
Summary Report of the 19th ICPDR Ordinary Meeting



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for the Protection
of the Danube River Internationale Kommission
zum Schutz der Donau

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Table of content

Table of content	3
Introduction	5
1. General Issues	5
1.1. Opening	5
1.2. Adoption of the agenda	5
1.3. Adoption of the Summary Report of the 14 th Standing Working Group Meeting, Modra, Czech Republic	5
1.4. Briefing of the President on 2016 Presidency activities	6
1.5. Announcement of the President of the ICPDR for 2017	6
1.6. ICPDR membership / observership	8
1.7. Chairpersonship in EGs and TGs	8
1.8. Information by Ukraine	8
2. Finance, Staff, Administration	8
2.1. Budgetary situation of the ICPDR	8
2.2. ICPDR Budget 2017 and 2018, 2019, 2020	9
2.3. Contribution Keys 2018-2020	10
2.4. Adoption of the Auditors Report 2015	10
2.5. Staff-related issues	11
2.5.1. Support Staff	12
2.5.2. Interns	12
2.6. Internal Regulations	12
Greeting of Observers and Guests by the President	13
3. Expert Group activities	13
3.1. Flood Protection EG	14
3.2. Monitoring and Assessment EG	17
3.3. Pressures and Measures EG	22
3.4. River Basin Management EG	25
Special Item Discussions	27
3.5. Information Management & GIS EG	34
3.6. Accident Prevention & Control EG	35
3.7. Public Participation EG	37
4. Sub-basin activities	40
4.1. International Sava River Basin Commission	40
4.2. Tisza River Basin	40
4.3. Prut River Basin	41
4.4. Danube Delta	42

5. Cooperation & Partnership	42
5.1. EU Grant	42
5.2. EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)	43
5.3. Danube – Black Sea	45
5.4. Visits from Countries, Commissions & Academia	46
5.5. Business partnership	46
6. Projects with ICPDR involvement	47
6.1. Project SOLUTIONS	47
6.2. Coca-Cola – WWF – Partnership for a living Danube	48
6.3. MARS Project	49
6.4. FAIRway Danube Project	49
6.5. AQUACROSS Project	50
6.6. STURGENE Project	50
6.7. Iron Gates Follow-up Monitoring Project	51
6.8. Danube project on hydromorphology and river restoration	51
6.9. DANUBIUS	53
6.10. REVISTUR Project	53
7. Information on projects with transboundary relevance	54
8. ICPDR Meetings & Events	54
8.1. Meetings 2017	54
8.2. ICPDR meetings	55
9. Any other business	55
9.1. Issues on EU presidency 2017	55
9.2. End of Meeting	55
Glossary	56

Introduction

The 19th ICPDR Ordinary Meeting was held in Vienna, Austria, on 6 to 7 December 2016. All Contracting Parties except for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro attended the meeting. The Chairpersons of the RBM EG, FP EG, MA EG, IMGIS EG, PM EG, PP EG and ad hoc S EG also participated. Many of the accredited observers and some additional guests attended the meeting as well. For details see the attached list of participants (Annex 2).

The Session was particularly devoted to:

- Budgetary situation and ICPDR administration,
- Discussion on Expert Groups' work,
- International cooperation, partnerships and projects.

1. General Issues

1.1. Opening

The ICPDR President, Mr. Peter J. Kalaš, opened the 19th ICPDR Ordinary Meeting and welcomed all participants in Vienna. He expressed thanks to the Expert Groups and the Secretariat for the work done and invited all for a constructive participation.

The President announced that, since the last Standing Working Group Meeting, Mr. Mykola Kuzyo, Deputy Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources in Ukraine, has been appointed a new Head of the Ukrainian Delegation. The President welcomed Mr. Kuzyo in Vienna.

The President also welcomed the incoming ICPDR President Mr. Peter Gammeltoft.

1.2. Adoption of the agenda

The ES invited Mr. Mykola Kuzyo, Deputy Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources to give an overview of progress in Ukraine in harmonising the national law with the EU environmental legislation. The Agenda was adopted with this additional point 1.8 and is presented in Annex 1.

1.3. Adoption of the Summary Report of the 14th Standing Working Group Meeting, Modra, Czech Republic

The Summary Report of the 14th Standing Working Group Meeting was circulated to the delegations following the meeting and comments were received from the delegation of Germany. These comments have been fully incorporated in the draft final version of the text.

Resolution:

The ICPDR accepts the Summary Report of the 14th Standing Working Group Meeting including all resolutions of the meeting, without amendments.

1.4. Briefing of the President on 2016 Presidency activities

The ICPDR President, Mr. Peter J. Kalaš, informed about his activities in support of the ICPDR in 2016.

The President identified three priorities in 2016: adoption of the DRBMP and DFRMP, fostering cooperation in DRB and climate change issues. He reported that he had visited number of the ICPDR Contracting Parties in 2016 and still plans to visit Serbia in January 2017. The President promoted the ICPDR activities at EUSDR events and during his visits to international conferences. He had established a working contact with FAO on agricultural issues. The President underlined the important role of the private sector in solving river basin management problems in DRB as well as the importance of cooperation with universities.

The President mentioned the financial instruments which have a potential to support the ICPDR activities (EBRD partnerships, Green Climate Fund) and reiterated that the Czech Republic is ready to strongly support the EU in its ICPDR presidency in 2017.

Germany thanked Mr. Kalaš for his very engaged presidency and expressed hope that he would stay further with the Danube community.

Serbia looked forward to welcoming the ICPDR President in January 2017.

The EU thanked the President for his active approach and highlighted the intention to continue acting in a similar spirit during its Presidency in 2017.

Slovenia thanked the President for his committed work and for the idea of bringing students into the ICPDR activities. Austria thanked the President for the excellent way he was presenting the ICPDR on top international events as a model case of international cooperation. Austria highlighted the proactive approach taken by the President towards the potential donors.

1.5. Announcement of the President of the ICPDR for 2017

The floor was given to Mr. Peter Gammeltoft, the incoming ICPDR President who introduced himself and introduced the EU plans and priorities for 2017.

Mr. Gammeltoft reminisced about his involvement in setting up the interim Danube Task Force in 1991 which was the precursor of the future ICPDR and he considered it to be a great honour for him to take over the role of the ICPDR President in 2017.

He highlighted the importance of the UN's sustainable development goals from 2015 and, in particular the very clear statement in the UNGA resolution about their indivisibility so that social, economic and environmental goals all have to be met and that win-win solutions to the issues identified and implemented. The goals are therefore particularly important when addressing current difficulties with integration of the environmental goals in other policy areas such as energy, transport and agriculture.

He also pointed out that the ICPDR is widely and internationally recognised as a model case of a good transboundary cooperation in water management.

Mr. Gammeltoft appreciated the adoption of DRBMP and DFRMP. The challenge will now be to ensure their full implementation and integration into other policy areas. It is a cause for concern that

the finalisation of the national plans is in some cases lagging behind. The EU will in 2017 strive to ensure a better alignment of the use of the available financial instruments of the EU institutions and the implementation needs of the ICPDR Contracting Parties, in particular non-EU States, to speed up finalisation and implementation of national plans. There will be a focus on both investment needs and on capacity building. Mr. Gammeltoft announced that strengthening of financial support to ICPDR-related activities will be the priority for 2017.

Another priority of the EU Presidency in 2017 is the agricultural impact on the environment which is particularly important for the preparation of the planned “Guidance Document on Sustainable Agriculture to reduce Nutrient Inputs”. Mr. Gammeltoft underlined the connection between good water management and sustainable agricultural development which necessitates a close cooperation between the environmental and agricultural sectors. To foster this process cooperation on key policy issues between DG ENV and DG AGRI has been strengthened in the European Commission, first meeting between EU Member States’ water and agricultural directors is planned for the Spring 2017. Mr. Gammeltoft emphasised that, also in the area of agriculture, assistance in funding of certain water-friendly measures play a key role in ensuring good cooperation between water and agriculture sectors.

Another priority of the EU Presidency in 2017 is to increase the visibility of ICPDR. There is in particular an ambition to aim for an increased attention and visibility outside the water community. Attention is needed here in order to mobilise support for more water friendly measures in other sectors. Attention and support outside the water community is needed if we are to attain our ambition of better integration with other policies. The EU will strive to organise an event to raise visibility vis-à-vis other EU institutions than the Commission, e.g. the European Parliament.

Mr. Gammeltoft mentioned that the Commission is planning to publish implementation reports on the EU Member States’ 2nd River Basin Management Plans and 1st Flood Risk Management Plans in late 2017 or in early 2018.

Finally, there are a number of other issues that may require attention by the Presidency in the course of 2017, e.g. the further application of the ICPDR “Guiding Principles for Sustainable Hydropower Development in the Danube Basin” and the “Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environment (e.g. the METEET activity), activities as regards adaptation to climate change as well as support for the Joint Danube Survey and the promotion of Danube sturgeons.

Slovenia welcomed the visions and priorities presented by Mr Gammeltoft and recommended to include the cooperation with EUSDR with the view of making it more effective.

Austria appreciated the comprehensive program for 2017, and reminded that the resources are limited at the Secretariat so an active support is expected from all ICPDR Contracting Parties and Austria is willing to provide such support. Austria highlighted that the cooperation with the agricultural and hydropower sectors and with EUSDR are the challenges for 2017. Germany expressed support to the priorities announced by the incoming President for 2017.

Hungary underlined the need of strengthening cooperation with EUSDR and announced that personal changes of coordinators of Priority areas 4 and 5 are envisaged from the Hungarian side.

The Executive Secretary expressed full support to the priorities announced by the incoming President, and reminded the importance of fostering cooperation with BSC. He stated that the Secretariat is continuing its effort to employ available funds for improving the situation in cooperation with the BSC.

Slovakia welcomed the priorities for 2017 and informed about the water-related activities which took place under the current Slovak Presidency in the EU.

The European Union expressed full support to the priorities for 2017 as announced by the incoming President and also to the current program of the ICPDR.

Mr. Gammeltoft confirmed the potential of the EU Presidency in 2017 for making the cooperation with EUSDR more effective and for enhancing the cooperation with the BSC.

1.6. ICPDR membership / observership

No additional observers have applied to join the ICPDR since the last Standing Working Group Meeting on 16-17 June 2016.

1.7. Chairpersonship in EGs and TGs

Mr. Joachim Heidemeier, the PM EG Chairperson informed the Secretariat that due to the higher work load of a new position to which he had been appointed in the German administration, he would not be able to hold the PM EG Chairperson position from January 2017. Mr. Heidemeier hold his duties as chairperson till the 19th Ordinary Meeting in December 2016. To ensure continuity the Secretariat asked the Heads of Delegations (HoDs) to nominate candidates for the PM EG Chairperson position by mid-September 2016. Romania nominated Ms. Elena Tuchiú for the position and she was also supported by other HoDs. The PM EG members unanimously supported Ms. Tuchiú in her nomination. The PM EG asked the Secretariat to communicate the group's decision at the 19th Ordinary Meeting and to formulate a resolution for approval of the HoDs.

The list of Expert Groups and Task Groups and the associated responsibility of Experts of the Secretariat was presented by the Executive Secretary.

1.8. Information by Ukraine

Ukraine briefed about recent developments in water policy at the national level. Six water related EU directives will be transposed into national legislation based on the accession agreement. National water law will enter into force by February 2017. Ukraine sees ICPDR as a successful model for international water management cooperation.

Ukraine confirmed that its financial contributions to the ICPDR will be settled as required.

Germany welcomed the new Ukrainian HoD. Germany would like to get familiar with the new Ukrainian water act.

Austria informed about supporting WFD implementation in Ukraine through an EU project.

2. Finance, Staff, Administration

2.1. Budgetary situation of the ICPDR

The Executive Secretary presented the information on the budgetary situation of the ICPDR as of 31.10.2016. He mentioned the status of the:

- Regular Budget: Contributions, Expenditures, Balance
- Special Funds
- Bank Reconciliation

There is an outstanding contribution payment for the financial year 2016 from Ukraine, and, partially, from Montenegro (bank transfer fee). Ukraine informed about its willingness to pay as soon as possible.

The budget savings proposed during OM-18, which are being carried out on ongoing basis as well as identifying and implementing other capacities to minimise the Secretariat's expenditures, resulted in notable savings (approximately 29,000 €).

For the last couple of months, the Secretariat has been involved in in-depth discussions and preparation to application for an EU LIFE project on implementation of the 2nd DRBM Plan and 1st DFRMP (more details in the Summary sheet on agenda item 5.1), of a total of 320,000 EUR, co-financed in 55% by the European Commission. The open 45 % of necessary funds, which equals to 147,000 EUR, would be required from the ICPDR. Most of this self-financing amount will be covered in-kind by the ICPDR EGs and Secretariat staff work and regular budget financed activities.

Planning the relevant project's activities and the resources for the self-financing part of the LIFE 2017, the Secretariat would like to engage the savings achieved during the current year towards applicable activities related to the planned LIFE project, where external inputs would be necessary.

Germany thanked the Executive Secretary for a transparent explanation of the budget and supported the projects proposed in line with the goals of 2017 Presidency and of JDS4.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR approves the use of the savings realised in 2016 for the following special projects under a special fund on activities determined by the planned LIFE 2017 grant as follows:

- **harmonised approach on Invasive Alien Species: 11,000 €**
- **improved hydromorphological assessments and linkage to water status: 11,000 €**
- **methodological approach for regionalised nutrient surplus calculations from agriculture: 7,000 €.**

2.2. ICPDR Budget 2017 and 2018, 2019, 2020

Budget 2017

The proposed Budget 2017, Version 2, was based on the Contribution Keys for 2017, discussed at the OM-17 in December 2014 and further presented during StWG-12 in June 2015.

The originally proposed Budget 2017 was increased by 5,917.16 EUR in comparison with the year 2016.

Upon analysing the situation, Troika recommended to freeze the Budget 2017 at the level of Budget 2016. During OM-18 the Budget 2017 vers.3 was approved.

Detailed positions of the budget include the planned activities as well as foreseen changes. Approach to continue on the potential savings proposed during OM-18, which are being realised on ongoing basis as well as identifying and implementing other capacities to minimise the Secretariat's expenditures, has been incorporated within the budget 2017.

Budget 2018 - 2020

The proposed Budget 2018, Version 2, Budget 2019, Version 1 and Budget 2020, Version 1 are based on the Contribution Keys for 2018-2020, which were approved during StWG-14 in June 2016.

The Budget of 2018 was increased by 0.5% (nominally by 5,828.40 EUR) in comparison to the year 2017.

The Budget of 2019 was increased by 0.5% (nominally by 5,857.54 EUR) in comparison to the year 2018.

The Budget of 2020 was increased by 0.5% (nominally by 5,886.83 EUR) in comparison to the year 2019.

Germany suggested that in resolutions b) – d) note should be taken of instead of approving the budgets 2018 -2020.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) adopts the Budget 2017 (IC 176 Vers. 4)**
- b) takes note of the Budget 2018 (IC 192 Vers. 2)**
- c) takes note of the Budget 2019 (IC 197 Vers. 1)**
- d) takes note of the Budget 2020 (IC 177 Vers. 1).**

2.3. Contribution Keys 2018-2020

During StWG-14 in Modra the Contribution Keys for the year 2018 were adopted as proposed in the table ICWD/208-28.04.2016, Vers.1.

For the years 2019 and 2020, the Secretariat was asked to recalculate the percentage and nominal contribution keys according to the resolutions adopting an increase of 0,5 % yearly in comparison to the previous year.

The Contribution Keys for the year 2020 show very modest increase as the inflation rate so far in advance is hard to be predicted.

The recalculated Contribution Keys for the years 2019-2020 were incorporated in the minutes from 14th Standing Working Group Meeting, adopted under the agenda item 1.3.

Resolution:

The ICPDR adopts the Contribution Keys (ICWD-208 v.4_21.06.2016) for the period 2019-2020.

2.4. Adoption of the Auditors Report 2015

The Audit Team of the ICPDR evaluated the Statement of Accounts of the ICPDR for the period from 01.01 – 31.12.2015 presented by the Secretariat and audited the bookkeeping and all related documents on 19.04.2016.

The Audit Team confirmed the correctness of the Statement of Accounts as of 31.12.2015 and recognised that all corresponding documents are in line with the requirements.

There were no recommendations passed to the Secretariat's staff by the auditors.

