methods. These methods will be tested in 5 pilot areas. National key actors of water management will be trained on national workshops which will be organised in 2022. Additionally, a transnational Stakeholder Workshop is planned for September 2022 to gain feedback on the drafted strategy how to implement the ecosystem service approach in water management (Output 3.1) in Budapest, members of EUSDR PA4 are welcome to participate.

#### 4.3. TIDY UP

**Mr Gergely Hankó** and **Mr Miklós Gyalai-Korpos** presented information about the project Tidy Up. This project follows the plastics from source to sea with 10 partners, 11 ASPs in 7 countries. The main message is to improve water quality and reduce plastic pollution of the Tisza River from its source to the Black Sea. There are 3 main work packages: WP1 – Methodology (waste localization & collection

strategy, microplastic assessment and hotspot localization), WP 2 – Pilot actions for awareness raising and WP3 – Involvement and legislation.

Mr Hankó mentioned that Mr Adam Kovacs (ICPDR) and Ms Diana Heilmann (PA4 HU team) supported the idea of this project very much since plastic pollution is emerging issue, raising awareness is really important and prevention is crucial. It is an important step for the DRBMP as well. In the upstream countries RO and UA several (approx. 200) settlements do not have waste settlement systems and tons of waste is entering into the rivers. 9 years ago, experts started to collect plastics and now the Tidy up along the Tisza and tributaries localising waste in monitoring activities started recycling activities and so within 9 years - Plastic Cup became an international best practice with a complex solution: Waste localisation, Recycling, Roundtables, Communication. Mr Hankó explained the roundtable discussions that operate with involvement of the stakeholders, with yearly „progress meeting”, on regional and national level in all countries and one big transnational roundtable as highlight of the project (planned for November 2022). Legislative analyses are carried out by all partner countries to be summarized in an assessment study, on what to develop on national level, including suggestions for EU-level improvement. Tidy up is providing the methodology for the roundtable discussions. Now all the partners have to organise similar workshops. UA and RO partners started to act and step up: Waste trap, a.k.a. „szitka” at Borzsa River.

Mr Gyalai-Korpos continued as follows: The TidyUp submitted comments to the draft DRBMP update 2021, with focus on: Hands-on, practical measures that anyone can implement, underpinning data on the pollution and its impact. Topics addressed: microplastic data and sampling methods, awareness raising: roundtables, floating exhibition, movie; waste management: legislative analysis; source and pathway of litter: hotspot analysis and GPS tracking, selective collection: waste reduction toolkit; public cleanups: pilots and handguide.

Mr Gyalai-Korpos stressed that 6 tonnes of waste, more than 100 participants – probably the largest clean-up in Slovakia continued with the 2nd Plastic Cup of Bodrog and then with the first roundtable. Future plans include work on the Borzava and/or Latorca rivers, Ukraine, Bega river in Timisoara (RO) and Serbia, Lower Danube in BG-RO, would welcome participation in all events. Mr Gyalai-Korpos finally mentioned that input to every topic in a summary of work in the project with more details are available and is happy to share and discuss experience further with ICPDR and the PA4 SG.

#### 4.4. Micropollutants in wastewater – pilot project

**Mr Gábor Bordós** from Wessling presented information on the ongoing small scale pilot project: Microplastics in wastewater treatment plants. The project is initiated and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary, it will be finalized in November 2021. Mr Bordós explained that there are always benefits and risks to environmental solutions: for example, if we isolate building with polystyrene phoam, it means environmental benefits, but also posing risk to the environment as small particulars enter to the environment.

As a background information he explained that global plastic pollution reached 368 Mtons in 2019 compared to 47 Mtons in 1947. Microplastics: 5mm occurrence in water, sediment, biota; its effects: intake to GI tract and tissues, pollutant transport, there is a lack of standard method. There is a need for scientific and regulatory area to establish standardised methods. It started already because of the Drinking Water Directive (EU 2020/2184) was adopted. Mr Bordós also mentioned that the first methods should be standardised until 12.01.2024 and added that hopefully there would be a report on human health risks issued until 12.01.2029.

The small project was started to measure microplastics in HU. 5 WWTPs (small, medium, large) plants were chosen, sampled influent, effluent, sludge twice. Also surface water sampling, 2-2 samplings (min.

14 day) between the samplings. Mr Bordós mentioned that a few more weeks until to obtain the final results. Preliminary observations are:

- Particle size range: larger MPs in WWTPs, thickness complicates identification.
- Overloaded filters: overlapping particles results: surface area might be important further to particle numbers. less sample volume, elongated time to prepare composite samples.
- Further analysis to define WWTP efficiency is needed: utilisation of sludge is a question, monitoring programme of effluents; thickness complicates identification.

