



**Summary Minutes**  
**Joint PA4-PA5 SG meeting**  
**24th Steering Group Meeting of EUSDR PA4**  
**22-23 November 2022, hybrid meeting**

The objective of the meeting was (1) to provide information on recent activities of EUSDR PA4 -PA5, the EU DG Regio, ICPDR, ICSRB, EU, DSP, Global Water Partnership, (2) to introduce the upcoming PA4 and PA5 PAC projects for the period of 2023-28, and (3) to hold a joint session on droughts and nature-based solutions.

The meeting was hosted by PA4-PA5 HU with assistance provided by DSP for the virtual platform. Over thirty participants were present at the meeting: representatives from Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia participated as well as delegates of the European Commission, the Danube Strategy Point (DSP), the ICPDR, the Sava Commission (ISRBC), Global Water Partnership (GWP), and representatives of the Danube Youth Council and university students from Hungary, Kenya, Philippines, and Peru. Detailed list of participants is attached in Annex 1.

#### **Opening of the meeting**

**Mr Horváth, PAC4 HU** opened the meeting and welcomed the participants, pointed out to several finalised deliverables, namely the new water projects brochure, the funding brochure and project proposals submitted recently. He stressed the topics of droughts, nature-based solutions and climate change to join forces of PA4-PA5. He also noted that it is good to be together after two years of COVID.

**Ms Andrea Vranovksa on behalf of Danka Thalmeinerova PAC4 SK** also welcomed the participants and expressed appreciation for a joint PA4-PA5 event.

**Mr László Balatonyi PAC5 HU** highlighted the importance of flood issues and the involvement of youth colleagues and the joint session on nature-based solutions in the agenda. Mr Balatonyi also referred to the renewed brochure of Letter of Recommendations.

**Ms Manuela Miron** from Romania welcomed the participants **on behalf of George Constantin PAC5 RO** who could not be at the meeting in person on the first day due to other commitments.

It was mentioned that recent drought effects water and drinking water supply is in danger, climate change would affect water quality and quantity and therefore PA4 and PA5 joining together is a good idea. Green Deal and the EU's Biodiversity Strategy should be considered in our activities.

The agenda was adopted.

The national coordinator of **EUSDR Hungary, Mr Viktor Oroszi** welcomed the participants present at the event. Mr Oroszi highlighted that the first call of the new Danube Region Program (DRP) was closed and that altogether 290 project proposals were submitted. He mentioned that currently we face several challenges also due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, where among others, significant pressure is placed on the water management sector as the water supply is affected, large infrastructure and electricity facilities were destroyed resulting shortages in electricity. The reconstruction of Ukraine is important for us and for all the Tisa countries. Mr Oroszi expressed his appreciation for the Ukrainian EUSDR Presidency and noted that after the recent Annual Forum in Kosice in October 2022 the EUSDR Presidency was handed over to Slovenia. He called attention to the importance of tailing facilities; the issue of droughts and scarcity and climate change continue to be important in the Danube Basin.



## 1. EU news

Mr Johan Magnusson from DG Regio appreciated to have joint meetings and the possibility to organise events close to each other that enabled him to take part of 3 PAs in Budapest. He mentioned that there are two important inputs of PAs to the EU Macroregional Strategies (MRS): the PAC reports in every two years, for which he thanked contribution in 2022. He stressed that the report will be submitted to the Parliament and the Council, in mid- December 2022. Focus is on core issues: added value on MRS, on key EU political priorities, the war in Ukraine and the Covid recovery. The enlargement, embedding aspect is also very important to the Strategy. Mr Magnusson highlighted that project examples are also very important, and we should consider how can we connect to the broader picture in Europe-the quality of our environment. The MRS week in Brussels will be held in the second part of April 2022 (no definite date announced yet) and would welcome PAs to go to Brussels and express their views, disseminate their results and network. Beside the topics of energy, the EU Green Deal, the issue of drought will be on the agenda. Pay attention that it was the year of European Youth in 2022 and next year focus will be on education and the link to the Green Deal.

### Questions/Comments:

**Mr Oroszi, HU NC:** Agreed that droughts and nature-based solutions should be a topic in the MRS week. He asked whether the MRS report would be shared with NC?

**Mr Magnusson, EC:** It will be submitted from the Commission to the Council at some point in December and then it will be public, and comments could be made.

**Mr Stania, AT:** Expressed appreciation and gratefulness that the EC representative attend the event I person.

**Mr Kovács, ICPDR:** The EU water legislation and policy entered a new era, several EU legislations were and still are in the pipeline to be revised: important pieces to overcome the European challenges that we would need to consider.

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

### 2.1 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 and brochures:

Mr Horváth mentioned that the **Ship noise and water wave measurement on the Hungarian section of the Danube study was finalised**, available at: <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/ship-noise-and-water-wave-measurement-on-the-hungarian-section-of-the-danube/>.