Because the auditors are nominated for three years period, at the next StWG meeting the ICPDR Contracting Parties will be asked to consider nominating Auditors for next three years period. Austria praised the finance administration of the Secretariat for a flawless performance.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) takes a note of the Auditors' Report on the Financial Activities of the ICPDR for the period from 01.01 – 31.12.2015 and agrees with the Response to the Auditors' Report prepared by the Secretariat;**
- b) takes this opportunity to thank the Audit Team (Ms. Mila Kovacevic, Mr. Gerhard Reichebner, Mr. Peter Fülöp for their engagement, cooperation and professional performance.**

2.5. Staff-related issues

a) New employment

Following on the selection procedure steps for two open positions, the contracts were offered to and accepted by the following Technical Experts:

- Hödl Edith – River Basin Management
- Masliah-Gilkarov Hélène – Public Participation and Communication

b) Extension of staff contracts

According to ICPDR Staff Regulations (Art. 3.9 b) the two expiring contracts of Technical Experts were extended by Executive Secretary:

- Major Zoran => extended until 30.04.2019
- Kovacs Adam => extended until 31.05.2019

c) Extension of Executive Secretary contract

The contract of Executive Secretary was extended until 31.07.2019.

d) Completed contracts

The following contracts of Technical Experts have been fulfilled

- Mair Raimund => 15.07.2016
- Mandl Benedikt => 31.08.2016.

A resolution concerning advertising two positions of Technical Experts in the Secretariat was proposed by the Executive Secretary to give the Secretariat enough time to advertise the two positions expiring on 31. December 2017 (TE WM/WQ and TE IMGIS) and to organise the appointment procedure. The Executive Secretary will review TORs for both positions and both positions will be advertised in the first half of 2017.

2.5.1. Support Staff

In line with ICPDR Staff Rules, Art. 3.4 a, the Executive Secretary has conducted Performance Evaluation of the Office Manager, Ms. Sylvia Koch and extended her contract till 30.11.2019.

2.5.2. Interns

- Majerovic Tomislav (HR) has completed his internship on 30.09.2016.
- Fürt Renata (HU): Renata's extended contract was fulfilled on 06.05.2016.
- Krstajic Jelena (ME) joined the Secretariat on 01.04.2016 and will complete her internship on 31.03.2017. Jelena supports ICPDR-activities related to the DFRM Plan and DRBM Plan - 2015 Update as well as assists in the preparation of key meetings of the ICPDR.
- Skrbic Natasa (RS) commenced her 1-year internship on 01.12.2016. Natasa will support RBM, PM and FP Technical Experts.

The President supported the suggested time plan of the hiring procedure in 2017 to ensure the stability in the Secretariat.

Slovenia welcomed the two new staff members and asked for their first impressions.

Edith Hödl stated that she had been the first intern at the ICPDR, and that a lot of work had been done in the ICPDR since then. Edith's start at the Secretariat was very active and she appreciates her work. Edith Hödl will take all efforts to keep the ICPDR work attractive for the countries in the coming years.

Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov has come from the navigation sector. She is a true believer in public participation and public outreach activities. She will do her best to increase the visibility of the ICPDR and to keep a high standard of communication on ICPDR activities.

Austria was extremely pleased with the work of the Secretariat staff, and thanked Joanna Blaszkiwicz for an excellent accounting job done.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) asks the Executive Secretary to review ToRs of Technical Experts: Water Management / Water Quality and Information Management & GIS and circulate them to HoDs by 31 March 2017 for approval by written procedure;**
- b) asks the Executive Secretary to advertise the position of the Technical Experts for Water Management / Water Quality and Information Management & GIS by 31 May 2017.**

2.6. Internal Regulations

Thorough review of existing internal rules and regulations indicated, that they did not fully reflect neither organisation's culture nor the relevant processes providing occasionally outdated guidelines. It unveiled the necessity for synchronising both the running procedures and the internal regulations.

Ongoing for the couple of months assessment and update of the regulations has involved in depth internal analysis and discussions leading to reaching their current form, in line with Financial Regulations, signed by the Executive Secretary on 14.10.2016.

During the process of updating the internal regulations, the Secretariat has been restructuring its documents management system introducing unified nomenclature of the documents, which resulted in renaming (chronologically) the applicable internal regulations.

Furthermore, the Guidelines for Accessing Danubis Databases (IRLG-101) should be adapted to the improved access management functions of the recently relaunched system. Therefore, a revised version of these guidelines will be submitted to the Strategic Expert Group for review and prepared for adoption as an ICPDR Document by the Standing Working Group in June 2017.

Greeting of Observers and Guests by the President

The ICPDR President, Mr. Peter J. Kalaš, welcomed observers and guests and thanked all who contributed to a successful work of the ICPDR. He highlighted the three priorities of the Czech Presidency in 2016: start of implementation of the adopted DRBM and DFRM Plans, fostering cooperation in the DRB and climate change issues. He underlined the role of the private sector in solving river basin management problems in DRB as well as the importance of cooperation with universities.

3. Expert Group activities

At the 14th StWG Meeting, the ICPDR asked the ad-hoc Strategic EG “to review all ICPDR EGs WPs and ToRs to ensure coherence and conformity with key ICPDR legal and policy documents (e.g. DRBMP – Update 2015, DFRMP, Danube Declaration 2016, etc.), consistency in style and sufficient coordination among the WPs, and to submit them to the 19th Ordinary Meeting for adoption in December 2016”.

The EGs reviewed again these documents at their autumn 2016 meetings. Consequently, the ad hoc Strategic EG reviewed the ToRs and draft Work Programmes of all EGs with a view to ensuring coherence and conformity (as requested in the StWG resolution above) and proposed only minor editorial changes. In addition, the ad hoc Strategic EG recommended to expand the FP EG Work Programme with an outlook for activities envisaged for the entire 6-years-cycle of the EU Floods Directive until 2021, recognising that this was not requested by the ICPDR from the outset of this exercise but proposed by the RBM EG for the 6-years-cycle of the WFD.

The full set of the ToRs and Work Programmes was submitted to the ICPDR for adoption.

Austria appreciated the developed ToRs and suggested that, the Guidance on sustainable agriculture as one of the key elements of the PM EG work should include the issue of resilience against droughts and the ToR of PM EG should be amended accordingly.

Germany appreciated the developed ToRs, informed that some minor proposals on the document layout will be clarified directly with the Secretariat, and emphasised that the issue of droughts and agriculture should be discussed in more details before making any amendments in the ToR.

Hungary informed that irrigation development has a top priority in Hungary; therefore, Hungary strongly supports linking of water resources management to agriculture.

Slovenia underlined the importance of the cooperation with the agriculture sector and asked that this has to be underlined in the next DRBMP update. Slovenia suggested that ICPDR should develop an internal strategy on how to deal with the key cross-cutting issues that would include cooperation with the agricultural sector.

The EU made reference to the meeting of the EU environmental ministers in Bratislava which called for adequate policy actions on water and agriculture. Sustainable agriculture requires respecting the non-deterioration principle and achieving of good status of water bodies but also the water quantity aspects are important. The ICPDR Guidance should start with nutrients and it should be extended later to cover all relevant issues including water scarcity.

Romania informed about the intention to involve the Ministry of Agriculture into the planned Danube Floodplain project. Romania would support a step-by-step approach in developing the Guidance on sustainable agriculture.

Serbia supported including water scarcity into the Guidance document.

DEF supported strengthening the dialogue with the agricultural sector. The planned Danube Floodplain project should contain less modelling and more active links to the agricultural sector.

The Executive Secretary suggested that ICPDR should start with approving ToRs and then the Chairpersons of the NTG, PM EG and RBM EG should propose the next steps regarding the extension of the scope of the Guidance Document on sustainable agriculture in terms of an additional resolution. Austria supported this proposal of the Executive Secretary.

Germany recommended including a step-by-step approach into resolution c).

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) adopts the ToRs and Work Programmes of all EGs;**
- b) asks the FP EG to add to its Work Programme an outlook for activities envisaged for the entire Floods Directive cycle until 2021 and submit it to the 15th Standing Working Group Meeting in June 2017;**
- c) asks the PM EG to extend the scope of the Guidance Document on Sustainable Agriculture by integrating the issue of droughts, to closely cooperate also on the linkage between agriculture and droughts with the RBM EG taking into account the conclusions from the “2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin Report” and to step by step reflect this in its WP.**

3.1. Flood Protection EG

The report of the Chairperson of the FP EG Károly Gombás summarised the activities of the FP EG since StWG-14. In particular, it addressed:

- Project ideas on flood risk management for 2014-2020: The FP EG made an overview of the state-of-the-matter of the existing project ideas, which have been incorporated into DFRMP Annex 2.
 - The Hungarian Lead Partner of the Danube Sediment Project informed in early October on receiving the official positive result of the DTP project evaluation and the project was accepted with conditions. The modified version of the application form was submitted to the Joint Secretariat on 19 October.
 - The Romanian Lead Partner of the Danube Floodplain project organised a trilateral meeting (RO, ICPDR, BayFor) in Bucharest on 4 July 2016. The meeting focused on defining the responsibilities taken over by BayFor and the Lead Partner and defining the role of ICPDR in the project. First meeting of project partners was held on 30-31 August 2016 in Vienna. At the meeting the project objectives, deliverables and work packages were discussed focusing on the role of the project partners. At the FPEG-30 Romania presented the current state of the project preparatory activities. The updated project application document was distributed at the time of the FPEG meeting. The second meeting of project partners will be held in Bucharest, on 13-14 December 2016.
 - DANICE project preparation meeting was held on 11th October 2016 at OVF in Budapest. The meeting participants agreed about the technical goals of the project and found to be essential explaining this clearly to the decision makers in the application form.
 - In order to facilitate the improvement of the DAREFFORT project approach and discuss the possibility of expanding the existing partnership, the General Directorate of Water Management in Hungary along with the Secretariat of the Hungarian EUSDR Ministerial Commissioner organised a concept development workshop on 21 September 2016 in Budapest.
 - The project Drava And Mura WAtER and Risk Management (DAMWARM) focuses on better and more efficient Drava and Mura river basin and flood risk management. The original project proposal is currently being modified.
 - The Danube Floodplain, DANICE, DAREFFORT and DAMWARM project proposals will be submitted to the 2nd DTP call in spring 2017.
 - The DAREnet project is to support flood management practitioners across the Danube River region and from different disciplines to deepen and broaden their Research, Development and Innovation related collaboration. DAREnet will build a multi-disciplinary community of practitioners, operating in a network of civil protection organisations, and supported by a broad range of stakeholders from policy, industry and research. Together they will build a transnational and interdisciplinary ecosystem to foster synergies, innovation and its uptake. ICPDR will provide DAREnet with the technical and political feedback on the project deliverables from the flood risk managers and experts in the Danube countries. ICPDR will make use of the DAREnet outcomes in order to contribute to the Danube Flood Risk Management Plan update 2021. ICPDR has only a supporting role; no personnel budget has been allocated. The proposal was submitted on 24 August 2016 to H2020-SEC-2016-2017-1 call.
- FP EG Work Programme 2016-2018 & ToR: The revised FP EG Terms of Reference and draft FP EG work programme for years 2016 – 2018 were submitted to the 14th StWG meeting. StWG asked ICPDR EGs to reflect comments made at the 14th StWG Meeting in a revised draft of their respective WPs and ToRs and submit them by mid-September 2016 to

the ad-hoc Strategic EG for a review. There were no specific comments made by the StWG on the FP EG's WP and ToR so these have been submitted to the SEG in the version adopted at the FPEG-29.

- Coordination with WFD: Discussion paper on Risks and opportunities for applying flood risk measures under WFD was developed in 2015. This discussion paper aims to increase awareness among Danube countries on linkages between the two directives and it provides a snapshot into win-win NWRM measures for both directives. The FP EG agreed to further develop the Discussion paper to ensure its practical usefulness for flood risk managers and to include the assessment of impacts of river basin management measures on the objectives of the Floods Directive as well. All FP EG members were invited to send comments and, especially, the examples of WFD measures that may have an impact on flood risk management to the Secretariat by 31 December 2016. DG ENV encouraged the FP EG to further develop this paper.
- Danube Hydrological Information System: At FPEG-29 the ISRBC gave an overview of the Sava Geographical and hydrological information system. At FPEG-30 a discussion was held on the possible benefits which a similar Danube hydrological information system could bring to the ICPDR Contracting Parties. Danube HIS shall provide a tool for collecting, storing, analysis and reporting of the near real-time hydrological data in the DRB. The FP EG considered the Danube HIS as a very useful tool for providing standardised data for ICPDR project partners in the Danube River Basin in future. The FP EG unanimously found the Danube HIS to be a useful system and agreed with its development.
- Latest developments on EFAS and other relevant JRC activities: Two new developments are going to be released soon: the rapid impact assessment and the seasonal forecasting (8 week outlook on low/high flow state). Both developments are currently in the testing phase, they will be operational early next year. The rapid impact assessment application is not intended to be used for local emergency planning but for obtaining an overview on the regional level. EC JRC invited countries to submit their public flood warnings to MeteoAlarm and informed about relevant events.

The FP EG Chair invited Germany, Austria and BG to participate in the DANICE project (DFRMP Annex 2 project).

Slovenia informed that DAMWARM is a regional priority project on flood risk management but it contains also elements on low water management even addressing agriculture and energy sectors. This project aims to address the existing lack of knowledge. One of the key project objectives is to foster the cross-sectoral cooperation.

Romania pointed out that it is necessary to update the Discussion paper on Risks and opportunities for applying flood risk measures under WFD to include the local basin level. This document shall contain the examples of best practices, and shall be discussed not only in the HYMO TG but also in the RBM EG.

Austria appreciated the planned development of the Danube HIS, which will close the existing gap on lack of the data and expressed support to further development of the Discussion paper on Risks and opportunities for applying flood risk measures under WFD. Austria proposed that resolution b) should be amended to ask the project consortia to come up with their request for support in time.

EAA referred to the climate change which has an impact on water level and flood frequency and asked ICPDR to take this issue into account.

Germany suggested that the Discussion paper on Risks and opportunities for applying flood risk measures under WFD would need including practical examples. Germany informed that ICPR plans

organising a workshop on WFD-FD links. Germany supported the development of the Danube HIS and asked if BfG is involved.

The IMGIS EG Chair mentioned that the owners of the data needed for the development of the Danube HIS are national hydrological services and recommended that these should be involved in the process.

Hungary supported the DAREFFORT project proposal and asked what does “near real time” mean in the Danube HIS.

The FP EG Chair responded that the Danube HIS will collect the available and easily accessible data, and that the policy document is the first step in the process. Near real time means collecting data immediately after being published by a country. The FP EG Chair explained that the Discussion paper on Risks and opportunities for applying flood risk measures under WFD was prepared by the HYMO TG and the FP EG will develop it further and forward it to the RBM EG (and HYMO TG) and other expert groups as needed. The ambition of the FP EG is to insert the wide range of examples of best practices but it is essential that the countries will submit such good examples. So far Bavaria is involved in the preparation of the Danube HIS but the FP EG would welcome participation of BfG as well. The FP EG Chair emphasised that all projects the FP EG deals with do address the issue of climate change as well.

Executive Secretary suggested adding a resolution encouraging HODs to engage national hydrometeorological services into the Danube HIS development.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) takes note of the preparation of the proposals of projects listed in the Annex 2 of the Danube Flood Risk Management Plan;**
- b) encourages the ICPDR Contracting Parties to give all necessary support to these project consortia to make sure that the project application forms can be submitted to the 2nd DTP call in time and asks the representatives of these consortia to contact the HoDs with such request in time;**
- c) welcomes the proposal of the FP EG to develop the Danube Hydrological Information System;**
- d) asks the FP EG to agree about the details of the concept and scope of the Danube HIS;**
- e) asks the Secretariat in cooperation with the FP EG and IMGIS EG to prepare the relevant policy document for data exchange;**
- f) encourages the ICPDR Contracting Parties to engage the national hydrometeorological services in the Danube HIS development.**

3.2. Monitoring and Assessment EG

The report of the Chairperson of the MA EG was presented by the Vice-Chair Jarmila Makovinska. It summarised the activities of the MA EG since StWG-14. In particular, it addressed:

- **JDS4:** At OM-18 it was recommended that the HoDs should be involved in designing the concept of the next JDS and that a discussion paper shall be developed indicating where the gaps are and how ICPDR utilises JDS results. In reaction to this all MA EG members were encouraged to discuss with their Heads of the Delegations any potential benefits and added

values their country would expect from JDS4 and the Secretariat prepared a draft the Discussion paper on the practical application of JDS3 results and the existing gaps and needs for the RBM planning period 2016-2021 and updated it based on the comments by the MA EG. The final feedback by the HYMO TG on this paper is still expected. A letter of the ICPDR President was sent to all countries to encourage those HoDs who still did not discuss with their MA EG experts the JDS4 preparation to do so as soon as possible, so the MA EG members could communicate the national position at the MAEG-24. The President also drew the attention of HoDs to StWG-14 Res. 3.2.c) which encouraged all ICPDR Contracting Parties to explore the practical possibilities of financing contributions for JDS4 organisation at the national level and to report on it at the 19th Ordinary Meeting. So far Germany (StWG-14: approx. 250.000 EUR) and Austria (MAEG-24: 200.000 EUR) informed on their intended financial contributions to JDS4.

