

ICPDR IKSD

International Commission
for the Protection
of the Danube River

Internationale Kommission
zum Schutz der Donau

Shared waters – joint responsibilities

ICPDR Annual Report 2015

/// Deutschland /// Österreich /// Česká republika /// Slovensko /// Magyarország /// Slovenija /// Hrvatska /// Bosna i Hercegovina /// Srbija /// Crna Gora /// România /// България /// Moldova /// Україна //



“Last year, several countries of the Balkans suffered from devastating floods. The Croatian presidency of the ICPDR in 2015 poses an opportunity to call into our minds that working on sustainable water management is vital for the future of the people and their rivers.”

Dražen Kurečić, ICPDR President 2015 on Danube Day

ICPDR highlights in 2015

Major advances were made towards achieving the ICPDR's long-term vision for sustainable integrated river basin management in the Danube Basin. This included a focus on finalizing management plans for the 2015–21 cycle, as required by EU Water Framework Directive and EU Floods Directive, as well as initiatives on sturgeon, invasive species, and public participation.

Among the many ICPDR initiatives, events and cooperative activities in the Danube River Basin (DRB) during 2015, highlights included:

- Completion of the [Danube River Basin Management \(DRBM\) Plan – Update 2015](#) outlining progress made since the first DRBM Plan and objectives for 2015–2021 in line with the Water Framework Directive – see p5.
- Completion of the [Danube River Basin Flood Risk Management \(DFRM\) Plan](#), the first ever comprehensive DRB overview of flood risk and management priorities – see p9.
- Updates of the [Pressure Assessment](#) – on point-source, nutrient, and hazardous substance emissions – and the [Joint Programme of Measures \(JPM\)](#), including progress with current implementation and future needs – see p6.
- Launch of [projects to conserve sturgeons](#), such as an international monitoring project in the lower Danube financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), and the “STURGENE” project, to preserve sturgeon genetic diversity, under “EUSDR Start” – see p5.
- The [Guidance Paper on Invasive Alien Species \(IAS\)](#) in the Danube Basin was updated with a procedure to assess IAS and a “Black List” of species – see p7.
- Publication of a new report on the [Balkan Floods in 2014](#) with the International Sava River Basin Commission – see p9.
- [Significant public participation activities](#) included the July stakeholder consultation workshop “Voice of the Danube” held in Zagreb, the 12th annual Danube Day with 350 events and the 12th annual Art Master Competition with 612 artworks – see p11.



The ICPDR also provided participation and partnership in important activities and events throughout the DRB and across the world:

- Signing of a [Joint Declaration](#) of the ICPDR Tisza Group and the Framework Convention on the Protection and the Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (represented by UNEP Vienna) on the sustainable development of the Tisza River Basin within the Carpathian region.
- Ongoing participation in [sub-basin management planning](#) including completion of the [2nd Sava River Basin Analysis and Sava River Basin Flood Risk Management Plan](#) – see p12.
- Ongoing participation in the [Danube Sturgeon Task Force](#) – see p5.

Long-term cooperation with corporate partners is central to many of the activities of the ICPDR:

The [Green Danube Partnership](#) with the Coca-Cola System forms the ICPDR's main business partnership; notably supporting Danube Day, Danube Art Master and the Danube Box education kit.



World class expertise: the operational and institutional framework

Since its creation in 1998, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River has brought together representatives from the highest ministerial levels, technical experts and members of both civil society and the scientific community to improve the state of the Danube and its tributaries.

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is the largest international body of river basin management experts in Europe. Its mission is to promote and coordinate sustainable water management for the benefit of all the people of the Danube River Basin.

The structure of the ICPDR

In 1994, the Danube countries signed the [Danube River Protection Convention](#) and established the ICPDR in 1998. The ICPDR is made up of [15 Contracting Parties](#) (Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and the European Union) who have committed themselves to implementing the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC). The ICPDR serves as a forum for coordination on water management issues in which the Contracting Parties agree on legal, administrative and technical measures to maintain and improve the quality of the Danube River and its tributaries.

The ICPDR is steered through an [Ordinary Meeting Group](#), which establishes policy and strategy, and a [Standing Working Group](#) that provides guidance and prepares decisions. Furthermore, Expert Groups, Task Groups and representatives of stakeholder groups provide the scientific and technical basis for the ICPDR's work.