Ms Kocsis-Kupper provided a short overview of the finalised **funding online leaflet** that enables the reader to link directly to the related funding programme and easily navigate among the different financial possibilities. The funding brochure is available at <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/financing-water-projects-online-brochure-completed>. Ms Kocsis-Kupper further introduced the **water success stories 2020-2022 brochure** that was finalised by PA4 recently and available in hard copy and in electronic version at <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/water-success-stories-2020-2022-brochure-completed/>. The brochure includes 17 important projects that continue provide important contributions

to the Priority Area, among others: the Danube hazard m<sup>3</sup>c , Tidy Up, MEASURES, REVITAL, DEEPWATER CE, to name a few. Ms Kocsis-Kupper further mentioned the ongoing assistance to the **Danube hazard m<sup>3</sup>c project in relation to their Layman's report.**

Ms Vranovska reported that the **working meeting on migratory fish was organised on 12 October 2022** with 27 participants, including representatives of the EC, ICPDR, PA 6 DSTF/WWF, WePass and WePass 2 projects, EUSDR PA 5 and PA 7, Széchenyi István University, Ministry of Environment SR, WRI, State Nature Protection, Water Construction, Slovak Water Management Enterprise, Slovak Fishing Association, ZSI Vienna and EUSDR PA 4. The purpose of the meeting was to share relevant information on migratory fish restoration, e.g. methodologies and investigation results on behaviour of fish species overview of ichtyocenoses in Middle and Upper Danube technical solutions of fish pass designs, and experience and knowledge transfer from the Iron Gates to Gabčíkovo Water Structure. As a follow up activity, it is planned to organize a workshop for SK and HU experts on the new guidelines for fish passes construction updated technical solutions contribution offered by Mr. Mark Redeker. Search for synergies with WePass projects in Gabčíkovo fish pass construction and look for the most proper place for fish pass to be attractive for fish, i.e. effective for passing. Uphold PA4 fish migration activities (planned WS/meeting in 2024 and in 2027) and to support fish migration projects.

Ms Vranovska mentioned that a **Fish Migration Restoration Document** is being prepared to provide a database of relevant information on migratory fish restoration, e.g. to list investigation on behaviour of fish species; to present an overview of ichtyocenoses in Middle and Upper Danube; to assess alternative technical solutions of fish pass design for specific migratory fish at Gabčíkovo Water Structure as the case study. The Document will consider previous and current fish migration restoration activities in the Iron Gates (especially WePass I and II projects) and at other Danube barriers.

Further she mentioned that a Brochure on case studies of sustainable agriculture measures implementation in the Danube Region is also under preparation. The Brochure will be ready by the end of 2022 and will include „green measures”.

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

- EUSDR NC-PAC meeting – 19 May, online
- NC-PAC meeting – 19 May, online
- Coffee with the Presidency – 23 May, online
- 20th Slovak hydrogeological conference – 23-26 May, Tatranská Javorina
- A greener, low carbon Danube Region – 30 May, online
- Round Table “Plastics and Microplastics in Our Rivers”, Sava Day – 1 June, online
- PA5 SG meeting – 14 June, hybrid
- GWP-CEE Summer School – 14 June, Poroszló (HU)
- ICPDR Standing WG – 21-22 June, online
- 23rd PA7 SG meeting – 22 June, online
- “Local governments and their impact on water quality in Žitný ostrov” workshop – 23 June, hybrid
- “Achieving functional biodiversity in the Danube-Carpathian region by mainstreaming ecological connectivity” workshop – 28 June, online
- EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators' needs assessment and communication workshops – 28-30 June, Oradea
- ICPDR Tisza Group meeting – 6-7 July, Szolnok
- EUSDR embedding week, online, 11.-15.7.2022
- Discussion on improvement fish migration in the Danube river system, 3.8.2022, Hungary
- PA4 Trilateral meeting – 8.9.2022, Budapest

- National training Danube Hazard m3c – 19.-20.9.2022, Bratislava
- ICPDR HYMO TG – 28-29 September, Vienna
- EUSDR NC-PAC meeting – 29-30 September, Vienna
- IDES project final workshop – 4-5 October, Budapest
- ICPDR ECON EG – 6.-7.10.2022, Bratislava
- Migratory fish working meeting – 12 October, Bratislava
- Water4all kick-off meeting – online, 13.10.2022
- Ecological connectivity declaration event – online, 18.10.2022
- ICPDR RBM EG – 18-19 October, Vienna
- EUSDR Annual Forum – 19-20 October, Kosice and hybrid)
- Tid(y)Up project final conference – 8-9 November, Budapest
- Unfolding EUSDR: harmonise knowledge and capacity workshop – online, 16.11.2022

The following events are further planned with PA4 participation:

- European River Symposium and Danube Hazard m3c project closing event – 27-30 November, Vienna
- NC-PAC informal meeting – 1-2 December, Bled
- ICPDR OM – 13-14 December, Vienna

Mr Horváth also highlighted in relation to projects that within the 2022 call in HORIZON EUROPE the project proposal **DALIA** (Danube Lighthouse Innovation Action) was awarded funding with a lead partner Hungarian Water Directorate. In 2022 the following project proposals received Letter of recommendations: MapRiverPlastic (macroplastic), What-A-Way (sustainable services at local waterways), DANUBELIGHT (water innovation), WETNUBE (demonstrations of wetland and floodplain restorations), RESTORIVER (restoration of urban riversides), AquaticPlastic (plastic waste reduction), Danube Water Balance (Danube model and data repository).

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

#### Remarks:

**Mr Ivanov:** GWP is happy to assist with UWWT study and conference in 2026 and 2027.

**Mr Johannes, EC and Mr Lichtner:** Both thanked for this short film, Mr Lichtner would like to ask for the link as would like to upload it to the EUSDR website and disseminate further.

**Mr Horváth PAC4 HU:**

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

## 2.2 EUSDR PA5

From EUSDR PA5 **Mr László Balatonyi PAC5 HU** introduced a short presentation on the main PA5 tasks under the revised Action Plan.

**Mr Balatonyi** introduced the guests, and he highlighted that this meeting is a very good opportunity to discuss what has been done in the past weeks. Mr Balatonyi introduced the revised Action Plan of the EUSDR PA5. The main focus is on climate change, and what we can do about this problem. EUSDR PA5 is dealing with floods and droughts, which are very important issues for the Danube Region. Mr Balatonyi talked about the new project proposal, EUSDR PA5 has submitted about Tailing Management Facilities in the Danube Region. He also mentioned, that in these projects the ASPs have big influence, because they can give better ideas and proposals about the projects. Mr Balatonyi also highlighted the importance of the involvement of the youth, and he emphasized the significance of the Danube Youth



Council. Mr Balatonyi asked Ms Manuela Miron, to also welcome the guests from the Romanian co-ordination side.