Summarising the comments and ideas about the JDS4 received from the countries the Secretariat suggested at the MAEG-24 that a new concept could be applied for JDS4 based on a more active participation of the Contracting Parties and using a more effective and flexible logistics. The three past Joint Danube Surveys were based on a principle that a Core Team of leading experts did all the sampling and, in case of biology, microbiology and hydromorphology, also analytical work while the national experts only joined the Core Team in their country and observed how the work was done. JDS4 should be organised the other way round: most of the job should be accomplished by the national experts while the Core Team would have coordinating & advisory role to ensure the coherence between the approaches used by the national experts. To make sure that the methods used by the national experts in biology would provide comparable results, training workshop(s) shall be organised for each BQE before JDS4 at which all national experts together with the respective Core Team member(s) will take part. The advantages of this new approach are as follows:

- Reaching a higher level of technical cooperation in DRB. A shift from countries watching how the leading experts do the job towards doing the job by countries.
- Excellent opportunity for all the ICPDR Contracting Parties to demonstrate in practical terms the cooperation towards a better water quality.
- Non-Danube countries (CZ, SI, BA) can be fully-fledged participants in JDS as at least the chemical monitoring will cover the entire river basin and not the Danube River only.
- This new concept does not require a ship survey. Monitoring by cars and boats (some of them can even be offered as an in-kind contribution within the territory of a particular country) will enable more flexible sampling pattern at more economic conditions.
- Strong training & education & harmonisation value of the new concept. It can provide additional contribution to the intercalibration exercise.
- Establishing close links between national and international monitoring programs.

The MA EG expressed a strong support to this new JDS concept. JDS4 Biology Core Group will meet before the next MA EG meeting to discuss the details of the biological survey including the workshops. The MA EG underlined that in the new JDS concept the national coordination plays a critical role. Heads of the Delegation have to be actively involved in the survey preparation to ensure a smooth survey logistics.

- Invasive alien species: Serbia and Hungary are preparing the Guidance paper on Invasive Alien Species (IAS) in the DRB. The revised version includes the list of non-indigenous (alien) taxa recorded for the DRB; the results of testing of a specific Risk Assessment

Procedure for evaluation of the invasiveness of non-indigenous species relevant for the Danube River (IAS-RAP-Danube) as well as the draft "Black List" of invasive aquatic species relevant for the DRB, based on the IAS-RAP-Danube procedure. The MA EG was asked to send the final comments on IAS-RAP-Danube, IAS Danube list 2016 and IAS Black List 2016 by 30 November. Afterwards the final versions of IAS-RAP-Danube, Danube list 2016 and Black list 2016 will be prepared by 15 December and distributed back to the MA EG. The MA EG members will inform the Secretariat about their position on the IAS-RAP-Danube, Danube list 2016 and Black list 2016 by 28 February 2017.

- Danube River Basin Management Plan 2015 - follow up: The MA EG reviews the priority substances causing failure to achieve good chemical status and specific substances causing failure to achieve good ecological status in DRBMP Update 2015. So far the data were received from RO, BG, CZ, HU, SK, UA, SI, AT, DE and RS. Using this data the Secretariat prepared the draft overview document. This document will be finalised after the missing data will be received.

In some cases the same transboundary water body has a different status in two neighbouring countries. The MA EG, in cooperation with the IMGIS EG, is exploring the reasons of such discrepancies. To support this analysis the Secretariat prepared a draft list of transboundary river water bodies with their status assessments compared. The MA EG agreed to use this list for the analysis of the differences in status assessment of transboundary surface water bodies.

One of the outcomes of the JDS3 was the first draft list of the Danube River Specific Substances which was also included into DRBMP - Update 2015. This list has been prepared in the frame of the SOLUTIONS project using the NORMAN methodology. In September 2016 SOLUTIONS informed the ICPDR that the revised list of Danube RBSPs will be provided to ICPDR in 2017 after incorporating the SOLUTIONS modelling results.

- MA EG work programme 2016 – 2018: StWG asked ICPDR EGs to reflect comments made at the 14th StWG Meeting in a revised draft of their respective WPs and ToRs and submit them by mid-September 2016 to the ad-hoc Strategic EG for a review. There were no specific comments made by the StWG on the MA EG's work program. Afterwards Slovakia suggested replacing one word in chapter on IAS and the MA EG agreed with this minor amendment. Incorporating this change the MA EG work program 2016 - 2018 has been submitted to the SEG.
- TNMN - maintenance and reporting & AQC: Slovakia prepared the final draft of TNMN Yearbook 2014; it was discussed and accepted by the MA EG. Using an accelerated procedure the 2015 data on Danube loads at Reni was delivered by Romania, processed by the TNMN data centre, re-checked by Romania and accepted by the MA EG.

In line with the MA EG recommendation Wessling scheduled the 2016 QualcoDanube distribution for 26th September 2016. The distribution was accomplished according to the schedule. The AQC 2017 will include nutrients (EUR 230.- per lab) and heavy metals (EUR 150.- per lab).

- Monitoring of climate change impacts: The ICPDR climate change adaptation strategy highlights that an investigative monitoring programme for climate change shall be set. In reaction to that the MA EG agreed upon the relevant monitoring variables and representative TNMN sampling stations, explored the availability of the necessary data and commenced with the data collection. At the MAEG-23 all countries were asked to discuss with the national experts the possibilities of processing of the collected water temperature data and come up with the proposal how to proceed further. In response, Austria offered at the MAEG-24 to carry out water temperature trend analysis for the selected TNMN sites.

- **Mercury in fish:** The MA EG agreed that TNMN will report on Hg in fish in 3-year cycles. The first cycle will be 2014-2016. Slovakia developed a draft reporting template for monitoring of mercury in fish. The MA EG discussed the template and suggested a number of amendments. Further discussion will be needed on how to interpret the data obtained from analysing different fish species.
- **Monitoring of plastic particles:** OSPAR developed a questionnaire in support of exchanging experience on best practice to prevent litter entering into water systems and international river basin commissions cooperating with OSPAR completed it. The MA EG agreed to develop a similar questionnaire to collect the relevant information from the ICPDR Contracting Parties. The Secretariat was asked to modify the OSPAR questionnaire using track changes by 30 November and send it to the MA EG to collect comments by 15 January 2017. The Secretariat will then prepare the final questionnaire on best practices to prevent plastics entering into water systems by 30 January 2017 and will send it to the MA EG to fill it in by 15 March 2017.
- **Key results of the GW TG:** The revised version of the GW Guidance was discussed by the GW TG. The guidance will be revised accordingly and distributed to the GW TG for the final comments.

According to TNMN Groundwater it is foreseen to collect every 6 years monitoring data for a set of parameters for each GWB of basin-wide importance. The GW TG agreed on the template for the data collection and that the same set of parameters which were reported six years ago will be reported. 2015 was agreed as the reference year. The GW TG also agreed that all WFD monitoring sites in GWBs of basin-wide importance are also considered as GW TNMN sites. The data collection has officially started and will last until 28 February 2017.

The GW TG considered the potential of JDS4 for further investigation of groundwater quality as well as for raising public awareness with respect to groundwater protection. It was suggested that the groundwater monitoring during JDS4 can cover more sampling points and the list of substances can also be expanded. A possibility should be considered of collecting groundwater not only from the tap but also from the wells in a wider area around to have an overview of "background" pollution of the surrounding groundwater

Germany expressed a strong support to the proposed JDS4 approach, as it will ensure more active participation of all countries. Germany suggested to amend the resolution d) to "planned commitment". Germany welcomed the use by the ICPDR of the OSPAR questionnaire on marine litter and Germany will share with the ICPDR the final outcomes of this OSPAR initiative. An OSPAR workshop on marine litter is planned for 2017, the ICPDR will be invited. Information in the JDS paper that non-target screening exercise has been carried out by the ICPR should be corrected as such activity is only planned in future.

Croatia expressed a strong support to JDS4 and asked about the possibility to include tributaries.

Ukraine supported the new JDS4 approach and expressed its readiness to support the survey with in-kind contributions in terms of national expertise and logistics. Ukraine asked to include Vilkovo into the JDS4 site list.

Austria thanked Slovakia for preparing the Yearbook and expressed full support to the new concept of JDS4. Thanks were also given to Hungary and Serbia for preparing the ICPDR guidance on invasive alien species. Austria asked to include the potential JDS4 deliverables into the Preparatory paper and to involve the PP EG in identifying these deliverables.

DEF underlined that pollution by pharmaceuticals has adverse impacts on water biology and recommended to include the monitoring of pharmaceuticals into JDS4. DEF stressed that the

hydromorphological monitoring is very important for JDS4 and asked the MA EG to get involved into this exercise.

Moldova highlighted the role of JDS for interlaboratory comparison and for harmonisation of monitoring & analytical methods. Information was provided on new LIFE+ project supporting water quality monitoring in Moldova. The outcomes of this project will provide a good basis for JDS4.

Hungary offered the deep water fishing expert team for JDS4 similarly as it was used during the JDS3. Hungary called the attention to the potential problems in involving the national laboratories and experts into JDS4 as at present all water related laboratories are under the Prime Minister's office and it may be difficult to make them available for the JDS4 cooperation.

IAD highlighted the unique datasets obtained from previous Joint Danube Surveys and asked how the proper harmonisation will be guaranteed in the new set-up. IAD underlined that the presence of the invasive alien species will have an impact on achieving WFD environmental objectives especially with the view of the expected impacts by the climate change. IAD informed on establishing a task force on invasive alien species.

MA EG Vice-Chair responded that the tributaries will be included in JDS4 and that Vilково will be on the list of JDS4 sampling sites. The JDS4 deliverables will be discussed in cooperation with the PP EG. Pharmaceuticals have already been monitored during JDS2 and JDS3 and DEF is welcomed to review these results and to come up with a proposal for additional pharmaceuticals to be monitored during JDS4. The harmonisation of the JDS4 results will be guaranteed via training workshops and through a scrutiny & coordination by the core team members.

The Secretariat explained that the HYMO TG is responsible for designing the hydromorphological monitoring during JDS4 and that there is a close cooperation between the MA EG and HYMO TG to address the links between hydromorphology and biology.

The EU informed that WFD CIS WG Chemicals plans to carry out an Effect Directed Analysis activity and suggested that this could be a good topic for JDS4. The EU is taking all efforts to find the possibilities to contribute financially to JDS4.

IAD recommended that the JDS4 training workshops should include field work (sampling) and laboratory work.

DEF informed that the HYMO TG was reluctant to designing a fully-fledged hydromorphological monitoring during JDS4 and therefore DEF asked the MA EG about this task.

The Secretariat explained that there was a discussion at the last HYMO TG meeting about the need of hydromorphological monitoring during JDS4 assessing any significant changes in the Danube hydromorphology since JDS3. No country reported any major changes and the HYMO TG will further discuss JDS4 activities at its next meeting.

The Secretariat explained that the Effect Directed Analysis is planned for JDS4, and that discussions on this issue are ongoing with the NORMAN Association.

The PP EG Chairperson committed to support JDS4, and emphasised the need for early stage discussions between the MA EG and PP EG about the outreach products to be developed.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) takes note of the Discussion paper on the practical application of JDS3 results and the existing gaps and needs for the RBM planning period 2016-2021;**

- b) welcomes the new concept of JDS4 proposed by the MA EG, based on a more active participation of the national experts and using a more effective and flexible logistics without large ships, and agrees to follow this concept leading to a higher level of technical cooperation in DRB and providing an excellent opportunity for all Contracting Parties to demonstrate in practical terms the cooperation towards a better water quality;**
- c) asks the Secretariat in cooperation with the MA EG to develop, based on the Discussion paper, the first draft of the JDS4 Preparatory paper outlining the technical program of the next survey including potential deliverables and present it at the 15th StWG meeting in 2017;**
- d) expresses gratitude to Germany, EC and Austria for planned financial commitments in support of JDS4 and in line with the provision of the Danube Declaration 2016 about securing the necessary funding for JDS4, encourages the other ICPDR Contracting Parties to explore at the national level the practical possibilities of financing contributions for the survey organisation;**
- e) approves TNMN Yearbook 2014 and expresses gratitude to Slovakia for preparing this annual overview of water quality in the Danube River Basin;**
- f) approves the data on Danube loads to the Black Sea in 2015 and asks the Secretariat to report it to the BSC;**
- g) encourages the ICPDR Contracting Parties to allocate their budget for the AQC 2017 in the amount of EUR 380.- per participating laboratory.**

3.3. Pressures and Measures EG

The report of the Chairperson of the PM EG Mr. Joachim Heidemeier summarised the activities of the PM EG since StWG-14 including the activities of the Nutrient TG. In particular, it addressed:

- Chairpersonship: Mr. Joachim Heidemeier is not able to hold the PM EG Chairperson position from January 2017. Romania nominated Ms. Elena Tuchiu for the PM EG Chairperson position who was unanimously supported by the PM EG members.
- Challenges of wastewater treatment in the Danube River Basin: The PM EG discussed what potential activities the group might undertake to help EU MS complying with the Directive and support non-EU MS to improve their wastewater infrastructure and management. The group agreed that the PM EG shall organise a workshop on financing & capacity strengthening. With regard to financing issues, determining investment priorities and financial needs, mobilisation of funds, planning & securing operational costs and ensuring cost-recovery and affordability are the issues of high relevance. Capacity should be strengthened to support the optimised design, operation and maintenance of the waste water collection and treatment facilities, to enhance local administration and management responsible for wastewater services, to implement enhanced and smart technologies for centralised treatment systems and to introduce sustainable practices for decentralised systems. The PM EG agreed that the workshop should be organised back-to-back with the PM EG meeting in autumn 2017.
- Activities to reduce knowledge gaps on hazardous substances emissions: The PM EG started conducting a pre-study to investigate how water quality models could be potentially used to identify emission hot-spots and transport pathways in the Danube basin, what data they would need, which of the required data are available and what additional information is needed for gap-filling. In addition, the study will also serve the preparation of a project to be implemented on pollution sources at the basin-wide level. The Secretariat developed a ToR

for the work and contracted the involved institutions. A short concept note is provided as separate document on the objectives and work plan of the pre-study.

The PM EG also discussed the status of the elaboration of national inventories on priority substances emissions, discharges and losses. Since now substantial information is available in the countries the PM EG decided to develop a basin-wide overview report. This will be supported by national summaries to be elaborated by the countries.

The cooperation between the PM EG and the SOLUTIONS Project has been further strengthened. The PM EG discussed how to guide SOLUTIONS experts to make use of the project's modelling potential. The group suggests to focus on a specific group of substances of high importance which could be useful to be modelled for the Danube River Basin.

With regard to monitoring issues the PM EG agreed that the planned project on pollution sources should be connected to the activities of the next JDS. The PM EG recommends to include targeted influent and effluent monitoring of wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities to the next JDS. The PM EG also discussed how to potentially obtain regular monitoring data on selected hazardous substances at several representative TNMN stations. This would need the adaptation of the TNMN operation at these stations. The PM EG will elaborate a background document which would explain why further development of the TNMN is needed and would recommend to assign a specific subset of the TNMN stations to serve specific emission modelling purposes.