Mr Bordós mentioned that further analysis would be needed to define WWTP efficiency as WWTP plans can be considered as source of microplastic pollution.

#### Questions/remarks:

**Edith Hödl, ICPDR:** I very much appreciate the contribution of the projects to the work of the ICPDR, thankful in particular for the Danube Hazards, Tidy up and IDES Project. One remark of Tidy up: you sent us a document in public consultation, thanks for that. Also please send us the pictures of the work you do as it would be nice to share them via our ICPDR social media channels. A reference to the Tidy up project was included in the revised DRBMP Update 2021.

**Adam Kovacs, ICPDR:** I also appreciate the projects progress, we are regularly in contact with them. It is already a success that the topic of Tidy up is included in the DRBMP Update 2021. The PM EG will invite them to the spring 2022 meeting. I welcome that IDES is using the MONERIS results, and the potential retention possibilities of the river corridors and it is quite a novelty.

**Mr Klaus Arzet:** I congratulate for the presentations. Question to Tidy up: what was the picture of the deers?

**Mr Bordós:** The picture was taken at the ice flood in 2017 from a bridge, thousands of tonnes of wastes came from UA and that was pictured. Deers were travelling on these waste islands. We have some mobile small ships that can collect waste, in Transylvania they use nets, but now we prepare automatised traps to collect waste.

#### **4.4. Update on ongoing projects**

**Mr Horváth PAC4 HU** shortly summarised the ongoing projects as follows:

##### **Finalised projects:**

**DAREFFORT:** <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/dareffort>

**MEASURES:** <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/measures>

##### **On-going projects:**

**We Pass:** Facilitating fish migration and conservation at the Iron Gates

<https://we-pass.org/>

Latest: Final Conference on 17- 18 November 2021.

**SIMONA:** Sediment quality Information, Monitoring and Assessment System to support transnational cooperation for joint Danube Basin water management

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/simona>

Latest: final conference on 9 10 November 2021

**Danube Floodplain:** Reducing the flood risk through floodplain restoration along the

Danube River and tributaries

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/danube-floodplain>

Latest: Free online winter school on 15-19 November 2021, registration by 31 October

**DEEPWATER CE:** Developing an integrated implementation framework for Managed Aquifer Recharge solutions to facilitate the protection of Central European water resources endangered by climate change and user conflict

<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/DEEPWATER-CE.html>

**boDEREC CE:** Board for Detection and Assessment of Pharmaceutical Drug Residues in Drinking Water Capacity Building for Water Management in CE

[www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/boDEREC-CE.html](http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/boDEREC-CE.html)

**REVITAL I.:** Environmental Assessment for Natural Resources Revitalization in Solotvyno to prevent the further pollution of the Upper Tisza Basin through the preparation of a complex monitoring system. <https://huskroua-cbc.eu/projects/financed-projects-database/environmental-assessment-for-natural-resources-revitalization-in-solotvyno-to-prevent-the-further-pollution-of-the-upper-tisza-basin-through-the-preparation-of-a-complex-monitoring-system>

Latest: Measurements started with robot technology in Solotvyno with a press conference on 17 June 2021

**AquaPinka:** Pinka sustainable water management (CBC AT HU)

<https://www.interreg-athu.eu/hu/aquapinka/>; <https://keep.eu/projects/22758/>

Latest: fish monitoring carried out in May 2021

**lifelineMDD:** Protecting and restoring ecological connectivity in the Mura Drava Danube river corridor through cross sectoral cooperation

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/lifelinemdd>

Latest: UNESCO designated the Mura Drava Danube as the world's first 5 country biosphere reserve!

**SaveGreen:** Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/savegreen>

**OPTAIN:** Optimal strategies to retain and re-use water and nutrients in small agricultural catchments across different soil climatic regions in Europe (H 2020)

<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/862756>

Latest: OPTAIN's measures will be documented and presented through a web-based, interactive learning tool.

**Danube Hazard m3c:** Tackling hazardous substances pollution in the Danube River Basin by Measuring, Modelling-based Management and Capacity building (detailed presentation was provided by the project.) <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/danube-hazard-m3c>

**Tid(y)Up:** F(ol)low the Plastic from source to the sea: Tisza-Danube integrated action plan to eliminate plastic pollution of rivers <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/tid-y-up> (detailed presentation was provided by the project.)

**IDES:** Improving water quality in the Danube river and its tributaries by integrative floodplain management based on Ecosystem Services <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/ides> (detailed presentation was provided by the project.)