Ms Manuela Miron also welcomed the guests, and she apologized on behalf of Mr Gheorge Constantin, because he wasn't able to participate in this event. Ms Miron thanked the invitation, and she thanked all the participants to be present today. She highlighted the importance of fighting against climate change, because this problem can also affect the quality of the drinking water. She expressed that this EUSDR PA4 & PA5 joint Steering Group Meeting is a good idea, because it gives a platform for all of the representatives of the Pas to share ideas, discuss the common issues, and find solutions.

### 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:

**Water Balance activities:** Project concept (EoI) "Development of a harmonized water balance modelling system for the Danube River Basin" transmitted to Interreg DRP 1st Call on 21 November 2022 with the following objectives a) improved data management for the water balance calculations (a data repository with a toolbox and a new data management strategy), b) the state-of-the-art, open-source water balance model for the Danube River Basin, c) and elaborated water balance scenarios for the Danube River Basin and 4 selected shared sub-basins. PPs or ASPs from all Danube countries (20 PPs and 13 ASPs). Ms Hödl expressed appreciation to lead countries (HU, SR), lead partner and all experts for the huge efforts in bringing the proposal together!

**Joint Statement Meeting and Mixed Environment Transport External Expert Team (METEET):** 13th Joint Statement meeting was organized in Sept 2022 in Budapest; the ICPDR, DC and ISRBC considered a consultation among them regarding a possible update/review of the Joint Statement. The topic is also planned to be addressed at the ICPDR OM-25.

**Sustainable Hydropower activities:** Organisation of the next Hydropower Workshop in 2024, preparation of a first concept in RBM EG in spring 2023, important topics to be addressed (based on RBM EG discussion): Conflict of interest between a legitimate demand for more renewable energies, especially hydropower, and the equally legitimate and necessary objectives of the EU Green Deal and the Biodiversity Strategy. Hydropower in time of increasing drought periods and how to coordinate different water use needs in times of droughts (energy, agriculture)? How to close the implementation gap for mitigation measures?

**Nature conservation and biodiversity (MA EG):** ICPDR Biodiversity Report to be prepared, chapter 6 on number of taxa (WFD elements: benthic algae, phytoplankton, aquatic macrophytes, macroinvertebrates, fish; zooplankton, invasive alien species)

**Sturgeon activities:** Ms Hödl thanked for the organisation of the **EUSDR Fish Migration Workshop** (12 October 2022 Bratislava, SK) that provided an opportunity to exchange on We Pass results and information on plans at Gabčíkovo. Meeting of the National Focal Points of the **Pan-European Action Plan** for Sturgeons was held on 5-6 October 2022, in Strasbourg, FR on implementation of the Pan-European Action Plan for Sturgeons (Bern Convention 2018). **BLUE CORRIDOR** project proposal (EoI) was submitted to DRP Call, as a follow up of the Measures project. Close cooperation with DSTF, DSTF General Assembly (5-6 December 2022, Vienna). Ms Hödl mentioned the newly approved LIFE Boat4Sturgeons project (2022-2029).



Related to the **We Pass 2 project** (2021-2024) fish monitoring activities continued in spring & summer 2022 monitoring season was successfully completed. Meeting with Hidroelectrica and EPS, 8-11 November 2022 and Stakeholder Workshop planned for 1-2 February 2023 (ICPDR ES, ICPDR HoDs RO and RS).

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

**Hazardous substances pollution: Danube Hazard** m<sup>3</sup>c project is being finalized in the upcoming months. The first basin wide chemical emission model will be developed and policy recommendations will also be provided for the Danube countries. The final workshop will be held on 30 November 2022 within the International River Symposium in Vienna, where brief presentations of the project achievements will be provided in the framework of a conference and additionally a dedicated workshop will be held on the policy guidance. The final meeting of the partners will be held on 1 December 2022. As part of the communication activities, a Layman's report is being jointly developed with EUSDR PA4. A follow up project is planned to focus on remaining and new challenges, a new proposal was submitted to DRP.

**Plastic pollution:** one of the most urgent issues is the Upper-Tisza macro plastic pollution, the Tid(y)Up project that addresses plastic pollution is being finalised. The project provides several technical and dissemination tools, e.g. online maps on hotspots and clean-up sites, standardised monitoring approaches, a plastic waste clean-up handguide and a floating exhibition have been elaborated. Several voluntary clean-up campaigns were also organized. Moreover, a policy recommendation paper is being developed in cooperation with ICPDR. A follow-up project is planned to transfer the knowledge to other parts of the basin and to strengthen the practical aspects, the proposal was submitted to the new DRP call.

**Wastewater management:** Mr Kovács highlighted that positive feedback was received on past wastewater management knowledge exchange workshops, the sludge workshop co-organized with EUSDR PA4 was highly appreciated and was very efficient. This exchange is to be continued on emerging issues and remaining challenges. Discussions are on-going with the World Bank and EUSDR PA4 on potential topics. Rural and small-scale wastewater management, the revision process of the UWWTD and circular economy aspects (sludge management, energy optimization, wastewater reuse) are the most relevant issues to be addressed.

**Common agriculture policy:** Mr Kovács stressed that the ICPDR wants to keep the agriculture high on the agenda and is currently discussing the next steps, e.g. how the guidance document could be updated and the sustainable agriculture topic further discussed. It is planned to organize several workshops on e.g. pesticides pollution or the national CAP Strategic Plans; furthermore, on droughts and water scarcity issues related to agriculture. Based on the example of HELCOM, a prize for the best farmer of the year is planned to be established.