- **Database integration:** The final steps have been taken towards the full integration of the PM EG data into DanubeGIS. Recently, all UWW and PRTR data sets have been uploaded and validated. Based on the data, online maps are available on agglomerations and PRTR sites. The group agreed that all PM EG data should be available for general disclosure and all external experts should get access to the complete, final data sets.
- **Nutrient Task Group activities:** In spring 2016 the NTG started elaborating a guidance document on sustainable agriculture to reduce nutrient emissions. The guidance document would aim at decoupling the intensification of agriculture from increasing nutrient emissions into surface waters. To achieve this objective the guidance document will provide decision makers with potential policy tools, programs and targeted measures to be jointly implemented by the water and agricultural sectors. The rationale and main objectives of the guidance document and the conceptual approach of the elaboration have been presented at the EUSDR event "Trust-building between Water and Agriculture Sectors in the Danube Region" (04 October 2016, Bratislava) and the EC Workshop "Enhancing cooperation between water and agriculture stakeholders to deliver sustainable agriculture and healthy waters" (24 October 2016, Bratislava).

To support the development of the guidance document the NTG started conducting a pre-study to elaborate a knowledge base on agriculture. It particularly aims at addressing the main economic drivers of the sector and the future development scenarios in agriculture, the existing legal and financial mechanism and their implementation experiences and the good agricultural measures and practices to reduce nutrient pollution and their cost-efficiency. This pre-study will provide a sound basis for the elaboration of the guidance document on sustainable agriculture. In the first step, a study on agricultural policy and measure implementation is being conducted. The outcomes of the study will be discussed at the next NTG meeting in spring 2017 to which national experts from the agricultural administration will also be invited for joint discussion. The Secretariat developed a ToR for the work and contracted an agricultural expert to lead the knowledge base compilation. To collect specific information from the countries on agriculture, a comprehensive questionnaire has been

elaborated. A short concept note is provided as separate document on the objectives and work plan of the study.

The NTG invited the JRC to further discuss of the outcomes of the nutrient modelling inter-comparison study implemented in 2015. The NTG agreed that since the model results are comparable and coherent and there is a long history and well established and transparent database for the MONERIS model, there is no need to change the modelling approach at the basin wide level. However, the results of the SWAT model and the experiences of the model comparison can help to improve the model performance of MONERIS by identifying methodological weaknesses and data uncertainty issues.

Germany informed that ICPR finalised a paper on strategy for abatement of pollution by pesticides. Germany appreciated the cooperation of the ICPDR with the SOLUTIONS project.

DEF appreciated work of Joachim Heidemeier, encouraged the PM EG to address in the Guidance document on sustainable agriculture not only nutrients but the whole range impacts from agricultural sector such as pesticides, biodiversity or soil issues.

Austria thanked Joachim Heidemeier for his work for the ICPDR especially for his significant contribution to nutrient modelling in the DRB. Austria recommended adding to all figures in the ICPDR Guidance paper one reference value (maximum and mean value) for EU countries to enable benchmarking EU-Danube region. Austria asked that in the planned workshops differences between EU MS and non-MS should be taken into account. Mr. Heidemeier confirmed that the challenges for both, the EU and non-EU MS are intended to be discussed.

The EU informed that a paper on best practices in agriculture in EU MS will be published soon and gave support to the idea of organising a joint meeting between water and agricultural sectors. The EU recommended close coordination between the ICPDR and the DG ENV related to the process of cooperation with the agricultural sector to ensure synergies. Mr. Heidemeier assured the HoDs that the ICPDR work on sustainable agriculture will be harmonised with that of the EC.

The incoming PM EG Chairperson thanked Joachim Heidemeier for an excellent work done and expressed a strong commitment to continue in his work.

IAWD welcomed that the PM EG plans to organise a workshop to facilitate financing and capacity strengthening related to wastewater treatment and expressed readiness to cooperate with the ICPDR on organising this workshop.

Joachim Heidemeier was given a certificate of appreciation.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) appreciates the outstanding work of Mr. Joachim Heidemeier and expresses its gratitude for his long-lasting contribution to the success of the ICPDR as PM EG Chairperson;**
- b) welcomes and approves the nomination of Ms. Elena Tuchiu for the PM EG Chairperson position;**
- c) takes note on the finalisation of the PM EG data integration into the DanubeGIS;**
- d) encourages the PM EG to facilitate financing and capacity strengthening related to wastewater treatment and asks the Secretariat to start organising a workshop;**
- e) supports the NTG to organise a joint meeting for the water and agricultural administration and asks the Contracting Parties to facilitate the dialogue between these two sectors;**

- f) asks the Secretariat to coordinate the implementation of the pre-study on hazardous substances modelling financed from the Working Capital Fund surplus;
- g) asks the Secretariat to coordinate the implementation of the pre-study on agricultural knowledge base development financed from the Working Capital Fund surplus.

3.4. River Basin Management EG

The report of the RBM EG was presented by the Co-chair Mr. Knut Beyer. The report summarised the activities of the RBM EG since the StWG-14. In particular it addressed:

- RBM EG Work Program 2016-2018 and Terms of Reference: A draft for the RBM EG Work Program and Terms of Reference was elaborated, addressing the period from 2016 to 2018 and providing an outlook until the year 2021. Both documents were discussed and further revised at the 44th RBM EG Meeting (25 to 26 October 2016).
- Roadmap towards 3rd DRBMP and proposed Chairpersons Meeting in February 2017: As follow up to the informal brainstorming session at the spring RBM EG meeting and in order to define a clear roadmap of activities towards the 3rd DRBMP - including next steps for the elaboration of the Interim Report on the Implementation of the Joint Program of Measures (2018) and the Danube River Basin Analysis Report update (2019) - it is proposed to organise a Chairpersons Meeting in February 2017 (planned for 28th February to 1st March 2017, lunch-to-lunch meeting). Based on the experiences gained during the last WFD implementation cycle, the meeting is intended to discuss in further detail the data collection for and the outline of the 2018 and 2019 products as well as the coordination requirements between EGs. The main proposals emerging from the meeting will be summarised by the Secretariat for further discussion by the EGs in their spring 2017 meetings.
- 2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin: Based on the reply of thirteen Danube countries to the "Questionnaire on the 2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin" (AT, BA, BG, CZ, DE, HR, HU, MD, RO, RS, SI, SK and UA) as well as comments received during the 44th RBM EG Meeting and written comments received after the meeting (AT, RO), version 5 of the "2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin" was elaborated. The Report includes information about the meteorological and hydrological situation (chapter 3), impacts and measures (chapter 4) and lessons learned and conclusions (chapter 5) as well as an Annex summarising all completed Questionnaires from Danube countries.
- Coordination of the sturgeon issue: Several sturgeon-related projects have been accomplished or are ongoing (e.g. "STURGENE" Project, Monitoring study Iron Gate dams, LIFE Sterlet Project at the Upper Danube, REVISTUR). A High Level Iron Gates Fish Migration Meeting was organised with representatives from the water administration and hydropower sector from Romania and Serbia on 8 September 2016 in Vienna. As a follow-up to this meeting, draft Terms of Reference for the elaboration of a Feasibility study analysing the options for fish migration at Iron Gates dams I and II (including activities for the technical design, monitoring, stakeholder involvement and communication) were elaborated. Based on comments received during the 44th RBM EG Meeting and written comments received after the meeting (RO, RS, IAD and WWF), a revised version of the draft Terms of Reference was prepared. More detailed information on sturgeons is provided under agenda items 5.2 (Danube Sturgeon Task Force), 6.6 (STURGENE), 6.7 (Iron Gates Follow-up Monitoring Project) and 6.10 (REVISTUR).
- Adaptation to Climate Change: The ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change and its knowledge base will be updated by 2018 including the following next steps:

- During 2017: Update of knowledge base and scientific research study with reactivation and involvement of voluntary "Team of Experts"
- Beginning of 2018: Climate Change Adaptation Workshop, discussing the latest scientific findings and providing input for the update of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
- During 2018: Update of Climate Change Adaptation Strategy with involvement of relevant ICPDR Expert Groups and adoption at Ordinary Meeting in December 2018

Germany, Austria and Serbia are acting as lead countries for this activity. The University of Munich (Prof. Mauser), who elaborated the first scientific research study in 2011, is again involved. As concrete next steps, Danube countries were asked in the 44th RBM EG Meeting to provide latest research studies, project reports and strategies (finished after 2012 or still ongoing) which will be used to update the knowledge base as regards Climate Change in the Danube River Basin and to nominate national experts willing to cooperate in a Team of Experts working towards the update of the ICPDR Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change.

- ICPDR related projects on sediment management and floodplains: The Danube Sediment Management Project is envisaged to start on 1 January 2017. The work on the preparation of a full project proposal for the Danube Floodplain Project is ongoing. The 2nd Meeting of project partners will take place from 13 to 14 December 2016 in Bucharest. More detailed information is provided under agenda item "special items discussion".
- Activities of the HYMO TG: A workshop on the relationship between hydromorphological pressures and biological quality elements will be organised in September/October 2017. A Questionnaire as well as outline and draft programme will be prepared in January 2017. The Workshop should not focus on scientific results, but rather emphasise on questions related to the practical implementation. Pilot river stretches from Danube countries might be presented as case studies. A Workshop on the designation of Heavily Modified Water Bodies and the definition of the Good Ecological Potential will be organised in 2018. The updated HYMO TG Work Program and Terms of Reference addressing the period from 2016 to 2018 were adopted at the 44th RBM EG Meeting. The next HYMO TG Meeting is planned to be organised from 16 to 17 March 2017 in Vienna (AT).
- Activities of the ECON TG: The updated ECON TG Work Program and Terms of Reference addressing the period from 2016 to 2018 were adopted at the 44th RBM EG Meeting. The next 14th ECON TG Meeting is planned to be organised from 6 to 7 April 2017 in Bratislava (SK).

Romania proposed rephrasing the resolution c) explaining that it should refer to a draft ToR for the feasibility study. Romania will send additional comments on the draft ToR document to the Secretariat.

Slovenia stressed the need for a proper communication of the RBM results to stakeholders & public. The special attention in this respect should be given to the cross-sectoral issues. It is necessary to identify the potential users of the RBM results.

Austria appreciated the initiative of the Chairpersons meeting. The report on 2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin is a sound basis for the way forward in this issue. Austria suggested that the Mekong Commission should be invited to the Hydropower Workshop to present its results on this topic. Support was given by Austria to the sturgeon issue because it has a European importance and a necessity was recognised of a discussion on financing aspects of the feasibility study.

Serbia will also send its additional comments on the draft ToR for the elaboration of the Feasibility Study.

The EU informed about the recent relevant activities: a task group has been established to develop a guidance on practical application of WFD Art 4(7) and a task group on hydromorphology has been created as well. A report on GEP for flood risk measures will be developed soon. The EU also informed that DG CLIMA offered reviewing the knowledge base update for the update of the ICPDR climate change adaptation study.

Hungary informed the meeting that the contracting parties to the Carpathian Convention established a working group on climate change and encouraged the RBM EG to cooperate with this body related to climate change adaptation.

Germany appreciated the report on 2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin and informed that the necessary finances are being secured for the update of the ICPDR climate change adaptation study. A brochure reviewing all RBM plans in Germany was published recently (<https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/publikationen/water-framework-directive>).

GWP informed about the recent outcomes of its activities in drought management.

Serbia asked for a better coordination between JRC and ICPDR activities.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

Roadmap towards 3rd DRBMP and proposed Chairpersons Meeting in February 2017

- a) welcomes the proposed steps towards the 3rd DRBMP and asks the Secretariat to organise a Chairpersons Meeting in February 2017 to further discuss follow-up actions;**

2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin

- b) adopts the “2015 Droughts in the Danube River Basin” Report, mandates the Secretariat to ensure the final formatting, editing and printing and asks the Secretariat to inform the delegations on its finalisation;**

Coordination of the sturgeon issue

- c) takes note of the draft ToR for the elaboration of the Feasibility Study analysing the options for fish migration at Iron Gates dams I and II and encourages Romania and Serbia (with support of the Secretariat) to explore possible funding programmes to develop and implement the Feasibility Study.**

Special Item Discussions

Sediment Management

At the 15th Ordinary Meeting the HoDs concluded that a sound knowledge base is needed before the ICPDR Sediment Issue Paper from 2006 can be updated. Furthermore, the HoDs asked the three Lead Countries Austria, Hungary and Romania, together with the Secretariat, to work towards a revised Sediment project proposal.

Political support for the project was gained at the ICPDR Danube Ministerial Meeting in February 2016, with the adoption of the Danube Declaration. Ministers took note “that a sediment balance for

the Danube River Basin is still lacking. Such a sediment balance would allow to identify the significance of sediment transport on the basin-wide scale and to propose, on this basis, appropriate measures ensuring a balanced sediment transport taking into account the needs of navigation, hydropower, flood protection and ecosystems”. Therefore Ministers supported “the project proposal on sediment management encompassing all relevant sectors and underline the high priority we give to such a project”.

The Expression of Interest (EoI) for the Danube Sediment project has been submitted by the Hungarian Lead Partner (Budapest University of Technology and Economics) on 2nd November 2015 to the 1st call of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP). Kind support for the elaboration was provided by the Bavarian Research Alliance (BayFOR). The 1st call was a two-step application process. In March 2016 DTP invited the Danube Sediment Project partners to submit a full project proposal until 9 May 2016.

14 project partners (LP+11 ERDF+2 IPA) and 14 Associated Strategic Partners from Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania are going to work together in the Danube Sediment project. The Danube Sediment project consortium successfully accomplished the second stage of the application process by submitting a full project proposal on 09 May 2016.

In the beginning of October the Hungarian Lead Partner informed about receiving a positive result of the evaluation stating that the project has been accepted with conditions. The project team was asked to hand in a modified version of the Application Form latest by 19 October 2016. The Lead Partner submitted the modified version of the AF by the requested deadline and on 27 October received the response from JTS asking to further clarify some minor issues. The project team submitted the AF with these clarifications to JTS.

SedNet, ICPDR and the International Commission for the Protection of the Elbe River organised the Round Table Discussion on “Bringing Together Experiences in Sediment Management Concepts - Elbe meets Danube” on 7-9 November 2016, in Budapest. The Round Table aimed at exchanging experiences between the two river basins and SedNet on the integration of sediment management in river basin management. The discussion was focused on methodological approaches with designing and implementing a sediment management concept. Similar activities towards sediment management have also been undertaken in other European river basins the representatives of which have been invited to take part at this information exchange. Aim is to publish the outcome of the meeting in a report.

Austria congratulated to the project team for being successful in the DTP call.

Germany congratulated to the project team, and thanked Bavaria for support in preparing the project proposal.

Germany appreciated the role of the Secretariat in organising the SedNet, ICPDR & ICPEP Round Table Discussion and highlighted that such events are a good opportunity for information exchange.

Hungary Informed about the SIMONA project (Sediment-quality Information, Monitoring and Assessment System) development. The project was presented by the project team - led by the Geological Survey of Slovenia - at the 25th PM EG meeting. This project focuses on sediment quality and will be submitted to the 2nd DT/P call. Serbia and Slovenia supported this project proposal.

ICPDR Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower

In order to promote the application of the “ICPDR Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower Development”, the “ICPDR Workshop on Sustainable Hydropower in the Danube River Basin: Progress, solutions and remaining challenges” will be organised from 28 to 29 March 2017 in Vienna. A detailed workshop concept was prepared including comments made during the 44th RBM EG Meeting as well as in written after the meeting (RO, WWF).

A scoping study on the “Regional Hydro Master-Plan (Hydropower Development Study in the Western Balkans)”, contracted by DG NEAR, was drafted in September 2016 and presented in a Regional Conference on the Regional Hydro Master-Plan for the Western Balkans on 27 September 2016 in Bel-grade; the Terms of Reference for the study phase (9 months) are available, a final report is envisaged to be finalised in April 2017. The geographic coverage of the Study is the six countries of the Western Balkans (WB6) – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia – that are eligible for grants under the WBIF, and the IPA programme. However, the analysis will also cover the WB6 regional perspective and the identified transboundary issues within the WB6 region as well as between the WB6 and neighbouring countries (e.g. Croatia).

DEF emphasised that hydropower is not a sustainable energy solution for river ecology and for biodiversity.

IAD welcomed the organisation of the ICPDR Workshop on Sustainable Hydropower in the Danube River Basin and offered to give a presentation.

Mr. Nicholas Cendrowitz from DG NEAR made a presentation on the Scoping Study and reported on planned activities related to the “Regional Hydro Master Plan (Hydropower Development Study in the Western Balkans)”.

Germany pointed out that all relevant sectors in the Western Balkan countries have to be involved in the preparation of this Master Plan, and that the environmental aspects were not sufficiently taken into account in the Terms of Reference for the study. Germany stressed that the ICPDR developed the ICPDR Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower Development and this document shall be well reflected in the Master Plan.