[Expert Groups](#) (EG) are a vital part of the structure of the ICPDR. They address the requirements specified under the Convention and also those related to implementation of the [EU Water Framework Directive](#) (WFD) and the [EU Floods Directive](#) (FD). The Expert Groups comprise:

- [River Basin Management Expert Group](#)
- [Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group](#)
- [Pressures and Measures Expert Group](#)
- [Flood Protection Expert Group](#)
- [Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group](#)
- [Information Management and GIS Expert Group](#)
- [Public Participation Expert Group](#)
- [Strategic Expert Group \(ad-hoc\)](#)

[Task Groups](#) (TG) are established under the responsibility of the permanent expert groups and comprise delegates from existing expert bodies or additional specialists. They include professionals specifically needed for a particular task. Task groups have been formed to deal with issues concerning hydromorphology, economics, groundwater management and nutrients.

ICPDR Observers

Water management is a community responsibility and the active involvement of stakeholders is a core principle in the work of the ICPDR. 23 organisations have taken the opportunity to become observers to the ICPDR:

- [Black Sea Commission \(BSC\)](#)
- [Central Dredging Association \(CEDA\)](#)
- [Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians](#)
- [Danube Civil Society Forum \(DCSF\)](#)
- [Danube Commission \(DC\)](#)
- [Danube Competence Center \(DCC\)](#)
- [Danube Environmental Forum \(DEF\)](#)
- [Danube Parks](#)
- [Danube Tourist Commission \(DIE DONAU\)](#)
- [European Anglers Alliance \(EAA\)](#)
- [European Barge Union \(EBU\)](#)
- [European Water Association \(EWA\)](#)
- [Friends of Nature International \(NFI\)](#)
- [Global Water Partnership \(GWP/CEE\)](#)
- [International Association for Danube Research \(IAD\)](#)
- [International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area \(IAWD\)](#)
- [International Hydrological Programme of UNESCO \(IHP/Danube\)](#)
- [International Sava River Basin Commission \(ISRBC\)](#)
- [RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands](#)
- [Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe \(REC\)](#)
- [VGB PowerTech e.V.](#)
- [via donau](#)
- [World Wide Fund for Nature – Danube-Carpathian Programme \(WWF DCP\)](#)

River Basin Management: a sustainable future for the Danube

Actions by the River Basin Management Expert Group (RBM EG) focussed on finalising the Danube River Basin Management (DRBM) Plan – Update 2015, coordinating with EU processes, and advancing the sustainable management of DRB waters.

The final Danube River Basin Management (DRBM) Plan – Update 2015 was adopted with inputs from the other Expert and Task Groups, public consultations, and research for instance on climate change adaptation. Coordination with EU strategies and directives focused on the Water Framework Directive (WFD), Floods Directive (FD), EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and the EU Strategy for the Danube River (EUSDR).

The [DRBM Plan – Update 2015](#) sets out by highlighting progress made since the first DRBM Plan. This includes a reduction of organic emissions from urban waste waters by half from 2005 levels; a decline of emissions via point and diffuse sources – of nitrogen and phosphorus by approximately 10% and 30% respectively; the construction of more than 120 fish migration aids; or the partial or total reconnection of 50,000 hectares of wetlands and flood plains.

The DRBM Plan then details 2015–2021 objectives in line with WFD implementation, and integrates data from the 2013 Danube Basin Analysis. The final plan was then adopted and launched online in December, and was submitted for endorsement at the Danube Ministerial Conference in February 2016.

A proposal for a [Danube Sediment Management Project](#) was begun to be drafted by a consortium under the lead of Budapest University of Technology for submission to the first call of the EU’s Danube Transnational Programme.

The [Hydromorphology TG](#) contributed to the DRBM Plan A workshop was organized to clarify the role of hydromorphology in WFD implementation and share experiences with national assessment methodologies.

The [ECON TG](#) updated chapters and annexes for the DRBM Plan – Update 2015. The “Resource Document on Economics and Floods” was also finalized, summarizing the economic elements stemming from the EU Floods Directive (FD) in an Annex to the Danube Flood Risk Management (DFRM) Plan.

[Coordination with and between EU strategies and directives](#) is at the centre of many RBM EG activities. Inter-linkages between the EU WFD and EU FD were addressed in specific sub-chapters of both management plans. In addition, a draft document on floods risk management measures and the WFD was elaborated for a workshop jointly organised by the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), UNESCO, WMO, and ICPDR.

Under the responsibility of the relevant country, the *Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower Development* document was translated into additional national languages to make them available in German, Croatian and Czech. The RBM EG produced a related questionnaire for countries, and the preparation of a workshop on hydropower is ongoing to firm up priorities.