**Flood prevention activities:** The DAREFFORT project initiated the organization of the biennial Danube Forecasting Forum (DAFF). As a basis for further cooperation, DAFF is to be organized in 2023, 2025 and 2027 by EUSDR PA5 (2023), ICPDR (2025) and EC JRC – EFAS (2027). The StWG-20 adopted a resolution on biannual DAFF events in the current flood risk management cycle. DAFF 2023 is to be organized in the second half of the 2023, preferably back-to-back to the FP EG meeting. Currently, ideas are being collected by the FP EG for presentations at DAFF 2023 and representatives of the national flood forecasting services are being contacted to check their interest to participate at DAFF 2023.



**Danube Hydrological Information System (HIS):** The Danube HIS prototype was developed by the Secretariat to view the available data and to analyse pending issues. The FP EG agreed on technicalities for data transfer and implementation, further discussions and review are expected later on. The draft Danube HIS Policy document has been adopted at FPEG-40, comments are being collected from all acting data providers. The updated document will be redistributed to the data providers for acceptance. Upon receiving the preliminary acceptance from all countries, the formal policy acceptance procedure will be prepared by the Secretariat.

**Early warning system (AEWS):** A detailed list of AEWS Warning Messages in 2021/22 is available in the current APC EG Chairpersons' report. The comprehensive multinational AEWS test was carried out in October 2022 (during APCEG-14), divided into five incidents to involve all PIACs actively. The test simulated the case of a pollution plume in a river moving downstream with a (potential) transboundary effect. All 14 PIACs participated in the test, both Ukrainian PIACs are operational despite the war situation in their country. Very good performance was observed from all participating PIACs according to the test instructions, proving that PIACs have very good understanding on how to operate the AEWS and indicating that Danube AEWS is working well. In spring 2023, the 24/7 preparedness test will be organized in working day evening hours.

**Accident prevention control:** A detailed technical report is being developed on accident risk hot-spots and the related hazard/risk assessment methods, the draft report is available, comments are to be collected. An informative summary report and a short brochure on accident prevention and control have been published for dissemination to the interested public, they are available on the ICPDR website. Mr Kovács highlighted that all Ukrainian experts participate in the meetings and fulfil their tasks even in these very difficult circumstances and their activity is very much appreciated. A follow-up project on the TMF issue has been prepared with EUSDR PA5, targeting several regions and focusing on preparedness and prevention aspects. The first project proposal has been submitted to the new DRP call. Strengthening cooperation with the UNECE Joint Expert Group of the Water and Industrial Accident Convention is also high at the agenda, including co-organizing workshops on accident prevention, early warning and potential pollution consequences of the war in Ukraine, as well as exchange with other river basin organizations.

**Upcoming events:**

- International River Symposium: Vienna, 27-30 November 2022
- 25<sup>th</sup> ICPDR Ordinary Meeting: Vienna, 13-14 December 2022
- 38th PM EG meeting: Munich, 4-6 April 2023
- 43rd FP EG Meeting: Prague, 25-26 April 2023
- 57th RBM EG Meeting: tbc, 26-27 April 2023

**3.2 Sava Commission (ISRBC) activities**

**Mr Grošelj:** Most important activities are related to **Sava River Basin Management Plan** development: after public consultation process the development of the 2nd Sava RBM Plan is finalized. 2nd Sava RBMP Informative Summary was prepared by the Secretariat and revised on the 48th PEG RBM meeting. The approval of the 2nd Sava RBMP is expected at the 9th MOP in December 2022.





In the field of the **Flood risks management** the 2nd planning cycle is ongoing – the draft Updated Sava PFRA was prepared and accepted; data collection on flood maps is ongoing. Some of non-structural measures from the Sava FRMP are implementing within ongoing projects.

**Sava Flood Forecasting and Warning System:** MoU on cooperation concerning regular functioning and maintenance of the Sava FFWS was signed in 2020, and the system is in regular functioning: Major upgrade of the system completed in the spring 2022.

Mr Groselj informed the participants that a GEF financing was awarded for the regional component of the **Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program (SDIP)**, which was developed based on the Joint Plan of Actions for the Sava River Basin (2017). The grant was signed on 31 August 2022 and its effectiveness is expected by the end of November 2022. The planned activities are the development of a new hydrological study, a climate change adaptation strategy, a sediment study as well as a regional strategy for ecotourism development, further improvements of Sava GIS, HIS and Sava FFWS, and the updates of the Sava RBM and FRM plans.

The Sava Commission continues to be active in projects **Wacom** and **Shelter** as follows:

**Water Contingency Management in the Sava River Basin – WACOM** project (Interreg DTP, call 3): main objective is the reduction of environmental risks related to accidental pollution and floods, especially those which have or might have transboundary impact in the SRB. Its scope is to develop operational framework for activation of Protocols on Emergency situations, Prevention of Pollution Caused by Navigation, Flood Protection. Mapping of institutions and Modelling of oil slick propagation: finished; tabletop exercises held in May 2022. Upgrade of SavaGIS with APC and NAV modules are under development. Strategy for emergency response: WACOM Questionnaires have been prepared. Third national workshops on improved transboundary cooperation and interoperability in the field of water emergencies were held in October 2022. The final conference in a hybrid form was organized in Sarajevo on November 15, 2022. More than 100 participants from national/entities and local authorities, infrastructure companies, enterprises, research institutions.