WWF-DCP informed that a wide group of Danube NGOs is critical about the process behind the preparation of the Master Plan. Their main concerns are that the Master Plan focusses strongly on mitigation aspects and not on avoiding adverse impacts, that the civil society has to be involved in the process and that the scope of the Master Plan is too narrow. WWF-DCP recommended that the process should follow a holistic approach and that an integrated view on cumulative impacts is needed. WWF pointed out that the database of projects in the Master Plan is very weak and that a better stakeholder involvement is needed.

IAD supported the statements made by WWF-DCP and observed that the expected significant impacts on biodiversity as well as the environment are not taken into account in the study for the Master Plan.

DEF pointed out that the content of the Master Plan is against the environmental objectives of the WFD and the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The environmental community has not been involved in the preparation of the Master Plan.

Croatia expressed support to the sustainable development of hydropower but emphasised that the first step in such process should be developing a national energy strategy which would define the country’s needs for hydropower. Croatia asked DG NEAR who will adopt and implement the Master Plan for the Western Balkans and reminded that this document should be subject to a SEA. Croatia pointed out that such Master Plan can be prepared for a river basin but it is not clear what kind of administrative unit the Western Balkans are.

Austria, being aware of pros and cons of hydropower development, pointed out that a hydropower development masterplan would be an excellent planning document if it was applied properly. The

Master Plan on Hydropower Development in the Western Balkans will address hydropower plants currently in place and identify locations having potential for construction of new hydropower plants with minimum impact on the environment. However, the scoping study has a rather different understanding of ecological standards compared to the requirements of EU legislation in place (e.g. WFD). Austria pointed out that the criteria applied in the Master Plan are sometimes quite vague (e.g. minimum ecological flow requirements) and these should be confronted with the valid standards and requirements according to existing EU legislation. Austria encouraged the authors of the Master Plan to follow the principles and provisions of existing EU legislation; additional information can also be found in the WFD CIS Guidance documents.

Serbia voiced an unease that the water management sector in Serbia was not involved in the Master Plan preparation and recommended that the outcome of this activity should be called a study to a master plan as it does not contain all necessary elements of a real master plan. Serbia informed that in a GEF funded WB project in the Drina river basin, which will start soon, similar issues will be addressed and it would be good to ensure certain synergy between both processes. Serbia suggested that a multipurpose use of water has to be considered thoroughly in a standard master plan.

Slovenia expressed concern in its capacity of the ISRBC Presidency that there was no sufficient information distributed in the ISRBC structures on the Master Plan and asked DG NEAR to take the existing international agreements into account and apply the standard procedures during finalisation of the document.

DG NEAR agreed with the diagnostics presented in the countries' statements and emphasised that the Western Balkans is the region that will suffer more than average from the impacts of climate change. A thorough planning of actions towards sustainable hydropower development is therefore needed. Efforts were taken during the preparation of the Master Plan to engage the civil society and whole series of public activities will be held throughout the process of developing the Master Plan. This exercise focusses on energy choices in the Western Balkans. DG NEAR is aware that the outcome of this study is not a masterplan, which would certainly require a political endorsement at the national level, but it is rather a study through which DG NEAR aims at obtaining a list of hydropower plant development priorities in the Western Balkan region. Many countries in the Western Balkans will build hydropower plants in the next years and DG NEAR has an ambition to evaluate hydropower potential in the region. Defining the list of priority hydropower plant projects is the beginning of the process followed by a discussion with the countries and IFIs on concrete actions.

The EU (DG ENV) reminded the authors of the Master Plan study that renewable does as such not mean sustainable, and expressed hope that DG NEAR will consider the comments received as well as the existing legal requirements and guidelines related to environmental aspect when finalising the document.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

ICPDR Workshop on “Sustainable Hydropower in the Danube River Basin: Progress, solutions and remaining challenges”

- a) welcomes the organisation of the “ICPDR Workshop on Sustainable Hydropower in the Danube River Basin: Progress, solutions and remaining challenges” from 28 to 29 March 2017 in Vienna and asks the Secretariat to invite proposed speakers based on the provided detailed workshop concept;**

Regional Hydro Master-Plan in the Western Balkans

b) takes note, with concern, of the activities towards a Regional Hydro Master-Plan in the Western Balkans and calls for the comprehensive application of the ICPDR Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower Development especially by an intensified cooperation of the relevant sectors; calls upon the European Commission to ensure full respect of environmental requirements in its further support of this project.

Joint Statement on Navigation

The 7th Joint Statement Meeting was organised by the Danube Commission, together with the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) and ICPDR, from 15-16 September 2016 in Budapest. A proposal of three Directorate Generals of the European Commission, Environment (DG-ENV), Regional and Urban Policy (DG-REGIO) and Mobility and Transport (DG-MOVE) was made for setting up a Mixed Environment Transport External Expert Team (METEET) on Integrated Planning of Inland Waterways Transport (IWT) Projects; the Terms of Reference for the METEET Team of experts were jointly drafted by the ICPDR Secretariat and the DC Secretariat and agreed with the European Commission. The Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee were drafted by the European Commission and agreed with the ICPDR Secretariat and the DC Secretariat. The draft Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee as well as the METEET Team of experts (including Annex I and II) are available. Annex III to the draft ToR for the METEET Team of experts is within the responsibility of the DC Secretariat and still to be finalized. Written comments to the documents have been provided by the ISRBC as observer to the METEET exercise. The Heads of Delegations will be asked to adopt the draft Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee as well as the METEET Team of Experts (including Annex I and II) by written procedure.

As soon as the draft Terms of Reference are adopted in written procedure, the ICPDR Secretariat will – based on the Terms of Reference for the METEET Team of Experts – prepare ToR for the METEET environmental experts by clearly highlighting the required field of (practical) expertise. General qualifications (e.g. university degree, practical experience, fluency in English) as well as key technical qualifications required from METEET environmental experts (e.g. experience with the implementation of the EU WFD and other EU Directives related to environment and water management) will be clearly specified and outlined in the ToR. Application letters and CVs are to be sent to the ICPDR Secretariat, which – based on the selection criteria as outlined in the draft Terms of Reference for the METEET Team of Experts – will prepare a list of pre-selected experts to be sent to all ICPDR Head of Delegations for comments, feedback and/or objections. According to paragraph 2.4 of the draft Terms of Reference for the METEET Steering Committee, the list of METEET environmental experts nominated by the ICPDR will be proposed to the Steering Committee which will agree on the experts that will join the METEET expert pool. The experts to perform training missions under the METEET exercise are – according to paragraph 2.5 of the draft Terms of Reference for the METEET Steering Committee – to be selected by the Steering Committee.

National Action Plans on the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan were published in May 2016 and are planned to be updated twice a year within the framework of the FAIRway Danube project (Connecting Europe Facility). The second Steering and Advisory Committee meeting of FAIRway Danube will take place in Brussels on 13 December 2016.

PLATINA 2 set up a European expert platform for knowledge exchange on inland waterway maintenance and prepared a Good Practice Manual for Inland Waterway Maintenance for waterway administrations. The focus of this manual lies on navigational fairway maintenance of free-flowing rivers.

The elaboration of a study on “Good Navigation Status” for inland waterways was contracted by the European Commission (DG MOVE) which is financed by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). A first Working Group Meeting took place in Rotterdam on 20 June 2016 within the framework of the TEN-T days, in which the ICPDR Executive Secretary participated.

Executive Secretary welcomed Ms. Desiree Oen, the Policy Coordinator from DG MOVE in her capacity of the Technical Advisor of Ms. Karla Peijs, the EU Coordinator for the Rhine-Danube Corridor.

Germany appreciated the joint approach taken for increasing the capacity of national administrations on implementing inland navigation projects.

WWF-DCP appreciated that during the last Joint Statement meeting biodiversity conservation was substantially addressed and suggested that the pending problematic issues should also be addressed at future Joint Statement meetings.

IAD underlined necessity for actions to be taken in the frame of the Joint Statement focusing on solving the problem of fish migration obstacles in the Danube (e.g. Bala navigation project in Romania).

The Danube Commission informed about training missions to be conducted by the METEET exercise, which are going to be held in 2017.

DG MOVE informed about the rationale behind the METEET initiative, thanked the ICPDR for its support to this activity and expressed readiness of European Commission services to continue in assisting Romanian authorities in solving the problems with the implementation of the EU funded Bala navigation project.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) takes note of the draft Terms of Reference for the METEET (Mixed Environment Transport External Expert Team) Steering Committee and Team of Experts and asks the Secretariat to closely cooperate with the Danube Commission and the European Commission on the set-up of the METEET Team of Experts.**

Floodplain Management

A project concept for the Danube Floodplain Project was elaborated under Romanian lead supported by the EUSDR PA5 and the EUSDR Technical Assistance Facility (TAF). The overall objective of the planned project is to reduce the flood risk through floodplain restoration along the Danube and other DRB rivers. The specific objective of the planned project is to contribute to a more effective implementation of the EU Floods Directive and the WFD inter alia by developing a common approach on restoring the water storage capacity of floodplains, to develop best practice on using 'green infrastructure' for sustainable flood risk management, to stimulate stakeholder involvement and cooperation in floodplain restoration / flood management planning and implementation.

The project concept was presented at previous meetings of the FP EG, HYMO TG and RBM EG. Romania informed at the 13th Standing Working Group Meeting in June 2015 that it is planned for the

beginning of 2016 to start activities on the elaboration of the Danube Floodplain project proposal. ICPDR Contracting Parties were asked to provide nominations for potential project partners.

In the Danube Declaration the Danube Ministers supported the preparation ongoing in the framework of the EUSDR of a “Danube Floodplain Project” with the aim to reduce the flood risk through floodplain restoration along the Danube and other rivers in the basin while at the same time contributing to the integration of the EU Floods Directive, EU Water Framework Directive and EU nature protection legislation as well as biodiversity and climate policies.

In April 2016 Romania informed the Secretariat that the Lead Partner from Romania will be the National Administration "Romanian Waters" and the person in charge will be Ms. Anemari Ciurea. BayFOR/Bavaria kindly offered a free-of-charge support to the preparation the Danube Floodplain Project proposal. The Romanian Lead Partner organised a trilateral meeting (RO+ICPDR+BayFor) in Bucharest on 4 July 2016. The meeting focused on defining the division of responsibilities taken over by the BayFor and the Lead Partner, on defining the role of the ICPDR in the project and on the other project preparation related issues.

First Meeting of partners committed to develop the Danube Floodplain Project application was held on 30-31 August 2016 in Vienna. At the meeting the project objectives, deliverables and work packages were discussed focusing on the role of the project partners.

The second meeting of project partners will be held in Bucharest, on 13-14 December 2016.

The project will be submitted to the 2nd DTP call in spring 2017.

Germany appreciated the progress in the project preparation and thanked Romania for the engagement in this process as well as BayFor for the administrative support. Germany highlighted the need of planned pilot activities in the frame of the project as these shall produce tangible deliverables. Germany informed that BayFor is willing to support preparation of other ICPDR projects in future.

Austria thanked Romania for taking the lead in this project of high importance for the ICPDR. Gratitude was expressed to Germany/Bavaria and BayFor for the administrative support. Austria underlined that it is necessary that the Danube Floodplain project would deliver concrete results and that the project budget would be downscaled to an amount realistic for funding.

Slovenia supported the pragmatic approach of the project which is inevitable for addressing such important cross-sectoral issue.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) **The ICPDR encourages the ICPDR Contracting Parties to keep the relevant authorities and national contact points informed about the Danube Floodplain project underlining a high priority the Danube Ministers gave to this project in the Danube Declaration 2016.**

3.5. Information Management & GIS EG

The report of the Chairperson of the IMGIS EG Ms. Dragana Ninković summarised the activities of the IMGIS EG since StWG-14:

- DanubeGIS and WISE reporting: IMGIS EG in 2016 discussed the lessons learnt in DanubeGIS reporting, and experiences with WISE reporting, including discrepancies between these two systems. The IMGIS EG concluded to follow-up and further discuss issues related to WISE reporting, which affect the DanubeGIS, and to define adjustments of the DanubeGIS when necessary.
- PM EG datasets integration into DanubeGIS: Based on the agreements with the PM EG, the PRTR and UWW templates were implemented and the final country datasets were uploaded – for the first time exceptionally by the Secretariat – to the DanubeGIS for DRBMP 2015. The PM EG agreed that all datasets (UWW and PRTR) should be “unclassified” and that all attributes should be made available for download in the DanubeGIS.
- APC EG datasets integration into DanubeGIS: The templates for APC EG Inventories (ARS and CS) were also implemented. DanubeGIS will be used for supporting data assessment and elaboration of a report. Several maps are planned to be included in a Danube Emergency Plan.
- MA EG review of status assessment on transboundary River Water Bodies: The Secretariat drafted a list of neighbouring river water bodies with a transboundary category, and presented typical cases for discussion and review. This list will be checked by IMGIS EG and forwarded to the MA EG for their analysis of differences in the status assessments.
- DanubeGIS Development: The Secretariat implemented the layers and maps (layer groups) of the final datasets of the DRBMP 2015 and DFRMP 2015 in the map server of the DanubeGIS. A simple and easy-to-use map viewer for the public was developed to display and navigate the predefined maps. This and other details of the DanubeGIS public section have been finalised in summer 2016. The public section of the DanubeGIS has a web form for registered users to request download access to confidential datasets from the countries. The terms and conditions, previously used in the printed Data Request Form, shall be included in the online form with a checkbox for mandatory agreement.
- Danube Hydrological Information System: The Secretariat discussed with the IMGIS EG (and the FP EG) the idea of a Danube Hydrological Information System (Danube HIS). Considering the experience from the Sava HIS, where data collection and sharing is based on an agreement by the national hydrometeorological services, the same principle of having the formal agreement, should be applied for the ICPDR. The IMGIS will provide the technical support to the FP EG in development of the HIS for the Danube River Basin, as an integral part of the DanubeGIS.
- Integration of Water Quality Database (WQ-DB) into DanubeGIS: The Secretariat discussed with the MA EG and IMGIS EG the suggestion to integrate the WQ-DB into DanubeGIS to facilitate future data collection for TNMN and JDS, and to benefit from other DanubeGIS functionalities. This initial proposal will be followed-up with a more detailed proposal, by the Secretariat in cooperation with both expert groups.
- DanubeGIS manual: The Secretariat prepared a draft DanubeGIS User Manual based on a previously agreed structure and shared it with the IMGIS EG for comments. The finished manual will be used for facilitating and promoting the use of the DanubeGIS among ICPDR experts.
- Danubis Development: The ICPDR Information System Danubis has been re-developed and launched in April 2016. The system will be further fine-tuned, taking in account user suggestions for further improvements.

Austria pointed at the interest of many countries from outside of the Danube basin in ICPDR activities as it was demonstrated by the IMGIS Chairperson's presentation and encouraged the IMGIS EG to cooperate closely with the PP EG on further website development to make it even more attractive for public.

Slovenia encouraged to start a discussion on how to better present the ICPDR products on the website and suggested that the academic sector should be involved in such brainstorming.

Germany suggested that the DanubeGIS should be better promoted and a potential role of the academic sector in this process should be explored. The attractiveness for the broad public is always limited by the language barrier. Further discussion is needed on how to promote the ICPDR website & DanubeGIS and to identify possible user communities.

The Executive Secretary stated that about 50% of Danubis users from Contracting Parties and Observers are inactive; therefore the Secretariat would like to generate a list of Danubis users and send it to the delegations for updating. He also suggested a new resolution on involving the academic community to facilitate information distribution to public. Germany recommended that making a note on this issue in the meeting minutes would suffice.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR welcomes the preparation of the DanubeGIS User Manual in support of promoting the use of the DanubeGIS among ICPDR experts.

3.6. Accident Prevention & Control EG

The report of the Co-Chairs of the APC EG Mr. Iurii Nabyvanets and Mr. Janez Polajnar was presented by the Technical Experts of the Secretariat responsible for this group. It summarised the activities of the APC EG since StWG-14.