The 6th Meeting to discuss implementation of the [Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and the Environment](#) was organised by the ICPDR, ISRBC, and Danube Commission in Vienna.

The [Danube Sturgeon Task Force](#) was busy in 2015. Following the “Fish Migration at the Danube and Iron Gates” project (finalised in 2014), an international monitoring project on sturgeons in the lower Danube, financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB), was launched by the Danube Delta National Institute. The EIB also launched a study to investigate fish migration possibilities at the Gabčíkovo dam. Under “EUSDR Start”, the “STURGENE” project to preserve sturgeon genetic diversity commenced. Other initiatives included an EU LIFE project to restore sterlet (a small sturgeon species) in the upper Danube, and a “Feasibility study summarising the important elements on ex-situ conservation for sturgeons in the DRB”, finalized with DG Regio support.

[Climate change adaptation](#) was addressed in the DRBM Plan – Update 2015 and DFRM Plan. Ongoing ICPDR activities will help update the *ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change*.

Pressures and Measures: assessing challenges, targeting priorities

Updating our understanding of the pressures affecting the Danube environment and the effectiveness of measures designed to alleviate them is vital to achieving long-term sustainable management.

Eliminating untreated wastewater emissions, limiting eutrophication, reducing threats from hazardous substances are among the key basin-wide goals. To this end, updating data on pollution and the analysis and modelling of emissions are essential. Also fundamental is the integration of the relevant EU policies into national and basin-wide strategies.

The Pressure Assessment and the Joint Programme of Measures (JPM) were updated by the Pressures and Measures Expert Group (PM EG) and incorporated into the [DRBM Plan – Update 2015](#).

The [Pressure assessment](#) included updates on point-source emissions, having in view organic substances and nutrient discharges. For [point-source emissions](#), all countries provided the necessary data for emissions from urban agglomerations, wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities. A detailed report on wastewater assessment was provided by UBA Vienna (DRBMP Annex 3). Updated maps of direct emissions from urban treatment plants and industrial facilities were produced with the IMGIS EG..

Modelling of nutrient emissions in the Danube Basin with [MONERIS](#) (Modelling Nutrient Emissions in River Systems) was finalized by the IGB Berlin research institute and discussed with the ICPDR Secretariat, national experts, and the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC). This led to the update of reference status emission maps as well as evaluations of the spatial distribution of nutrient emissions and the importance of sources and pathways (DRBMP Annex 5).

Information on [hazardous substance emissions](#) was collected from Danube countries, particularly data on direct releases from industrial facilities (DRBMP Annex 4). Also incorporated into the DRBM Plan – Update 2015 was an update of ongoing modelling activities to close knowledge gaps (e.g. through the EU Research and Innovation FP7 [SOLUTIONS](#) project or the [EU Joint Research](#)

[Centre](#)), and a basin-wide summary of ongoing activities in identifying priority substance emissions (DRBMP Annex 6), compiled by the PM EG.

The [Joint Programme of Measures](#) was updated to highlight, for each Significant Water Management Issue (SWMI), which measures should be continued and which new ones are needed, along with presenting progress achieved in the implementation of existing measures. Future scenarios reflecting the impacts of different future management conditions and drivers were also discussed and assessed, according to the main activity sectors (i.e. urban waste water, agriculture).

The PM EG continued cooperation with the IMGIS EG to develop a harmonized and consistent ICPDR [emission database](#) that is integrated with DanubeGIS. The Secretariat organized a related training on uploading and validation in order to refine its templates and validation functions.

The PM EG also continued close [cooperation](#) with the [Joint Research Centre](#) on water quality issues. This included a comparative study on nutrient emission modelling activities for the Danube Basin, a “User Story” to demonstrate collaboration and identify future activities to reduce knowledge gaps, and the sharing of datasets.

The Nutrient Task Group focused on several aspects of nutrient pollution caused by agriculture and supported the PM EG to elaborate the respective assessments of the DRBM Plan – Update 2015. In addition, the NTG started discussing how to develop a guidance document on [sustainable agriculture](#). The planned guidance paper would aim at recommending good agricultural practices and policy instruments. It would ensure a balanced agricultural production and economic sustainability for the farmers in the Danube countries and an effective protection of the water bodies in the DRB and the Black Sea coastal waters against nutrient pollution.

Monitoring and Assessment: quantifying problems... and progress

Ongoing water assessment is a vital process: ensuring our water is fit for consumption and targeting action to enhance chemical, ecological and quantitative status.

The Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group (MA EG) is responsible for water quality assessment issues including the Joint Danube Surveys (JDS). Its remit covers operation of the Trans-National Monitoring Network (TNMN) and Analytical Quality Control (AQC) program. The priorities for 2015 included inputs into the Guidance Paper on Invasive Alien Species, DRBM Plan – Update 2015, TNMN, JDS3, and groundwater studies.

Hungary and Serbia updated the [Guidance Paper on Invasive Alien Species \(IAS\)](#) in the Danube Basin, with a procedure to assess IAS and a “Black List” of species. In addition, using JDS3 maps, two maps were prepared for the [DRBM Plan – Update 2015](#) to show the IAS contamination of particular sites.

The MA EG reviewed [gaps and uncertainties](#) in the assessment of ecological and chemical status for the DRBM Plan – Update 2015. The analysis of [mercury in biota](#) was found to be critical for the assessment of chemical status because it caused bad status in all analyzed surface water bodies during the JDS3 and also in the DRBM Plan – Update 2015. In response, it was agreed that mercury in fish would be included in the TNMN for three-year cycles and that countries would report national findings at the next MA EG meeting. The MA EG intends to explore the [priority substances](#) which caused failure to achieve good status in the DRBM Plan – Update 2015.

The MA EG also discussed upgrading the TNMN to monitor the [impacts of climate change](#) and agreed on the following parameters to be explored: temperature, discharge, water level, pH, and oxygen. Countries were further requested to report on available national studies on the impact of climate changes on water quality. The MA EG selected five TNMN stations as representative for assessing impacts.

The [Joint Danube Survey 3 \(JDS3\)](#) Technical Report and public report were finalized and distributed. Based on JDS3 data, the [draft List of Danube River Specific Substances](#) was updated, to be further revised in cooperation with the EU Research and Innovation FP7 SOLUTIONS project and validated with the emissions data in cooperation with the PM EG.

The [Groundwater Task Group \(GW TG\)](#) collected all necessary information for the DRBM Plan – Update 2015 from all countries. A new map was prepared to demonstrate the geographical distribution of groundwater used for drinking water production. The GW TG published results on bank-filtered water and drinking water through a public leaflet. Furthermore, it was agreed to update the ICPDR GW Guidance after the DRBM Plan Update’s finalization in 2015.



Accident Prevention and Control: reducing risks and responding to emergencies

Rapid execution of the ICPDR Accident Emergency Warning System, identification and action at risk sites, and planning cross-border emergency responses – all result in a cleaner, safer Danube environment.

The Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group's (APC EG) efforts were dominated by testing and maintaining the Accident Emergency Warning System (AEWS), updating inventories on accident risk spots and contaminated sites, and considering the application of the research of external organizations to Danube countries.

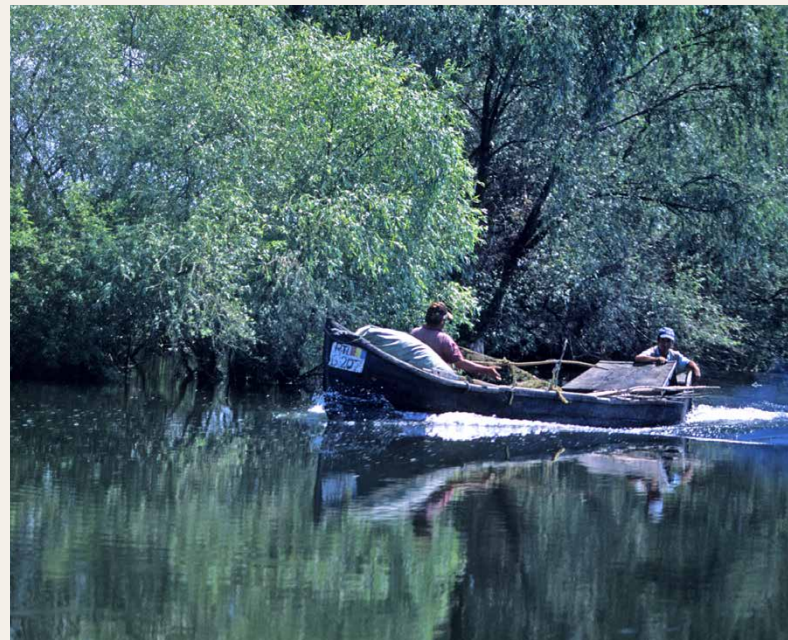
The [AEWS system](#) was tested in February for functionality and the cooperation of Principle International Alert Centres (PIACs) during an accident. All PIACs participated actively. In response, the APC EG agreed on a number of amendments to the Danube AEWS to refine system operations. It further agreed that the next such multinational test, as well as AEWS operations training, will be organized in the frame of the APC EG meeting in spring 2016.