**SHELTER- Sustainable Historic Environments hoListic reconstruction through Technological Enhancement and community-based Resilience Shelter** project: data on CH laying in flood-prone areas collected and the Sava GIS improved, CH data integrated. Currently performing flood impact analyses on the CH sites within flood-prone areas and the preparation of the flood risk analysis and elements of the preliminary flood risk assessment are on-going. Continuous exchange of knowledge within the Sava Open Lab and peer-learning between other OLs. ISRBC Shelter Task Group at the Study Tour to the Dordrecht Open Lab was held on 13-15 September 2022. Training for the tools pre-releases- held on 25 October 2022. The 6th Sava openlab workshop will be held on 14 December 2022.

Mr Groselj further informed about the ISRBC's public participation issues as follows: The Sava Day 2022 theme: Plastic and microplastic in the rivers. The Sava Youth Parliament 2022 was held on 13-15 October in Beograd (RS), organized within the framework of the WACOM project with a theme: Let's manage emergency situations!

Mr Groselj mentioned project: Can you hear our rivers? Sava and Scheldt Youth Parliaments Cooperation. It is a 2-years project (March 2022 – February 2024), with a budget of 60.000,00 EUR. A study trip of representatives of the Sava Youth Parliament to Ghent was organized in September 2022





and students from the Scheldt Basin will come to Croatia in April 2023 (each time 20 participants from 7 countries).

### 3.3. 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 mentioned that the **Human Tech Nexus Building a Safe Haven to cope with Climate Extremes (HuT)** Horizon Europe, project was approved, starting from October 2022 to September 2026 with 25 partners on innovative disaster risk reduction solutions, accounting for CC, transdisciplinary.

Also, from Horizon Europe he further pointed to their newly awarded project of **Danube4All**: restoration of the Danube River Basin waters for ecosystem and people from mountains to coast that will start in January 2023 with 25 partners. Its main aim is the development of Restoration Action Plan for the Danube River Basin, co-creation process with stakeholders, integrating citizens' promote the improvement of ecological status, biodiversity and ecosystem connectivity and development and implementation of innovative "Win Win Nature Based Solutions (NBS)".

**GWP community of practice on NBS** in water management is launched in October 2022 at: [www.gwptoolbox.org](http://www.gwptoolbox.org)

He provided the information about the **Summer School 2022 IWRM Action Hub** among young water professionals and university students on Tackling Water Pollution Through Water Governance from Knowledge to Action, with 20 successful participants, 2 projects for the GWP ToolBox and 1 internship.

**OPTAIN** (OPTimal strategies to retAIN and re-use water and nutrients). Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation project with 21 Partners in 15 countries and aiming 14 case studies is ongoing. The OPTAIN Summer School 2023 will be organized in Czechia.

Mr Ivanov called attention to the following upcoming programme: **Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP)** CEE Drin Basin Countries. Activity 3: Decision Support on Drought, was held from January to August 2022. IDMP for Climate Change in Kosovo financed by Slovak Aid, from October 2022 to June 2024.

### 3.5. DSP news

**Mr Robert Lichtner from DSP** thanked the PAs for cooperating and for joint events organized.

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 2021-2022: the embedding tool has been updated in 2021. Mr Lichtner highlighted the EUSDR Embedding Week held in July 2022 and stressed that the consolidated paper



from 10/2021 was shared with the EUSDR core stakeholders and is available on the website under [Embedding](#).

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. The EUSDR Monitoring Concept was endorsed by NCs in February 2022. Reporting on the Progress and Achievements of the EUSDR Priority Areas implemented in April 2022 via the new online tool, Mr Lichtner appreciated the PAs reports prepared in 2022 to be used for EC Reports on the Implementation of EU MRS, EUSDR Implementation Reports, decision making by NCs, future evaluations etc. The next reporting is due in 2024.

For **Policy/Impact Evaluation** complex research was finalised and published on the EUSDR website in May 2022. The assessment was carried out by Spatial Foresight, including desk research and involving EUSDR stakeholders via an online-survey and interviews. The Evaluation concluded with the following recommendations:

- Ensure that all PAs contribute to the overarching objectives and horizontal topics (e.g., digitalisation, smart specialisation, climate change/energy, SDGs) - work on a cross-PA approach how each PA could provide its input
- Reconsider how to flexibly attend to cross-cutting developments emerging in short and medium-term such as, for example, COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, circular economy, etc.
- Ongoing empowerment of key stakeholders to facilitate wider impact - increased outreach beyond core groups and more professional communication of the EUSDR implementation
- Take on board the positive lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, for example the benefits of online meetings and virtual conferences
- Develop a common EUSDR impact model that structures activities at three levels: strategic, thematic and governance/facilitation.

**Communication aspects:** Mr Lichtner mentioned that significant number of new users joined during the 2nd online media campaign developed for 10 weeks (May– July 2022). DSP also promoted EUSDR with the help of an interactive movie. EUSDR social media platforms are the following:

<https://www.facebook.com/DanubeRegionStrategy>: 7,524 followers

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/eusdr>: 2,524 connections

<https://twitter.com/EUSDR>: 1,352 followers

<https://www.youtube.com/danuberegionstrategy>: 69 subscribers

[https://www.instagram.com/danube\\_strategy](https://www.instagram.com/danube_strategy): 130 followers

**Danube Strategy Flagships:** Following an extensive process and great efforts by all involved stakeholders, the List of Danube Strategy Flagships 2022 was published on the EUSDR Website (under projects and funding - Danube Strategy Flagships: <https://danube-region.eu/projects-and-funding/eusdr-strategic-projects/>) as well as in the EUSDR Intranet. 27 #danubestrategyflagships provided by PACs/Pas. The DSP asked to actively promote the Flagships and spread the word on regional, national and international/transnational levels.