- AEWS test 2016: The test of the Danube Accident Emergency Warning System (AEWS) on 27 October 2016 was initiated on a weekday's late afternoon. Its main objective was to test the functionality of the system, 24/7 operability of PIACs and basic usage of the system. The test has confirmed that the system itself is working as expected without problems from a technical point of view. All 14 PIACs reacted very fast, i.e. most of them in less than 10 minutes, all PIACs within 18 minutes, and thus much faster than the 3 hours required response time.
- Next AEWS test 2017: The comprehensive multinational test will be carried out in spring 2017 directly at the 9th APC EG meeting because of a positive experience with the similar test organised at the 8th APC EG meeting. The details of the multinational test will be prepared by the Secretariat and announced to PIACs in advance.
- AEWS operation: During 8th APC EG meeting in April 2016 the Secretariat carried out the regular AEWS operation training focussing on overview and key features, system structure, functionality, transboundary incidents, recommended equipment and software, operation and maintenance tasks, technical background, backup communication, documentation and tutorials. All PIACs were asked to update immediately in the AEWS any changed e-mail address or phone number and send a test notification. Regular security updates of the base system have been implemented into AEWS. Next AEWS operation training will be organised during the 9th APC EG meeting.

- ARS and CS inventories: In spring 2016 the APC EG discussed the status of the data collection for the Accident Risk Sites (ARS) and Contaminated Sites (CS). The group agreed that the collection of outstanding data and the data revision have to be finished by autumn 2016. Then the APC EG will elaborate an assessment report (Accidental Pollution Risk in the Danube River Basin) by summer 2017 including updated maps, detailed analyses and conclusions and should give recommendations on measures to deal with the potential risk hot-spots of the identified key sectors. Currently (as of the 7th of November 2016), data are available from 10 countries. The preliminary assessment made in spring 2016 has been updated based on the current datasets. Moreover, a draft online interactive map on the current ARS and CS data is available on DanubeGIS.
- Danube Emergency Plan: At its previous meeting the APC EG discussed the possibility to develop a Transboundary Emergency Plan for the Danube River Basin based on the example of the Oder River. It would aim at minimising the risk and adverse impacts of cross-border accidents by setting up a strategic framework and pragmatic procedures for accident prevention and emergency management on the basin-wide level. The emergency plan could provide a short, illustrative overview with the most important information, maps and responsible organisations relevant for emergency management and general recommendations related to contingency planning. The draft document is to be elaborated by summer 2017 based on the outcomes of the detailed report on accident risk hot-spots and some additional necessary information that is easily available. The Secretariat developed the first draft outline for the plan to be discussed with the countries in spring 2017.
- Tailings management: In spring 2016 the APC EG organised a short seminar on tailing management facilities (TMFs). The most important outcomes of the discussion were that the TMF issue is relevant in the Danube region and the APC EG supports the idea of implementing basin-wide risk assessments and prioritisation of the TMFs and organising training courses on safety measures in the countries where the issue is of high importance. The APC EG agreed that countries should pre-discuss their national standpoint and this should be then communicated by all countries at the next APC EG meeting in spring 2017. The Secretariat will compile and send out a short questionnaire in winter 2017 to facilitate the national discussions. In case there is a clear willingness of the countries to start activities on the TMF issue discussions will be started how to implement project(s) and what time frame and funds would be needed.

Hungary thanked the APC EG for cooperating with the UNECE Joint Expert Group and drew attention to the Checklist for contingency planning for accidents affecting transboundary waters elaborated by this working group and looks forward to similar cooperation in future.

The Secretariat replied that the UNECE checklists are taken into account by the APC EG activities.

Austria suggested that the resolution d) should be extended by a statement asking the ICPDR Contracting Parties to report back about the concrete needs. The Secretariat explained that a discussion on the relevance of the tailings issue is planned at the next APC EG meeting in spring 2017 and national reporting to the APC EG would be useful to support this discussion.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) appreciates good results of all PIACs during the AEWS 24/7 reaction test and encourages the ICPDR Contracting Parties to maintain this preparedness level further on;**

- b) welcomes the finalisation of the data collection for ARS and CS inventories and asks the APC EG to elaborate the Accidental Pollution Risk in the Danube River Basin report;**
- c) asks the APC EG to develop a draft Transboundary Emergency Plan for the Danube River Basin;**
- d) encourages the Contracting Parties to support national discussions on the necessity of further activities related to the tailings management issue and to report results of these discussions to the APC EG in spring 2017.**

3.7. Public Participation EG

The report of the Chairperson of the PP EG Ms. Susanne Brandstetter summarised the activities of the PP EG since StWG-14:

- Revision of the ICPDR Sturgeon Communication: The strategy has helped to position the ICPDR's sturgeon communication work relative to measures of other partners in the Danube Sturgeon Task Force. A living document, the Sturgeon Communication Strategy needs to be revised and developed further. Thus, a small working group has been created under the lead of Konstantin Ivanov of WWF DCP to undertake the revision and further development of the document. All countries are encouraged to volunteer and join the group.
- Sturgeon Key Visual: For the purposes of the ICPDR Sturgeon Communication Strategy, a key visual was created and validated by the group with refreshed optics and which can be used in channels on global ICPDR as well as on country level. Based on the input of the PP EG members, a final version of the key visual for sturgeon communication was produced and is ready to be used by the countries. The open files have been shared with all PP EG members.
- Cruise Tourism: Based on intensive investigations and field experiments, final findings have concluded that, cruise tourism is not a proven valuable tool for dissemination of ICPDR action. While the interest is there, the reach is too far away from the Danube and focus should instead be put on activities with a proven-track record of success. The tourists reached on the cruise ships during the first experiments were in an average age range exceeding 70 years and the likelihood that they would established some form of connection with the Danube seemed very remote at this point. However, interest has arrived from other channels and the matter might be open for discussion again in the future. For PP EG at this point this long term issue is concluded.
- Danube Watch: The PP EG has agreed to put more emphasis on an online distribution of the magazine, and is asking to boost online promotion with a PDF file that would be easier to read to help make the dissemination range even broader. The distribution list is currently being updated by the countries who are reviewing it to make sure that their contacts are up-to-date and eventually add new ones.
- Danube Declaration: The Danube Declaration deserves to be known better and brought closer to the general public. One of the first steps towards increased recognition is the slogan of the upcoming Danube day which will use one of the elements of the declaration: "get active for a cleaner Danube". Furthermore, the group is waiting for endorsement by the ICPDR to create a shorter 1 page version –which will be drafted by the Secretariat and approved by the group.

This document will be translated into national languages. The final document should be ready by 31 January 2017.

- **Danube Day 2016:** Celebrated in 13 countries, Danube Day 2016 got over 25,000 people active for the Danube with events that ranged from clearing riversides marred by rubbish to competing in sport, art, environmental and culinary challenges or targeted actions contributing to sustainable development. Gifts of international friendship were exchanged and beautiful cultural traditions shared. Close to 400 organisations held more than 350 events, forging a strong message of Danube solidarity, diversity and cooperation. The take-home message of Danube Day 2016 was that together we are stronger and as individuals we can and must contribute to a sustainable future.
- **Danube Day 2017:** Danube Day 2017 is in the planning phase. The PP EG agreed on the motto which is linked to the Danube Declaration: “Get active for a cleaner Danube” and the colour theme of the bags will be shades of blue. Funds will be required for the design of the bags and the open files which can be used by all countries for further products they may need for the organisation of the Danube Day festivities. The short motto chosen for this year shows the strategy behind the PP EG in making it easier to connect the Danube Day motto to concrete actions. Until now, an umbrella theme was used that could be filled by countries for specific, local issues. This new motto will now enable the group to generate specific action for a specific topic – moving from the very open approach adopted in the past few years and make the impact of Danube Day even greater.
- **Danube Adventure Game:** Launched last February, the online game DanubeAdventure.org has entered six months of existence, providing children between the ages of 10 and 14 years, and adults still young at heart with an exciting opportunity to engage with the Danube. The countries will report on their assessment of whether a national language version of the Danube Adventure Game is needed for them, to allocate the funds necessary to develop national language versions of the game if considered useful and once translated to promote the game on country level. This work is ongoing. The German version is already online since mid-November.
- **Joint Danube Survey:** The JDS organisational team is looking into different logistics set-up solutions where the countries will have more ownership over the project. PP EG sees it as its task to work on the formulation of new messages for this new setup and to promote the formula: “a safer, healthier and cleaner Danube”. It is crucial to have the PP EG involved early in the process to work in close cooperation with the JDS4 Team and that already in the planning phase.
- **Business Cooperation:** As Coca Cola System may no longer be a main ICPDR sponsor for outreach activities in the framework of the Green Danube Partnership, the decision was made to pursue a fundraising activity in support of ICPDR communication and outreach projects. The agency selected, AQA is now in charge of the fundraising activities on behalf of the ICPDR and has prepared sponsoring packages in close cooperation with the Secretariat. The campaign is reaching out to potential sponsors basin-wide; the list of potential sponsors was circulated in the PP EG. This fundraising activity is part of the PP EG agenda and the group has made this issue a clear focus for the coming year as well. An interim report on the status of the activities of AQA will be available for the 19th Ordinary Meeting.
- **Danube Art Master:** The continuation of Danube Art Master in 2016, although wanted by the PP EG, could not be guaranteed given the lack of financial support. The competition is returning in 2017 and led by GWP in close cooperation with PP EG.

EAA informed that an article on the Danube sturgeon was published in the December volume of the EAA journal.

Hungary asked for a clarification of the term “eventually upon success” in the resolution g). Hungary pointed out that in the list of companies prepared by AQA potential Hungarian companies are missing. HU promised to send to the Secretariat a list of potential HU companies.

Slovenia congratulated the PP EG for an excellent work done and recommended that discussion is needed on how to bring the new partners on board.

Ukraine expressed thanks to Hungary for organising the Danube Day 2016 on both banks of the Tisza River and suggested to Hungary to celebrate the Danube Day 2017 jointly again.

Germany appreciated the Sturgeon Key Visual and informed that despite the development of the German version of the Danube Adventure Game was a bit problematic this version is already online. The Danube Art Master shall be maintained in 2017 and Germany would like to join this activity again. Germany asked about the financing implications of the resolution g).

Czech Republic suggested using videos developed within the Eco Film Festival for public participation purposes. An initiative, “Water, the source of all life” of the University of Zlin, was run as a project in cooperation with by the Water Protection Department of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. Between June and September 2016 students of PR and Arts created short clips on the theme ‘water the source of all life’. Danube Civil Society Forum informed about celebrating the Danube Day 2016, recommended that social media shall be used more intensively for this purpose and offered support to organising Danube Day 2017.

The Executive Secretary explained that “eventually upon success” means that if by June 2017 AQA will manage to attract the relevant sponsors, AQA will be given a next contract, otherwise no further contract will be signed.

The PP EG Chair pointed out that the introduction of its German version contributed to an increased use of the Danube Adventure Game. Using videos for ICPDR promotion is a good idea and it will be explored further.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) calls all contracting parties to actively support the revision of the ICPDR Sturgeon Communication Strategy and the work of the group dedicated to this task;**
- b) supports the use of the sturgeon key visual for sturgeon communication purposes and encourages its use for awareness-raising;**
- c) asks the Secretariat to develop a concise version of the Danube Declaration for the broader public and asks the Heads of Delegation for approval by written procedure by 31 January 2017;**
- d) thanks all countries for their active engagement in Danube Day activities 2016;**
- e) endorses the motto “Get active for a cleaner Danube” for Danube Day 2017 and asks all countries to prepare activities and events according to the new motto;**
- f) reminds all contracting parties to promote the educational online game “Danube Adventure”; through active use of appropriate national channels;**
- g) asks the Permanent Secretariat to extend the mandate of AQA until June 2017 and eventually upon success to extend it further.**

4. Sub-basin activities

4.1. International Sava River Basin Commission

The Executive Director of the ISRBC Mr. Dejan Komatina provided a review of activities since StWG-14. He focused on:

- Development of joint / integrated plans & establishment of integrated systems for the Sava basin
- Participation and cooperation in the development of projects
- Rehabilitation and development of navigation on the Sava river waterway
- Other activities in the field of navigation
- Amendments to the “FASRB”
- Development of protocols to the “FASRB”
- Activities related to implementation of the “EU Strategy for the Danube Region”
- Meetings, cooperation & promotion activities.

Slovenia thanked to the ISRBC and ICPDR Executive Secretaries for a good partnership. Slovenia in the capacity of ISRBC Presidency informed that the World Bank had approached ISRBC with the initiative of bringing investments into the basin.

Germany appreciated the cooperation between ICPDR and ISRBC highlighting as a good example the agreed development of the Danube HIS using the Sava HIS know-how. Germany thanked ISRBC Executive Secretary for an excellent presentation of ISRBC results at international forums.

4.2. Tisza River Basin

In the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2011, the countries of the Tisza River Basin decided to continue the future work on the implementation of the Joint Tisza Program of Measures taking into account and underlining specific integration issues related to water quality and quantity management - as introduced in the ITRBM Plan. It was agreed to prepare an update of the Tisza River Basin Analysis and an updated Tisza River Basin Management Plan by 2015. Countries of the Tisza River Basin welcomed the initiative of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and expressed the strong wish and commitment to turn the Tisza basin cooperation into a flagship project of the Strategy and by this to support and intensify the cooperation between water management relevant sectors in the Tisza River Basin.

The JOINTISZA project will focus on interactions of two key aspects, the river basin management (RBM) and flood protection, taking into account the relevant stakeholders who have pivotal role in the Tisza RBM planning process. The main aim of the project is to further improve the integration of the water management and flood risk prevention planning and actions in the next RBM planning cycle, in line with the relevant EU legislations.

The 23rd ICPDR Tisza Group Meeting was organised on the 26th October 2016, in Budapest, Hungary back to back with the ICPDR RBM EG meeting. The two hours meeting was focusing on the JOINTISZA clearing process and related tasks.

General information about the project:

- Title: Strengthening cooperation between river basin management planning and flood risk prevention to enhance the status of waters of the Tisza River Basin.
- Main objective: The main objective is strengthening approaches and cooperation among the relevant actors of the river basin management planning process especially actors of flood risk prevention/flood protection sector to enhance the status of waters of the basin.
- Partners/Associated Strategic Partners: 12 partners and 5 associated partners including all Tisza River Basin countries and five organisation with Danube basin activities relevance. ICPDR participates in the project as project partner.
- Work packages: The partners identified six work packages as follows - (WP1) Project Management; (WP2) Communication; (WP3) Basin Characterisation; (WP4) Water quantity issues; (WP5) Flood Management; (WP6) Synthesis.
- Budget: 2,255,126.80 €
- Timeframe: Jan 2017 to June 2019.

In May 2016 a full JOINTISZA application form was submitted. Following the positive evaluation in September 2016 the project was awarded for fund, with some conditionalities. On 8 November 2016 the application form which included all the updates required by the conditionalities was delivered to the Danube Transnational Programme. The JOINTISZA Project is envisaged to start on 1 January 2017.

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) acknowledges the JOINTISZA project initiative and congratulates for the successful project proposal development;**
- b) invites the ICPDR Tisza Group to continue its joint efforts towards the development of the Update of the Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan, through the JOINTISZA project.**

4.3. Prut River Basin

Latest information related to the ongoing activities within the Prut River Basin has been introduced in the frame of the 44th RBM EG Meeting in October 2016.

Different activities are ongoing or being established with non EU countries (MD and UA) of the Prut sub-basin and in connection with different EU directives. An association agreement between Moldova and the EU as well as Ukraine and the EU entered into force on 1 July 2016; authorities assumed responsibility to implement the EU-WFD as a part of the association agreement.

A number of projects are currently under implementation or in the preparation phase.

EPIRB Project

The project “Environmental Protection of International River Basins” (EPIRB) was funded by the EU, managed by the European Commission and implemented by a consortium led by Hulla & Co “Human Dynamics”. The EPIRB Project aimed to reinforce current actions in environmental protection and water resources management, supported by previous EU funded transboundary projects in the region in terms of cooperation as well as convergence towards the principles of Integrated Water Resources

Management and the EU WFD. The project activities and outcomes aimed to improve the quality of water in selected transboundary river basins through joint water monitoring activities and the development of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) in selected pilot river basins. One of them was the Prut sub-basin. The Eight Progress Report of the EPIRB Project covering the period of February to July 2016 was circulated in September 2016. A Workshop between MD, RO and UA on the “First comparison of the MD and UA Prut River Basin Management Plans with the RO Prut RBMP” took place on 21 July 2016 in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Vienna (Austria). The project ended on 31 October 2016.

EUWI+ Project

EPIRB activities will be followed up in the new EUWI+ Project. A joint final EPIRB Regional Steering Committee and EUWI+ High Level Meeting took place from 19-20 September in Kiev. The three months EUWI+ inception phase will be initiated by missions by the implementing partners to consult with the country stakeholders regarding project expectations in the Beneficiary countries.