In November, the AEWS system was checked for 24/7 operability of the PIACs. The main results for operability were that most of the PIACs reacted within the three-hour required response time. Delayed response of one PIAC was caused by the failure of an external GSM operator and this failure was successfully eliminated thanks to the test.

On [accident prevention planning](#), an ad-hoc strategic meeting for experts was organized in Vienna to discuss how to strengthen progress in this area and future working objectives. The APC EG continued the update of the Accident Risk Spots (ARS) and Contaminated Sites (CS) inventories for the basin-wide catalogue of accident risk hot-spots. The Secretariat provided countries with consolidated templates for data submission and uploading to DanubeGIS. The APC EG will make use of the updated inventories to prioritize the accident hot-spots and to recommend safety measures to be implemented in the key industrial sectors.

Representatives of the project “[Improving the Safety of Industrial Tailings Management Facilities Based on the Example of Ukrainian Facilities](#)” were invited to the APC EG meeting. APC EG is looking into whether the project's checklist methodology – used to assess the risk of tailings facilities in causing accidental pollution and to determine measures – could be applied in the Danube Basin.

The APC EG also invited the [UNECE Secretariat](#) to a future meeting to gauge if Danube countries could use its findings on guidance and checklists for [cross-border contingency planning](#), elaborated by the UNECE Joint ad hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents. The UNECE's document aims to consider trans-boundary issues in contingency planning and to develop a checklist that harmonizes approaches used in the prevention of accidents with potential impacts on transboundary watercourses. It was further agreed to prepare an overview of the contingency planning exercises in Danube countries within the last three years.



Sustainable flood protection across the Basin

The ICPDR's Danube River Flood Risk Management Plan sees movement away from defensive action against hazards in favour of proactive, sustainable and dynamic management of flood risk.

Following public consultations, the Danube River Flood Risk Management (DFRM) Plan was finalized and published. New chapters, annexes, and project ideas were added to the plan. The FP EG jointly prepared a report on the Balkan floods in 2014 with the ISRBC.

In May, the ICPDR adopted the draft [Danube River Flood Risk Management \(DFRM\) Plan](#), after which it was submitted for public consultation until July, as well as to the July ICPDR Stakeholder Conference. After incorporating public comments, the final plan was adopted by the ICPDR and published on the ICPDR website in December. The ICPDR encouraged national delegations to update their national plans and link the DFRM Plan on their websites.

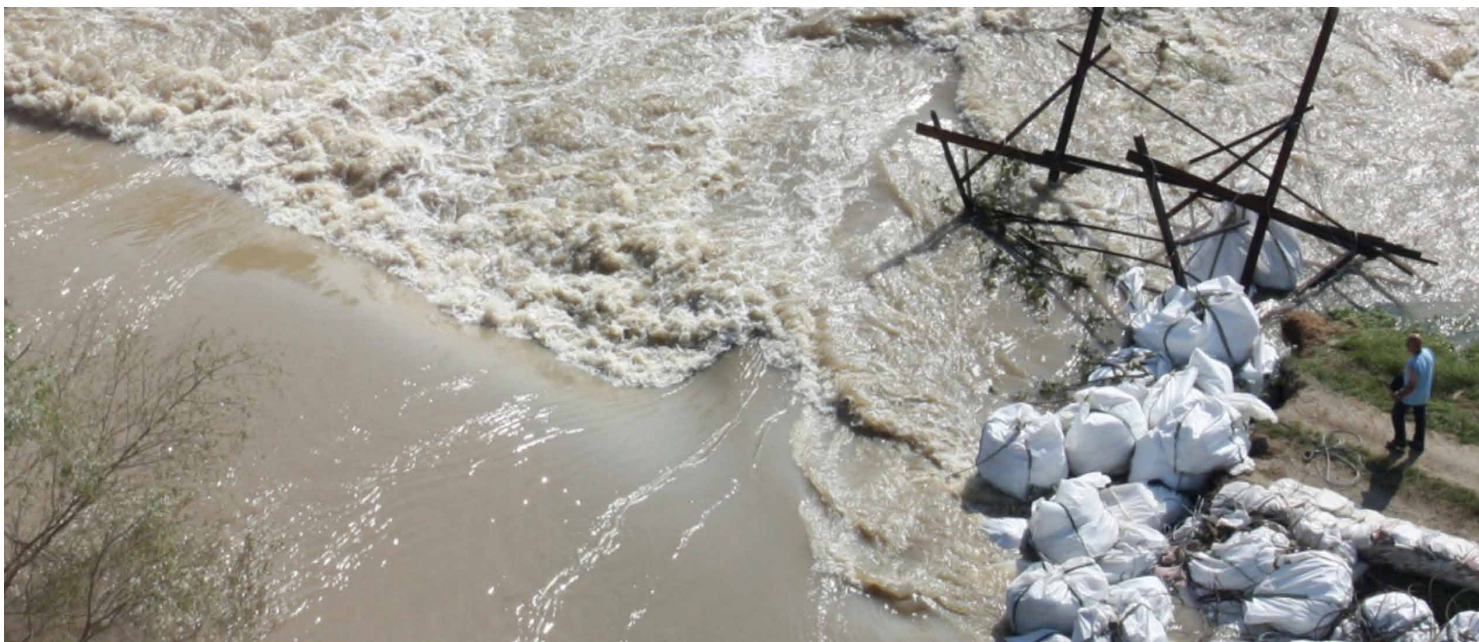
Separate chapters (e.g. floodplain/wetland reconnection) were created in the DFRM Plan to better demonstrate the links with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). A workshop was organized with the International Sava River Basin Commission