**Danube Youth Council:** Established as of October 2022, funded by the EC, co-funded by the City of Vienna for the period of one-year October 2022 - October 2023. Mission of the DYC: contribute to the implementation of the Strategy, which offers an opportunity for real impact, and bring new perspectives on the EUSDR by providing input on thematic level. 12-16 Dec 2022 the first Danube Youth Camp will be organised in Vienna, providing an intense capacity building programme with all the information necessary for DYC's active involvement in the implementation of the EUSDR.

### 3. 6 Discussion on youth involvement

Ms Kocsis-Kupper was moderating a discussion on youth involvement with participation of several university students enrolled in a master's programme in water diplomacy at the Public Service University, Budapest Hungary and with a representative of the Danube Youth Council.

Ms Kocsis-Kupper followed up on Mr Lichtner's presentation and introducing the topic she mentioned that the EU's Youth Strategy focuses on three core areas of action: Engage, Connect, Empower, while working on joined implementation across sectors. During a 2017-2018 dialogue process which involved young people from all over Europe, 11 European Youth Goals were developed. These goals identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people's lives and point out challenges. The EU Youth Strategy should contribute to realising this vision of young people. The Danube Youth Council has been officially established as of October 2022 and is composed of 28 members, 2 members from each of the 14 Danube Region countries.

Ms Kocsis-Kupper highlighted that to her view it is the first time that a Priority Area organises a session specifically related to youth involvement within an SG meeting.

The following questions were discussed in this session:

- What water quality protection, environmental protection, environmental and climate risk issues concern you?
- In your view how the young people could be better involved in the consultations?
- Do you have an idea on how we can channel your suggestions into the decision-making processes?

The participants were coming from different continents (Europe, Africa, America, Asia) and countries (Hungary, Kenya, Peru, Philippines). The students were happy to share their views on the topic and be actively involved. They have mentioned that they learnt a lot about other regions on how they struggle with water and shared a view that people in Europe do not face such difficulties that exists elsewhere. A participant from Africa was stressing the **need to value water more** and the need to **motivate** people is the key and that requires active involvement. According to her view, the youth perspective is a pressing issue, and the young generation wants to have their ideas to be heard. "Water quality involve us, it is not just a matter, we are part of the environment and its risks". Should come to platforms wed use: tik-tok instagram, facebook. Important that private institutions should be also here, we would need to talk to the private sphere, as to talk to those who are the people behind pollution. Capacity building is a key according to her view.

A European participant mentioned that youth involvement also means we learn much more about the world. She referred to an **example programme of the EU Parliament dedicated to youth involvement** supporting the green issues. The programme is funded by EU parliament, involving Spain, Croatia, Poland, Hungary, Finland, and Greece. The last national session of the programme was organized in Szeged in summer 2022 and the second session will be in January 2023. She advised for youth involvement, to find interested partner countries, find the budget and allocate cross continental programmes in focus on cross border cooperation. She advised that meeting with likeminded people is challenging but spending one week together can change someone's life. She would recommend having a group of EU people visiting African partner countries to change the perspective.

A student from Aisa asked: how do you concentrate on water and climate issues when you have governmental issues? The first issue is always related to poverty. To have a strong regional unit is a key. How do you protect smaller countries when international water laws protect the bigger countries? Great that Danube Youth Council have an advisory role. In the Philippines we do have Councils, but it works only on paper.

Another European participant stressed that we would **need to communicate youth on those platforms what they use**. How to motivate the motivators to get the message out? The main issue is climate change, in preferably in an understandable and clear audio-vision content. **Communicate the science** would be important, but also that the message should be scientifically correct.



The youth can contribute to the problem- solving of water and climate. We are getting the knowledge already, but just to see it is not enough. Data collection is important, but to take hands on the project, for example the problems of microplastics **you would need to get all of us involved**. The example and the Kisköre visit within project Tidy up really assisted in understanding the reality.

In a concluding round, Ms Kocsis-Kupper stressed that **PA4-5 are the first PAs involving youth at their SG meeting and appreciated the participation of the young colleagues**.

The young participants summed up that it is a satisfaction that the SG members appreciate their energy, they want to see that this youth involvement would be really happening. They have noted that albeit science is rich, but it is not linked to practice and that we shall consider this. The importance of activists' energy is necessary was also mentioned. It was further stressed overall that **motivation is the key** and if one is missing motivation, then not as good as could be.

#### Questions/Comments:

**Mr Arzet, AT:** appreciated the voices of the young participants and mentioned it is a driving force.

**Mr Lichtner, DSP:** What we heard is so great, your engagement, power, and energy, it is what we need. The Danube Region Strategy is looking forward to work with the youngsters. The DRS will win a lot from your energy and enthusiasm.

**Mr Horváth, PAC4 HU:** There are different circumstances in the different continents, I agree. What we struggle in Europe is how to involve the other sectors, such as agriculture, energy, navigation, etc. and the private sector as well into water management questions.

**Mr Oroszi, NC HU:** It is difficult how to continue with the youth involvement following with first, financed year in the EUSDR. In different monitoring committees we see pilot actions, but as NC I will have to deal also with its continuation. The EU Green activists training was new for us, thank you for the example.

**Mr Magnusson, EC:** In the EUSDR this is the year of youth, next year will be skills and education. Priority is to bring young people across Europe.

**Mr Kovács, ICPDR:** „I hear your voice”. Youth movement can activate the young generation, so they can influence the people around with good messages. Lot of science and innovation developments are available but they are not linked to the practice, this is what the young generation can absorb and utilize. Protecting environment is strongly related to behavioural change, if people hear your voice, their behaviour may change. Summer schools are great, ICPDR would need to think what the organization could do in the future with respect the youth involvement.

**Mr Balatonyi, PAC5 HU:** I consider you as colleagues and not as simple students to teach and it was really a pleasure to have these discussions with you.