Romania proposed establishing of a Prut expert group under the ICPDR, which would deal with the river basin management issues in the Prut river basin. This group should include Romania, Ukraine and Moldova and should act under the coordination of ICPDR.

Ukraine and Moldova supported the Romanian proposal.

The Executive Secretary replied that the idea is technically feasible, and the group should benefit from the experience from the Tisza group. The Executive Secretary encouraged Moldova, Romania and Ukraine to come up with a formal proposal for establishment and operation of this group for the next StWG meeting in June 2017.

4.4. Danube Delta

ENVSEC Danube Delta Project

The project is financed by the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) and the project’s main objective is to improve cross-border cooperation in the Danube Delta and to build capacities for introducing a river basin approach for the management of natural resources in the Danube Delta Region. The project is an important step with regard to sustainable transboundary water management in the Danube Delta region and constitutes an important step towards the preparation of a River Basin Management Plan for the Danube Delta Region as foreseen in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.

The draft Danube Delta Analysis Report (DDAR), including the evaluation of important water management issues of the region, is currently under finalisation; the draft DDAR is expected to be available at the end of December 2016. The project results are planned to be presented in a General Conference at the beginning of 2017.

5. Cooperation & Partnership

5.1. EU Grant

Taking into account the priorities set in the work program for the different planned ICPDR activities addressing the period from 2016 to 2018, a first draft proposal for a new EU Grant supporting the implementation of the 2nd DRBMP and 1st DFRMP was prepared and provided to the European Commission.

The following priority tasks and activities were identified to further address existing knowledge gaps and strengthen capacities to further improve approaches for the sustainable management of the Danube basin's water resources:

- Improved assessment of WFD biological quality elements
- Harmonised approach on Invasive Alien Species
- Improved hydromorphological assessments and linkage to water status
- Methodological approach for regionalised nutrient surplus calculations from agriculture
- Identification of accident risk hot-spots
- Climate Change Adaptation Workshop
- Assistance facility for bilateral capacity building activities

Upon signature of the 2017 financing decision expected for the first quarter of 2017, a decision on the EU Grant application will be made by the European Commission

5.2. EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

Different Priority Areas of the EUSDR are relevant for the work of the ICPDR. Next to the Priority Areas dealing with Navigation (PA1a) and Energy (PA2), specifically Pillar B of the Strategy (Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region – PA4 (Water Quality), PA5 (Environmental Risks) and PA6 (Biodiversity)) includes numerous actions which are important for or carried out in the frame of the ICPDR.

Priority Area 4 & Priority Area 5

Representatives of PA4 and PA5 are regularly participating in relevant meetings of the ICPDR (i.e. RBM EG, FP EG and the ICPDR Tisza Group) and vice versa. The exchange at the meetings provides the opportunity to further strengthen cooperation between the ICPDR and respective Priority Areas under the EUSDR to achieve a coordinated and effective implementation. In addition, regular participation of the ICPDR Secretariat in EUSDR meetings of relevant Priority Areas is taking place, in particular those of Pillar B (PA 4, 5 and 6) and PA 1a.

Since a significant part of the EUSDR PA4 Roadmap is closely related to the ICPDR activities, the Secretariat regularly meets the PA4 colleagues for informal discussions to ensure that the activities are well harmonised. The recent discussions at a trilateral PA4-ICPDR-ISRBC meeting on 8 September 2016 aimed at updating the PA4 Roadmap, contributing to the PA4 Annual Report and identifying joint activities and projects for the upcoming years. The Secretariat provided inputs for the PA4 Annual Report on the progress ICPDR has achieved and updated the milestones and deadlines of those Actions of the PA4 Roadmap where ICPDR is responsible for the progress. Based on the updated Roadmap PA4 prepared a draft list of strategic ideas which can potentially be further developed in the frame of a project in the coming years. The draft PA4 priority list as agreed in the 12th PA4 Steering Group Meeting on 1 December 2016 in Budapest is as follows:

- Implementation and promotion of eco-friendly waste water treatment for small settlements;
- Support effective management of water resources from the water quality viewpoint in the conditions of climate change (e.g. drought, water scarcity);
- Solving the problem of Hazardous and Problematic substances (problematic infrastructures) endangering water ecosystems in the in the DRB;

- Development of knowledge building and policy recommendations on the level of pharmaceuticals and other emerging substances (eg: cyano bacteria toxins) in the water.

In case of projects to be developed, the ICPDR Secretariat will ensure transparent information and circulation of any related outcomes to the respective ICPDR EGs for comments and feedback.

PA5 targets were revised in 2016 as follows:

1. To address the challenges of water scarcity and droughts in line with the Danube River Basin Management Plan – Update 2015, the ICPDR report on the impacts of droughts in the Danube Basin in 2015 (due in 2016) and the ongoing work in the field of climate adaptation.
2. Provide and enhance continuous support to the implementation of the Danube Flood Risk Management Plan – adopted in 2015 in line with the EU Floods Directive – to achieve significant reductions of flood risk events by 2021, also taking into account potential impacts of climate change and adaptation strategies.
3. To continuously update the existing database of accident risk spots (ARS Inventory), contaminated sites and sites used for the storage of dangerous substances.

Focus of PA5 activities is on actions addressing reduction of adverse impacts on groundwater quality of the abandoned Solotvino salt mine. A joint scoping mission to Solotvino was organised by PA4 and PA5. The key risk in that area is that the precipitation dissolves the salt depositions which results in a collapse of mine structures. PA5 information brochure has been published.

Co-coordinator of PA5 Mr. Laszlo Dobi and the Co-coordinator of PA 4 Mr. Laszlo Perger made a joint presentation on the recent activities of their priority areas. Mr. Dobi highlighted during his presentation the importance of the preparation of the DAREFFORT project proposal. He asked the ICPDR to support that the relevant institutes responsible for hydrometeorological forecasts, data gathering and processing should join the DAREFFORT project.

Serbia asked for updating the draft PA4 priority list based on the outcomes of the 12th PA4 Steering Group Meeting on 1 December 2016 in Budapest.

Germany highlighted the progress in cooperation with the EUSDR and encouraged EUSDR to act in the frame of the policy context as agreed by the ICPDR by supporting necessary funding for implementation activities.

Priority Area 6 (Biodiversity)

The 8th PA6 Steering Group Meeting was organised on 23 November 2016 in Zagreb (HR) providing information about the work programme for the year 2017, including an update on recent progress and work as well as on roadmaps and next steps.

Ms. Cristina Sandu from the Danube Sturgeon Task Force Chair gave a presentation on the DSTF achievements in 2016 and made an appeal to address fish migration issues related to the Romanian Bala navigation project and to get access to the raw data from a related monitoring project.

In reaction to this presentation the EU (DG ENV) committed to work together with DG MOVE and DG REGIO on exploring the possibilities of collecting the necessary data for DSTF work.

Ms. Cristina Sandu thanked EU (DG ENV) for this support and emphasised the urgency of finding sustainable solutions to the present situation.

Priority Area 1a (Inland Navigation)

The Danube FAIRway project aims to translate the “Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan” for the Danube and its navigable tributaries, which was endorsed on 3 December 2014 by the Ministers of Transport, into action. More detailed information on the FAIRway project and national kick-off meetings can be obtained from the contact points as indicated for the different events, as well as under agenda item 6.4. The second Steering and Advisory Committee meeting of FAIRway Danube, during which the intermediate progress made in the first 1,5 years will be reported, will take place in Brussels on 13 December 2016. A Working Group session of PA1a was organised on 15 November 2016 in Vienna addressing the status quo in the implementation of the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan for the Danube and its Navigable Tributaries.

Mr. Gert-Jan Muilerman, on behalf of the Coordinators of the PA1A made a presentation on the recent activities of PA1a.

IAD thanked PA1a for an open-minded attitude in its work.

The EU (DG ENV) suggested inviting of EUSDR Danube Strategy Point representative(s) to the ICPDR HoDs meetings in future to obtain a comprehensive view on linkages between the different priority areas and the work of the ICPDR.

EUSDR 5th Annual Forum, 3 to 4 November 2016, Bratislava (SK)

The 5th EUSDR Annual Forum was organised from 3 to 4 November 2016 in Bratislava, SK. The ICPDR organised and contributed to different sessions, including inter alia a presentation on “Dynamic integrated management with regard to climate change“ in Workshop 2 on “Water – non-alternative source for life“ as well as a stand presenting ICPDR reports.

JRC Danube Foresight Workshop, 27 to 28 October 2016, Budapest (HU)

Since the scientific activities of the JRC address several river basin management related issues, the Secretariat has been closely following the relevant activities of the JRC and regularly updates the respective ICPDR EG/TG members on the current developments. Recently, a Danube Foresight Workshop was organised for which scientists and experts from the Danube region and the ICPDR as key stakeholder were invited. The aim of the workshop was to discuss four “extreme” scenarios (corresponding to stronger or weaker European political integration and to investments more on the large or small scale – e.g. large infrastructure projects versus light technology, small business, circular economy etc.). Under each scenario, participants discussed what opportunities, threats and issues might be emerging concerning water management (e.g. pollution, flood) and those aspects of society and the economy that depend on water (e.g. hydropower, agriculture, ecosystems). Outcomes of the discussion will be assessed by the JRC and a technical report will be elaborated and published including messages for policy makers. The Workshops “flash report” including the list of participants (not representing the outcomes of the Workshop, but only providing a first condensation of feedback and description of what happened) is available; as soon as finalised, the full Summary Report of the JRC Danube Foresight Workshop will be provided to HoD for information.

5.3. Danube – Black Sea

At its 32nd BSC Regular Meeting on 12-13 October 2016 the Black Sea Commission adopted the text of the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program (BSIMAP) for 2017-2022. The BSIMAP has been drafted in the framework of the EU funded project “Support to the Black Sea Commission for the Implementation of the MSFD” (MSFD Project). The BSIMAP 2017-2022 includes two annexes reflecting the reporting obligations of the Contracting Parties to the Bucharest Convention, as follows:

Annex 4 - BSIMAP Reporting format:

This annex contains 6 tables with indicators for annual reporting to the Black Sea Commission. The data is based on existing annual reporting formats of the BSC Advisory Groups, and also takes into account the new environmental challenges and legislation, as well as the approaches introduced by relevant global and regional organisations (i.e. provisions of EU MSFD; GFCM; ACCOBAMS etc.).

Annex 10 - BSC – ICPDR Reporting format:

Data from the Danube on loads of pollution is being presented each year based upon the TNMN water quality yearbook. The load assessment data is generated based upon the regular monitoring carried out by Romania at the Reni water quality station. Romania has made a comparative assessment of the loads at Reni with the loads from the three arms of the Danube and found that the loads at Reni are representative of the Danube loads.

A short written report assessing the Black Sea ecosystem together with selected data on the selected indicators will be presented to the ICPDR by the end of the respective year. This report would be the official Black Sea report that would involve synthesis and interpretation of the data from the Advisory Groups of the Black Sea Commission on the ecosystem status of the Black Sea.

The BSC is ready to continue the work of the Danube – Black Sea Joint Technical Working Group and to organise its next meeting in the beginning of 2017.

BSC could not participate at this meeting and provided the Secretariat with an official statement in ANNEX 3.

5.4. Visits from Countries, Commissions & Academia

The ICPDR continues to receive significant numbers of requests for presentations from other commissions and countries in order to exchange and share information and experiences in the field of transboundary river basin management. The ICPDR President and the Secretariat Staff were requested to participate in meetings of other Commissions and River Basins.

Academics and research institutions have submitted requests to the ICPDR Secretariat to support research efforts or joined study visits.

5.5. Business partnership

Fundraising

Since Coca Cola System may no longer be a main ICPDR sponsor for outreach activities in the framework of the Green Danube Partnership, the agency AQA has been tasked with supporting the ICPDR in finding new sponsors in support of outreach communication projects.

In coordination with the Public Participation Expert Group, the ICPDR Secretariat has approached fund-raising agencies that could be assigned with recruiting sponsors for ICPDR activities such as outreach work. AQA has prepared a letter and a sponsorship opportunity package which has been sent to potential sponsors. A presentation has been prepared detailing sponsorship opportunities to support the meetings with potential sponsors.

Green Danube Partnership

Since June, representatives of the recently restructured Coca-Cola Company and Coca-Cola Hellenic have been contacted several times per email or over the phone to discuss future cooperation.

Coca-Cola System has not yet responded on whether and how to continue the cooperation with the ICPDR. A firm answer on how to proceed is awaited at the Secretariat.

However, recent signals have shown that while they may no longer be a main ICPDR sponsor, new cooperation with Coca Cola HBC who is launching a new strategy, may not be fully excluded. Since discussion is ongoing, final results can most likely only be communicated at the beginning of 2017.

6. Projects with ICPDR involvement

The ICPDR continues to have involvement in key projects which contribute to the work of the ICPDR. The projects of major significance for the ICPDR or where the ICPDR is managing or directly involved in the project, are presented here under this item.

6.1. Project SOLUTIONS

The major objective of the FP7 project SOLUTIONS is to develop a conceptual framework for the evidence-based development of environmental and water policies. In particular, International River Commissions, EC working groups and water works associations are directly supported with consistent guidance for the early detection, identification, prioritisation, and abatement of chemicals in the water cycle. The SOLUTIONS approach is providing transparent and evidence-based lists of River Basin Specific Pollutants (RBSPs) for the case study basins and support the review of the list of WFD priority pollutants. The project started in October 2013 with a duration of 60 months and budget of 12 million EUR. ICPDR is both a project partner and a member of the SOLUTIONS stakeholders board. One of the tasks of SOLUTIONS is to come up with a proposal of candidate Danube RBSPs together with their predicted no-effect concentrations (PNEC). In 2013/2014 the project provided a substantial contribution to JDS3 by analysing the samples for a wide range of hazardous substances and preparing the respective chapters for the JDS3 report. Analysing this large amount of organic substances during JDS 3 enabled SOLUTIONS experts to provide first suggestions for the update of the Danube river basin-wide list of specific pollutants, which were included into the DRBM Plan – Update 2015. The SOLUTIONS experts have already published an article on Estimating emissions of PFOS and PFOA to the Danube River catchment and evaluating them using a catchment-scale chemical transport and fate model.

Modelling activities of the SOLUTIONS Project have been presented and discussed at the meeting of the ICPDR Pressures & Measures Expert Group (PM EG) in April 2016 and further information on the progress has been provided in September 2016. The ICPDR PM EG welcomed the achievements of the project and encouraged the SOLUTIONS modelling experts to continue in its activities. The ICPDR PM EG narrowed the scope of the possible substances, which could be useful to be modelled for the Danube River Basin in support of the river basin management activities to EU WFD priority substances (particularly the ubiquitous persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic substances and the priority hazardous substances), EU Watch List substances and the Danube River Basin specific substances.

The ICPDR expects that SOLUTIONS model results can be very useful for further modelling studies to be implemented by the ICPDR by identifying hot-spots and compounds with a high environmental

risk. The SOLUTIONS modelling results can provide information on hot-spot regions in the Danube pilot countries (DE, AT, HU, RO and RS) for the background loads as well as for fluxes from human pressures. In the identified regions detailed modelling and extended monitoring activities are intended to be undertaken. Model comparisons between the SOLUTIONS emission and transport model system and regionalised emission and pathway models to be used by the ICPDR will also be considered to be accomplished to enhance understanding.

With regard to potential monitoring activities which might be additionally undertaken by SOLUTIONS the ICPDR PM EG explored if any point source emission monitoring campaigns (influent to wastewater treatment plants and effluents to river system from wastewater treatment plants and big industrial facilities) could be organised. In case that such activity could be carried out in the frame of SOLUTIONS, the ICPDR PM EG proposed conducting a targeted monitoring program. These monitoring data would serve the characterisation of typical wastewater effluents to be used for identification and assessment of the most important point sources of hazardous substances in the Danube River Basin.

The SOLUTIONS informed the ICPDR MAEG in October 2016 that the revised list of Danube RBSPs will be provided in 2017 after incorporating the SOLUTIONS modelling results. The MA EG agreed with this approach and expressed gratitude for the ongoing support concerning management of hazardous substances in the Danube River Basin received from SOLUTIONS.