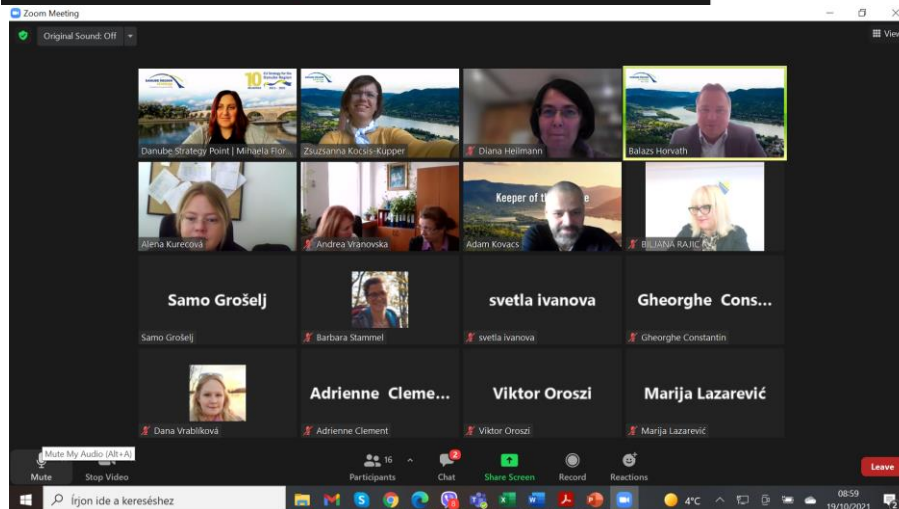
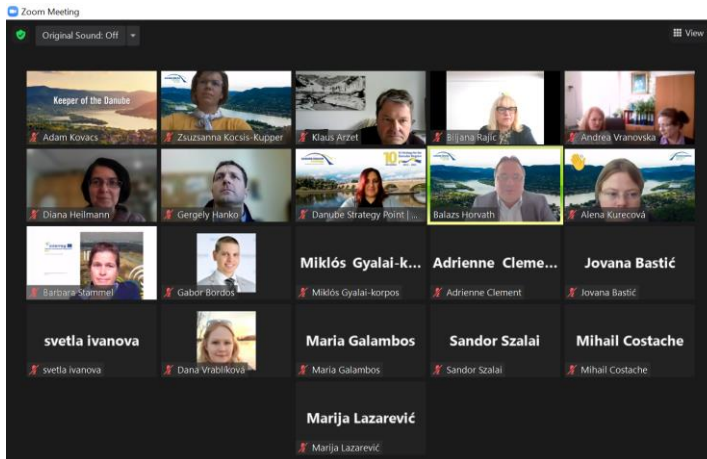
**AOB:**

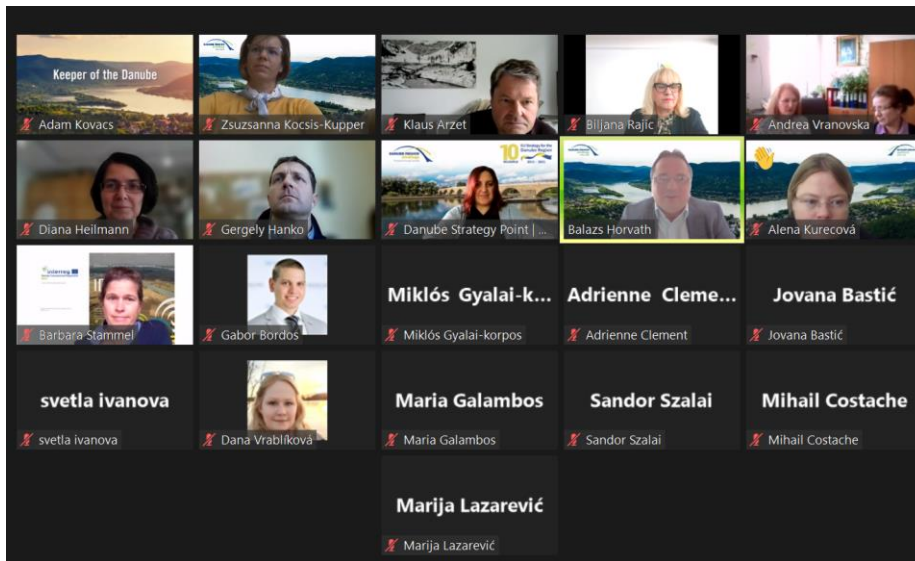
Ms Danka Thalmeinerova and Andrea Vranovska SK thanked very much for the meeting. Hope next spring will meet in person. Thanked all participants and the HU colleagues for organisation.

Mr Horváth PAC4 HU: Thanked DSP for assisting the meeting, for the presenters, and all participants, it was the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of PA4. Mr Horváth thanked all members for active participation, he reminded that all presentations would be shared.

The minutes were compiled by Ms Kocsis-Kupper, PA4 HU.

The presentations are available at: <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/22nd-steering-group-meeting-held-on-19-october-2021/>





## ANNEX 1.

<b>List of participants</b>	
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