(ISRBC) to discuss implementation of the WFD and EU Floods Directive in the Danube Basin. To address economic elements from the EU Floods Directive, a "[Floods Resource Document](#)" was added as Annex 5 to the plan. New annexes will also include lists of bilateral agreements and competent authorities.

The FP EG incorporated a number of [project proposals and ideas on flood risk management](#) for the period of 2014-2020 into Annex 2 of the DFRM Plan. The project ideas include those under discussion by the ICPDR and those proposed through the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

The FP EG jointly prepared a report on the [Balkan floods in 2014](#) with the ISRBC. The report was edited by Serbia and published by the ICPDR.

The FP EG agreed to update a 2009 [map of the hydrometeorological metadatabase](#) of Danube countries using the DanubeGIS. The new map presented water gauge stations, which was included in the DFRM Plan, and meteorological stations, which require further update.



GIS: mapping out a positive future for the Danube

Developing measures that address basin-wide problems relies on an accurate and current knowledge-base, and one that also allows different scenarios to be modelled and evaluated.

The Information Management and Geographic Information System Expert Group (IMGIS EG) plays a vital role in conceptualising, informing and presenting the tasks of the ICPDR. It is responsible for the creation and improvement of datasets and maps, the management and development of the DanubeGIS, and other online systems such as the ICPDR website. As such, it supports and advises other EGs and sub-basin activities. GIS maps provide a detailed picture of the state of the region – its utilisation and management – presenting future scenarios and pinpointing areas with optimal potential.

For [EU Floods Directive reporting](#), the Flood Hazard and Risk maps were finalized. New templates for water gauging and precipitation stations were implemented in the DanubeGIS into which all countries uploaded their new datasets.

For [EU Water Framework Directive \(WFD\) reporting](#) through the [DRBM Plan – Update 2015](#), updates of all maps were prepared. Countries were asked to correct issues reported through DanubeGIS. New templates for chemical status based on mercury in biota were implemented in the DanubeGIS and filled by all countries having available data. The Secretariat also made a special effort to integrate datasets from Montenegro into the DanubeGIS for inclusion in the final DRBM Plan – Update 2015.

Progress in integrating the [PM EG Emissions Database](#) with the [DanubeGIS](#) included preparation of the upload functionality for Excel files by the PM EG for PRTR and UWWT datasets, with data submission scheduled for 2016. The ARS and CS templates for data upload by the APC EG were also implemented into the DanubeGIS.

The Secretariat updated the [DanubeGIS Upload Guidance](#) document based on lessons learned. It also updated the [DanubeGIS Meta-data Guidance](#) document, including a full list with definitions and

examples of all elements. Both documents support the data submission to DanubeGIS by national GIS experts.

In early 2015, the focus of [DanubeGIS system development](#) was to improve analysis functions to retrieve aggregated tables and charts from the submitted datasets for use in reporting through the DRBM Plan 2015. The next milestone will be the implementation of online maps and GIS web services using the final report data of the DFRM and DRBM Plan 2015, based on the DanubeGIS Data Policy and the new DanubeGIS Maps and Layers documentation. The future public section of the DanubeGIS will also have a web form for users to request download access to confidential datasets from countries.