[BV1] megjegyzést írt: DE

## SECOND DAY

**Mr László Balatonyi** was moderating on the second day, which was focusing on a joint session on droughts and nature based solutions, project overviews, and PA5 had a special session at the end of the day.

**Ms Birgit Vogel, ICPDR** opened the first joint session, she was talking about the importance of drought and its future management in the Danube Region. Ms Vogel highlighted a trend of increasing temperatures and decreasing precipitation since the last 30 years across Europe, including the Danube River Basin. Drought events and low flows in rivers became increasingly frequent, and the economic losses can be linked to drought events. She underlined that it is time for joint actions in the Danube River Basin to understand aspects regarding drought events and their management. Ms Vogel introduced climate change scenarios in the Danube River Basins as well as drought and low flow assessments for the summer of 2022 that are published in a related report of the EC's JRC. . The droughts can impact on



ecosystem, and water uses as well. The reduced stored water volume can have impacts on hydropower, and the low water levels on navigation. To address climate change, ICPDR published one Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in 2018 as well as the Danube River Basin Management Plan addresses droughts as part of the Significant Water Management Issue on Climate Change Effects. Further, the Danube Flood Risk Management Plan addressed the topic of Climate Change. Ms Vogel mentioned that the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, provides basic guidance how to integrate climate change adaptation into the overall ICPDR planning and management processes. The Strategy supports actions in a transboundary context, and it influences and feeds into national strategies and actions. Besides these publications, ICPDR has other supporting activities as well, e.g. Danube Hydrological Information System), and a planned water balance (a proposal has been submitted by a joint consortium – see above). Ms Vogel introduced possible next steps to address drought and water scarcity in the DRB towards water resilience. A discussion regarding a way forward is considered important to have a better understanding of drought dynamics and their implication in the DRB. The cooperation with the EUSDR related to the topic should be part of the next steps.

**Mr László Balatonyi** introduced the Steering Group the results of the Nature Based solution workshop which was took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2022 in a hybrid format.

#### Financial presentation

**Ms Kocsis-Kupper**, PA4 HU expert provided a short presentation about the current financial possibilities and highlighted that most calls just closed, including the LIFE Programme, the different Interreg transnational programs. New calls are expected in 2023. She also reminded the SG again the new PA4 funding brochure that is an online readable pdf document where different funding instruments are hyperlinked and it would be easy to navigate to the different websites for further information. The brochure is uploaded to the PA4 website and available at <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/financing-water-projects-online-brochure-completed>.

#### 4. Projects

##### 4.1. Danube Hazard m3c

**Mr Kovács**, ICPDR provided a short overview on the Danube Hazard m3c project. The project aims to improve baseline knowledge on the status quo of hazardous substances water pollution and on the relevance of different emission pathways, to elaborate recommendations for the national and transnational river basin management plans, and to enhance skills and competence regarding inventorying, modelling and management of chemical pollution in the DRB. Mr Kovács presented the latest achievements and the remaining tasks of the main work packages, including the pilot catchment monitoring, the inventory development, the pilot catchment and Danube River Basin scale emission modelling, the policy guidance elaboration and the capacity building activities. He called attention to the final workshop of the project will be held in Vienna on 30 November 2022. He again expressed the project's appreciation for the PA4 assistance with the preparation of the Layman's report. Finally, he explained the rationale and objectives of the planned follow-up project.



## 4.2 LIFE LOGOS 4 WATERS

Ms Petra Szatzker introduced the project to the participants. LIFE LOGOS 4 WATERS project's goal is to strengthen the adaptation skills of the most vulnerable municipalities, and the target audiences are the decision-makers and experts of local governments. The project takes from 01/10/2021 until 30/09/2025. The partners are the Ministry of Interior of Hungary, 12 municipalities at river basins and 9 professional organisations. The overall goals are to improve climate resilience of local municipalities and increased uptake of ecosystem-based water management solutions. Ms Szatzker highlighted the importance of municipalities: Climate change is a global challenge; however, the most effective way is to act locally. Municipalities have first-hand experiences at the settlements, they know the local stakeholders, the potential resources, and they form local strategies and plans. Ms Szatzker presented the results of the survey about the need of municipalities. The results showed, that municipalities are important because of the finance opportunities, educational and information materials, they awareness raising, they share knowledge, and they are supportive regulators.

Ms Szatzker talked about what they do exactly in LIFE LOGOS 4 WATER projects. They test and demonstrate NWRMs, they support municipalities in CCA, and they raise awareness and knowledge transfer. They are trying to change attitude, increase knowledge and adapt more effectively to the climate change.

## 5. Activities and achievements of the PAS Disaster Management Working Group

**Mr Zsolt Kelemen**, the chairman of the Disaster Management Working Group presented the achievements of the working group from the last half year. There are 25 members from 10 countries participating. Mr Kelemen highlighted the basis of DMWG, which are supporting joint preparedness activities, harmonized training and capacity building, supporting disaster risk reduction, and innovation and technology to support disaster response.

Mr Kelemen highlighted that during the refugee crisis experiences and good practices were changed between Hungary and Romania, and the gaps were also identified. He also presented the DAREscue organisation: [www.darescue.eu](http://www.darescue.eu)

He also introduced the MobileApp, which can be a future for organizations. Volunteer Event Manager is a mobile application and related to web application to create and publish events, manage participants, manage capabilities, and manage notifications. The App is currently available in English, Hungarian, Romanian and Slovakian. The application handles different types of events, organizations in fixed hierarchy and predefined capabilities.

Mr Kelemen also presented the Exercise Control (ExCon) during scenarios like floods, wildfires and storms. The target organizations are governmental and non-governmental, and the method is participant-driven and continuous.