The cooperation between the Secretariat and the [EU Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#) is ongoing in order to implement DanubeGIS metadata discovery services, as well as spatial data view and download services, available for integration into the [Danube Reference Data and Service Infrastructure \(DRDSI\)](#). The DRDSI aims at providing access to data and services, facilitating cooperation between Danube countries, and developing a knowledge base for the Danube Basin.

The ICPDR and [International Sava River Basin Commission \(ISRBC\)](#) have enhanced their coordination in systems development through increased participation in meetings and exchanges of information. This is expected to harmonize overlaps in datasets in the DanubeGIS and the newly developed SavaGIS.

The ICPDR Information System [Danubis](#) was re-developed by the Secretariat with guidance by the IMGIS EG. The new system is based on Drupal, an open source content management system, and provides high scalability, security, and customisability. Continuity is also provided, as all existing content is migrated and old links will redirect to the same content on the new system. The focus of improvements was put on core functions of the system – the sharing of documents as well as meetings and contacts information among the ICPDR community – which will result in easier navigation and a better overview for users. New features include a bulk download of documents, as well as meeting registration and commenting functions.

Promoting public participation and communicating the Danube!

Publicizing information about the DRB and encouraging involvement is central to the activities of the ICPDR. Actions spread messages about sustainable development, environmental conservation, Danube solidarity, and good practice throughout the region.

2015 saw the Public Participation Expert Group (PP EG) finalize the public consultation phase for two management plans, start preparations for the 2016 Ministerial Meeting, and implement a successful Danube Day and Danube Arts Master competition. The PP EG further took steps to enhance corporate sponsorship and cooperation, and identified communications measures for sturgeon as well as Danube cruise tourists.

A successful [public consultation](#) phase for the draft [Danube River Basin Management \(DRBM\) Plan – Update 2015](#) and [Danube Flood Risk Management \(DFRM\) Plan](#) ended in July. Among the activities performed, written comments were collected from a wide range of organisations. The July stakeholder consultation workshop “Voice of the Danube”, held in Zagreb, was conducted in partnership with the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and attracted over 80 participants mainly specializing in water management. Online questionnaires and a social media campaign, through Facebook and Twitter, helped to expand the diversity of target groups beyond expert stakeholders.

Printed versions of the two management plans, as well as a related information brochure targeting the interested public, will be available for the [2016 Ministerial Meeting](#). The information brochure was developed with the involvement of the RBM EG, FP EG, and PP EG. The PP EG also began planning communication aspects of the Ministerial Meeting, such as media relations or film showcasing the Danube Art Master.

The [12th Danube Day](#) saw the organisation of more than 350 events in 11 countries of the Danube Basin including the traditional passing of the fish flag between Germany and Austria. Tens of thousands of participants attended the activities managed by over 850 partner organisations. The PP EG activities included planning the event’s “Get active...” theme, press releases, Danube Day bags and poster designs, and a regularly updated [danubeday.org](#) website and partner sites.

The [12th annual Danube Art Master competition](#), implemented with the GWP CEE, saw 612 artworks submitted from 1314 children and 190 individual schools in 11 countries. The dynamic theme tasked children to create costumes and masquerades from materials from local rivers and lakes. The winning entry, “Black Swan”, was from a child in Sarajevo. The staging of the competition in 2016 will depend on continued financial support by the Coca-Cola System.

Progress continued on two new initiatives. Firstly, a [Sturgeon Communication Strategy](#) was developed by the PP EG to communicate sturgeon as a flagship species. Secondly, the ICPDR began to address the rising number of [Danube cruise tourists](#) with specific communication measures, including the preparation of on-board lectures in cooperation with cruise companies.

Promotion of existing materials continued. Now comprising seven national versions, [Danubebox.org](#) was extended to host the contents of the Serbian Danube Box. In addition, the [ICPDR website](#) attracted roughly 10% more visitors than in 2014.

Partnership and cooperation: river basin planning in the sub-basins and across the world

Forging strong, successful partnerships at the local, national and international scale makes the work of the ICPDR a model for the rest of the world.

The ICPDR supports the development of sub-basin programmes and partnerships with neighbouring regions. Such planning is vital for sustainable integrated management of the Danube Basin.

Sava River Basin (SRB)

2015 saw the development of the [2nd Sava River Basin Analysis](#); [SRB Flood Risk Management Plan](#); [Sava GIS](#); as well as systems on flood forecasting/warning and hydrological information. The International Commission for the SRB was also active in projects including the *Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus Assessment*; *Improvement of Joint Flood Management Actions*; *Water and Climate Adaptation Plan*; *Rehabilitation and Development of Navigation*; *Towards the Assessment of Ecological Status of Water Bodies*; *Towards Practical Guidance for Sustainable Sediment Management*; *Flood Modelling Activities*; and initiatives to enhance stakeholder involvement.

Tisza River Basin (TRB)

The experts of the TRB countries and the members of the [ICPDR Tisza Group](#) drafted a [Tisza Project Proposal Concept](#) and submitted an expression of Interest for the [JOINTISZA project](#) (Strengthening cooperation between river basin management and flood risk prevention to enhance the status of waters of the Tisza River Basin) to the 1st Call of the Danube Transnational Programme. The preparation of the JOINTISZA expression of interest was funded by an ICPDR-allocated EUSDR PA4 fund. A [Roadmap](#) was elaborated to develop the [Tisza Analysis Report](#) and update of the [Integrated Tisza River Basin Management \(ITRBM\) Plan](#). A Joint Declaration of the ICPDR Tisza Group and the Framework Convention on the Protection and the Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (represented by UNEP Vienna) on the sustainable development of the Tisza River Basin within the Carpathian region was also signed.

Prut River Basin (PRB)

Activities focussed on projects in Ukraine (UA) and Moldova (MD) and on EU Directives. Work progressed on the EU ENPI 2012–16 [Environmental Protection of International River Basins \(EPIRB\) project](#), which aims to improve water quality in cross-

border rivers in the Black Sea region and Belarus. The project includes a [joint MD-UA Prut RBM Plan](#), training EPIRB experts, and a workshop to discuss RBM plans in MD, UA and RO. Other activities encompassed monitoring, information exchange, climate change adaptation, and the estimation of biological resources.

Danube Delta (DD)

The Environment and Security Initiative's ICPDR-implemented [ENVSEC DD Project](#) concerns cross-border cooperation and capacity-building towards integrated RBM, and constitutes an important step towards the preparation of a [DD RBM Plan](#). A [draft DD Analysis Report](#) is undergoing finalisation. [Climate proofing the DD through integrated land and water management](#) covering UA, MD and RO was funded through the EC Environment and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (ENRTP) programme, through which the [DD Adaptation Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#) were key project results.

The ICPDR is an acknowledged global leader in river basin management, with particular expertise in fostering international cooperation.

EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

The ICPDR was prominent at the 4th Annual Forum of EUSDR in Ulm, with involvement in sessions such as settling water management priorities, improving flood safety, and fostering cooperation for sturgeon and the environment. EUSDR funding was obtained for project proposals for priority actions on sediments, sturgeon, and the Tisza and Sava sub-basins. A number of initiatives aimed at restoring sturgeon in the basin were also launched (see p5 for details).

The ICPDR receives many requests from commissions, institutions and countries to attend meetings, share experience and support research. Examples included meetings with the International Sava River Basin Commission and at the 4th European Water Conference in Brussels. In 2015, the commission also hosted study group visits from Malaysia, China, Indonesia, India, and the Rhone (France) and Yesilirmak (Turkey) river basins.

Regular Budget and Financial Contribution

Regular Budget for the Financial Year 2015

Three independent auditors, appointed by the Contracting Parties, audited the consolidated financial statement including the accounting records of the ICPDR for the financial year from 1 January to 31 December 2015.

The Audit Team certified that the Statement of Accounts is correct and the contents, structure and details are in accordance with ICPDR rules and regulations and accounting principles assuring transparency of financial management.

Contributions Financial Year 2015

Contracting Party	Contribution in %	Contribution in Euro	Actual payment 2015 in Euro
Germany	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Austria	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Czech Republic	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Slovakia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Hungary	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Slovenia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Croatia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Serbia	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Bulgaria	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Romania	8.45	98,500.00	98,500.00
Moldova	1.00	11,656.81	0.00
Ukraine	4.50	52,455.62	52,455.62
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4.50	52,455.62	52,455.62
Montenegro	3.00	34,970.41	34,970.41
European Union	2.50	29,142.01	29,142.01
Total	100.00	1,165,680.47	1,154,023.66

Expenditure Financial Year 2015

Budget Heading	Approved Budget in Euro	Expenditure in Euro	Balance in Euro
Staff	658,750.00	650,956.66	7,793.34
Office Running	168,500.00	148,448.41	20,051.59
Publications	106,500.00	87,712.13	18,787.87
Travel & Meetings	109,500.00	83,064.36	26,435.64
Services	122,430.47	67,437.17	54,993.30
Total	1,165,680.47	1,037,618.73	128,061.74

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