The chairman of the DMWG presented the funds, like DiMaND, PROFOUND, DAREnet, WILDFIRES, PREP-R, RISKHUB and WACOM. Mr Kelemen also presented the types of disasters they are dealing with, the main now is the Tailing Management Facilities. The Working Group is also participating in the SAFETY4TMF project.

## 6. TMF - SAFETY4TMF

Mr László Balatonyi presented the SAFETY4TMF project. He presented the project partners and ASPs, which can be found here as well.

### **SAFETY4TMF partnership: Project partners**

Ministry of Interior of Hungary – LEAD PARTNER – Ministry  
Middle Tisza District Water Directorate – Regional Authority  
Budapest Fire Fighter Association – Thematic Association  
Csongrád-Csanád County Disaster Management Directorate – Regional Authority



Ministry of Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology of the Republic of Srpska (?) – Ministry  
Ministry of Interior of Bulgaria, Fire Safety and Civil Protection Directorate – Ministry  
National Association of Volunteers in the Republic of Bulgaria - Thematic Association  
Occupational Safety Research Institute – Academic Sector  
SMO Union of Towns and Municipalities - Municipalities  
Center for Education and Technical Development in Firefighting – Thematic Institution  
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations  
- Ministry  
Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests - Ministry  
Babes-Bolyai University, Research Institute for Sustainability and Disaster Management – Academic  
Sector  
Harghita County Council – County Municipality  
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management of Serbia (?) - Ministry  
University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Civil and Geodetic Engineering – Academic Sector  
Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, Environment Directorate (?) - Ministry  
Via Carpatia EGTC – EGTC (2 Counties)  
Water Management Construction – Thematic Engineer

**SAFETY4TMF partnership: Planned associated partners (ASPs)**

ICPDR International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River  
Civil Protection Directorate / Civil protection administration of Republic of Srpska  
Association of Rhodope Municipalities  
UNECE United Nations Economic Commission for Europe  
International Sava River Basin Commission  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department for Water Diplomacy and DR Strategy  
General Directorate of Water Management  
Municipality of Komárom-Esztergom County  
Municipality of Heves County  
Fire Fighter Association of Harghita County  
Fire Fighter Association of Slovenia  
ZAG National Building and Civil Engineering Institute (?)  
UBA German Environmental Agency

Mr Balatonyi presented the timing of the two-stage application process. The first process deadline was on the 21th November 2022, and the second stage is expected in Spring 2023. The project start is planned for January 2024, and implementation period is 2,5 years.

Mr Balatonyi gave a brief presentation of the implementation plan.

- SO1: Improving the knowledge on TMF and related local, regional, national and macro-regional policies
  - Mapping cooperation ecosystem of TMF related disaster management and risk reduction activities in SAFETY4TMF countries
  - A1.2 Improvement of TMF-related knowledge in the DRB
  
- SO2: Enhancing transnational TMF-related disaster management capacities
  - Revision of existing national and transnational education curricula and methods
  - Improving capacity building curriculum for disaster management
  - Capacity building of the actors of the TMF cooperation ecosystem
  - Elaborating and sharing online training tools and dissemination materials in national languages
  
- SO3: Innovation of processes, procedures related to TMF safety





- Pilot type 1: Improving TMF safety by applying advanced modelling of TMF-related risks
- Pilot type 2: Enhancing TMF safety in spatial planning policy
- Pilot type 3: Innovating monitoring and communication procedures better involving and serving local level stakeholders and processes
- Capitalisation on pilot activities and project experience via transnational peer-reviews, case studies and final conference

**Questions/remarks:**

**AOB:**

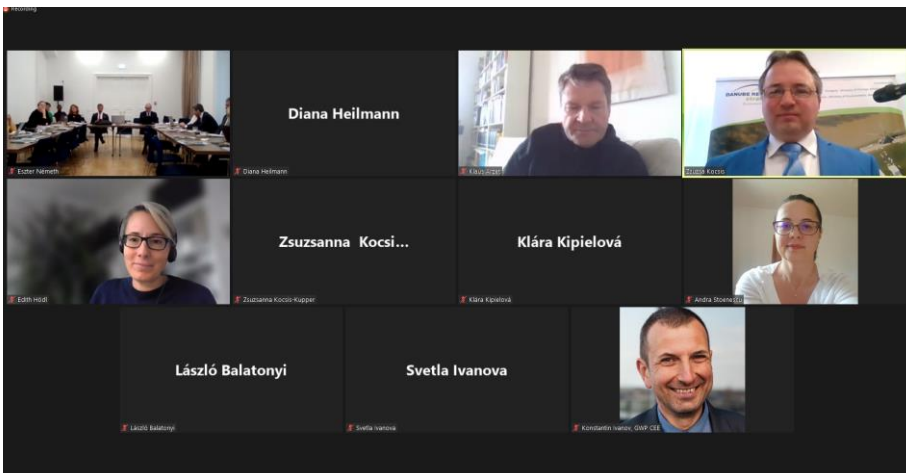
**Mr Horváth PAC4 HU, and Andrea Vranovska PA4 SK** thanked very much for the meeting, thanked DSP for assisting the meeting, for the presenters, and all participants, for active participation. The co-coordinators of PA5, **Mr Balatonyi PAC5 HU** appreciated active involvement.

The minutes were compiled by Ms Kocsis-Kupper, PA4 HU, Ms Németh, PA5 HU

The presentations are available at: <https://waterquality.danube-region.eu/joint-pa4-pa5-sg-meeting-presentations/>



## ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Steering Group MEETING

PA4 – Water Quality

PA5- Environmental Risks

22-23 November 2023

Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1062 Budapest, Bajza u. 44.

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