More information can be found at: <http://www.solutions-project.eu/>

6.2. Coca-Cola – WWF – Partnership for a living Danube

The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) and WWF are working in a seven year partnership to restore vital wetlands, river sections and floodplains along the River Danube and its selected tributaries by the year 2020 and promote the wise use of freshwater resources in the Danube basin. The ICPDR is observer in the Steering Group of the partnership.

The partnership will reconnect former floodplains to the river system by opening dikes, side-arms, supplying channels, ensure longitudinal connectivity by fish-pass development or elimination of obstacles as well as retaining water on the floodplains by working closely with relevant local authorities and stakeholders. At the same time, a regional movement is planned to be created for wetland conservation and restoration as well as good water stewardship. There are two larger focus areas: Lower Danube Green Corridor (RO and BG) and the Mura-Drava-Danube Trans-Boundary Biosphere Reserve (Croatia, Hungary, Serbia) as well as soda lakes in Austria.

The partnership was introduced to the ICPDR and officially launched in the frame of the 12th StWG Meeting in June 2014. The May 2016 Steering Group Meeting for the project reviewed progress achieved to date towards the 2020 objectives for the project. Over 400 hectares of wetlands have been restored to date, including areas at Strbac in Serbia and Neusiedler See in Austria. With a number of wetland restoration projects in the pipeline in Serbia (Siroki Rit) as well as in Croatia (Drava side-arms), Hungary (Drava and its floodplain, side arms), Romania (Lower Danube and Danube Delta) and Bulgaria (Rusenski Lom area, Persina, Kalimok wetlands), progress is on track to achieve the 5,237 ha objective by the year 2020. In a number of cases, financial support from the Coca-Cola Foundation is being used to leverage and co-finance support from other sources, including EU funds.

Progress has also been made towards the communication and mobilisation objectives for the partnership. The “Living Danube Tour”, an interactive mobile exhibit on the value of wetlands, has made 38 stops in Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. It has directly involved at least 57,500 people (target of 60,000 by 2020) and reached over 8 million people via traditional and online media. The partnership has also produced one expert publication on EU and

other funding opportunities related to wetland conservation and restoration as well as two video documenting, one on the Living Danube Tour and one about the Living Danube programme.

More information can be found under the following web link: panda.org/living_danube.

6.3. MARS Project

The MARS project (Managing Aquatic ecosystems and water Resources under multiple Stress) is financed by the 7th EU RTD Framework Programme and consists of 24 participating institutions from 16 different European countries, including JRC from the EU. Lead Partner is the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany). The project duration is 48 months and the ICPDR is involved as Applied Partner.

The project investigates how multiple pressures affect rivers, lakes and estuaries. Many water bodies in Europe are affected by multiple pressures, e.g. by diffuse pollution, hydro-morphological changes and climate change, but the impacts of these are not well understood and thus are not that well reflected in the 1st and 2nd WFD River Basin Management Plans. The project aims to support water managers and policy makers at the water body, river basin and European scales in the practical implementation of the WFD by conducting new research and syntheses of existing knowledge concerning the effects and management of multiple stressors on surface water and groundwater bodies.

Stakeholder Workshop was held on 19-20 October 2016 in Den Helder, (the Netherlands). The aim of the workshop was to present and discuss the first applications of the tools developed within the MARS project in light of the needs of river basin managers. These tools are able to assess multiple pressures in river basins and to design measures to mitigate the impacts of multiple pressures.

The key questions which were discussed at the workshop are: 1) how the tools are meeting the river basin manager's needs and requirements for diagnosing and assessing the impacts of multiple pressures and designing relevant management measures; 2) how to adapt the MARS tools and applications to meet the needs and requirements of river basin managers. A workshop report will be developed on the outcomes including an overview of the MARS tools to support river basin managers in developing the 3rd cycle of river basin management plans and a summary about the needs and requirements for tool development from river basin managers.

Questionnaire on river basin management, multiple pressures

The MARS consortium prepared a questionnaire for river basin managers responsible for practical WFD implementation including monitoring and assessments of pressures, status and elaboration of programmes of measures. The purpose of the questionnaire was to prepare background information for the MARS stakeholder workshop in October 2016. The questionnaire aimed at gaining information how daily water management practice deals with the selection of cost-effective measures for water bodies exposed to multiple pressures and whether knowledge on pressure interactions and biological response are taken into account when selecting and prioritising the measures. The Secretariat filled the questionnaire for the DRB based on the DRBM Plan – Update 2015 and submitted it to the MARS consortium at 20 September 2016.

Further information on the project can be obtained from the project website: <http://www.mars-project.eu/>.

6.4. FAIRway Danube Project

Most Danube Ministers of Transport endorsed the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Masterplan on 3rd December 2014 in Brussels. The EU funded project "FAIRway Danube" translates

it into action and sets first steps. At the same time, it prepares for the further deployment of the Masterplan along the Danube and its navigable tributaries. Up-to-date, reliable and harmonised information on shallow sections, on water levels and water level forecasts will be made available all along the Danube. Not only are they important for the planning of transports on the waterway, but also for its maintenance, the design of river engineering measures or relocating the fairway.

National Action Plans on the Master Plan were published in May 2016 at <http://www.fairwaydanube.eu/> and are planned to be updated twice a year within the framework of the FAIRway Danube project.

The second Steering and Advisory Committee meeting of FAIRway Danube, during which the intermediate progress made in the first 1,5 years will be reported, will take place in Brussels on 13 December 2016.

6.5. AQUACROSS Project

The Horizon 2020 project AQUACROSS (led by the Ecologic Institute from Germany, consists of 16 partners) explores, advances and supports the implementation of the ecosystem based management (EBM) concept across aquatic ecosystems in the EU for the purposes of ensuring the sustainability of these ecosystems, safeguarding the provision of ecosystem services and enhancing human well-being. Many of the aquatic ecosystems are at risk of being irreversibly damaged by human activities and pressures, including pollution, invasive species, overfishing and climate change. The project's main objective is to support the timely achievement of the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy and other international conservation targets. In this regard, AQUACROSS aims to develop and test an assessment framework which considers the full array of interactions, including human activities, within aquatic ecosystems. The AQUACROSS approach is built around four pillars of work supported in collaboration with eight local case studies. Case studies are a major source of information and data and ensure interaction across aquatic ecosystems as well as disciplines.

Case Study 3: Danube River Basin - harmonising inland, coastal and marine ecosystem management to achieve aquatic biodiversity targets identifies the impacts of significant water management issues in the Danube River Basin on its aquatic biodiversity. An important part of the driver-pressure analyses in the Danube case study is the existing data of the river basin management plans which will be included. One focus in terms of project activities will be on hydromorphological pressures on catchment, regional and local scale, including longitudinal (hydropower) and lateral connectivity. The impact on biodiversity will be addressed based on habitats, invertebrates and other BQE of the WFD and birds. Long migratory species (sturgeons) will be included in the analysis. ICPDR is a cooperating partner in the case study implementation.

Further information on the project including the summary report can be obtained from the project website: <http://aquacross.eu/>.

6.6. STURGENE Project

The Ex-situ survey to preserve sturgeon genetic diversity in the Middle and Lower Danube (STURGENE Project), financed by "EUSDR Start", was finalised in April 2016.

The projects main objective was to foster ex-situ conservation of sturgeon populations and to preserve sturgeon genetic diversity in the Middle and Lower Danube. It aimed to provide the necessary knowledge base, mobilise stakeholder support, and develop a roadmap for actions for securing the gene pool of endangered Danube sturgeon species.

The following final deliverables are available

- Final Report summarising the main findings of the project,
- Executive Summary representing the roadmap for ex-situ conservation,
- Annexes including the results of the field survey (Annex 1) and the technical measures foreseen for building ex situ facilities (Annex 2).

6.7. Iron Gates Follow-up Monitoring Project

The project “Improving Fish Migration at the Iron Gates I and II” was implemented from September 2013 until September 2014. The project report inter alia outlined possible fish migration solutions at the Iron Gates complex which are in need to be further investigated.

As a follow-up, a preparatory monitoring study on sturgeon behaviour at the Iron Gate dams was financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB). The project objectives were

- To test and adapt different telemetry techniques on sturgeons in order to achieve the detection resolution required to determine the preferred location of fish pass entrances at the Iron Gate hydropower and navigation system;
- To prepare and train sturgeon tagging and tracking teams from Romania, Bulgaria and Serbia, to become partners in a future larger telemetry study on sturgeon behaviour.

The international project was coordinated by the Danube Delta National Institute in Tulcea (Romania). Project partners included the Institute for Multidisciplinary Research Belgrade (Serbia), the National Museum of Natural History Sofia (Bulgaria) and NINA Trondheim (Norway). The project started in November 2014 and was implemented until November 2015. The final Report was published in December 2015 including an Executive Summary

6.8. Danube project on hydromorphology and river restoration

The objective of the Danube project on hydromorphology and river restoration, applying for GEF funding under the programme International Waters, is to achieve major progress and to harmonise approaches for river restoration and aquatic biodiversity conservation in the Danube River Basin with focus on Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. The project will be prepared in two steps: completing the Project Identification Form (PIF) and at a later stage developing a full proposal.

The proposed actions of the project include inter alia the following:

- Stock-taking of existing approaches and methodologies for the hydromorphological assessment and monitoring of river water bodies;
- Stock-taking of existing hydromorphological pressures and approaches for river restoration measures;
- Organisation of training sessions and workshops, including practical field trips, tackling the following questions:
 - Relevance of river hydromorphology for aquatic biodiversity
 - Pressures – impacts relationship of hydromorphological alterations on biological quality elements and water status

- Methodological approaches for hydromorphological assessments of river water bodies, taking into account the existing administrative requirements for water management (e.g. for water body designation, pressures assessment and planning of measures)
- Elements determining the sustainability of existing and new infrastructure in relation to their impact on aquatic ecology and biodiversity, and potential for exploiting win-win solutions i.e. in relation to sustainable flood risk management
- Questions related to funding opportunities for river restoration measures
- Organisation of pilot projects and activities in each of the five Non EU MS, including e.g. measures on ecological flows, hydromorphological monitoring and assessment of wet-land/floodplain reconnection projects; co-funding possibilities for pilot actions by linking project activities with other ongoing projects and potential funding instruments should be investigated for this action.

The activities will be instrumental for the implementation of follow-up river restoration projects and for tackling hydromorphological alterations in a harmonised and consistent approach throughout the Danube River Basin. The project will in addition be a major contribution for Non EU-MS towards meeting the legal requirements of modern integrated water resources management.

The project should last for 4 years (starting end 2018/early 2019); GEF funding of \$7 million and co-financing of national restoration projects in the entire Danube River Basin is envisaged. Direct beneficiaries are GEF-eligible countries in the Danube River Basin who have agreed to establish River Basin and Flood Risk Management Plans for 2015-21, i.e. Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine and Moldova. Other ICPDR Contracting Parties (except for the EU) will be cooperating countries.

Next concrete steps towards the development of the GEF project concept (PIF) are

- Organisation of key stakeholder interviews in each of the target countries to verify and complement identified measures and potential pilot projects.
- Organisation of two regional stakeholder workshops (organised by WWF).
- Submission of a PIF in March 2017

Resolutions:

The ICPDR

- a) acknowledges the WWF's leading role as the GEF Agency and its support to the elaboration of the Project Identification Form (PIF) of this project;**
- b) encourages the HoDs of Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine to contact the GEF Operational Focal Points (OFPs) in their respective countries and explain them the benefits of this project to the overall ecological status in the Danube River Basin and in their countries;**
- c) asks the RBM EG and HYMO TG to closely follow and support the elaboration of the Project Identification Form (PIF) and development of the full proposal, where appropriate.**

6.9. DANUBIUS

DANUBIUS-RI is a pan-European distributed research infrastructure dedicated to interdisciplinary studies of large river–sea systems. It will enable and support research addressing the conflicts between society’s demands, environmental change and environmental protection in river–sea systems worldwide.

DANUBIUS-RI is being developed by partners in eleven European countries, with expressions of interest and support from the scientific community in many other countries in Europe and worldwide. It aims to become operational by 2022. DANUBIUS-RI is included in the 2016 ESFRI Roadmap (European Strategy Forum on Research Infra-structures) and is a EUSDR Flagship Project.

The research infrastructure will comprise a Hub and a Data Centre in Romania, a Technology Transfer Office in Ireland, and Supersites and Nodes across Europe. The Hub will provide leadership, coordination, and key scientific, educational and analytical capabilities. Supersites will be designated natural sites that provide the focus for observation, research and modelling at locations of high scientific importance and utilising a range of opportunities to study RS systems from river source to coastal sea. Nodes will be centres of expertise providing facilities and services, data storage and provision, experimental and in situ measurements facilities, state-of-the-art analytical capabilities and implementation of standardised procedures and quality control (the DANUBIUS Commons). This structure will enable DANUBIUS-RI to build on existing expertise and synergies to support world-leading interdisciplinary research and innovation in freshwater-marine research. DANUBIUS-RI will apply for designation as an ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium).

Recently, a very positive evaluation result for the H2020 CSA proposal for the preparatory phase of DANUBIUS-RI was received. Core objective of this preparatory phase project is to support the further development of DANUBIUS-RI, i.e. to bring it to such a level that it is ready for implementation as a pan-European distributed Research Infrastructure (RI). This 3-year project is expected to start on 1 December 2016.

The Romanian Government signed a new Memorandum of Understanding concerning DANUBIUS-RI and its strategic importance for Romania which is opening the gate for structural funds. The previous Memorandum (signed in 2013) has been achieved in the moment DANUBIUS-RI got accepted on the ESFRI Roadmap.

More information at: <http://www.danubius-ri.eu/>

A discussion is ongoing between the ICPDR Secretariat and the DANUBIUS-RI on possibilities of future cooperation.

6.10. REVISTUR Project

The REVISTUR project (Revival of Danube Sturgeons: concerted basin-wide actions) will pave the way for the establishment of sturgeon migration corridors through the identification and protection of habitats along the Danube and its main tributaries. It will also build up the network and spread the know-how to conserve the diversity of sturgeon species. The project will be complemented by communication activities to raise awareness on sturgeon conservation needs and enhance public support for their revival. A special focus is placed on raising the support of the navigation and the hydropower sectors.

The REVISTUR draft proposal is currently being developed; as the 2nd Danube Transnational Programme call launch is postponed until early 2017 and thus, no specific call documents are

available yet, the draft proposal is based on the template of the 1st DTP call 2016. The draft proposal is the first written description of all work packages and project objectives. All work packages leaders were asked to provide input, as given in the template mentioned above. Several input was received; however, the proposal will need continuous improvement in the next weeks/months, until the 2nd DTP call is launched and need to be aligned with the second call requirements as soon as available.

Austria thanked ICPDR for supporting the STURGENE project; the results and knowledge obtained during this project is currently being used for the preparation of the REVISTUR project proposal.

While the STURGENE project focused initially on ex-situ conservation measures, IAD informed that the REVISTUR project proposal now is in particular focusing on in-situ measures and sturgeon habitat mapping, while addressing ex-situ measures has only secondary importance. However, Austria referred to the importance of the conservation of the genetic pool of Danube sturgeon species and the preservation of native sturgeon species outside their natural habitat (live gene bank) in order to ensure the “genetic connectivity” of Danube sturgeons in the Danube basin.

IAD also confirmed to better align the REVISTUR project proposal to the DTP specific objective 2.3, in particular as regards linking the proposed activities to the issue of improved "river connectivity" and interlinking of natural habitats.

7. Information on projects with transboundary relevance

This is a standing item on the agenda of ICPDR Commission meetings in response to article 10 of the Danube River Protection Convention which obliges the Contracting Parties to communicate on “planned activities, which for reason of their character are likely to cause transboundary impacts”. Countries are therefore requested under this item to bring forward information (for information purposes only) on projects which have transboundary relevance.

No information has been received from the countries on new projects with transboundary relevance.

8. ICPDR Meetings & Events

8.1. Meetings 2017

The following meetings are planned for 2017:

- International symposium on sturgeons, 10-16 September 2017, Vienna

8.2. ICPDR meetings

- Presidency handover meeting on 23rd January 2017 Vienna
- DBS JTWG meeting early spring 2017
- 15th StWG meeting 8-9 June 2017 in Brussels
- 20th Ordinary Meeting, 12-13 December 2017, Vienna

9. Any other business

9.1. Issues on EU presidency 2017

The PP EG Chair asked the incoming EU presidency to nominate a representative to the PP EG.

The EU informed about the change of the Head of the Delegation. Mr. Pavel Mišiga is leaving DG ENV for DG Research to deal with H2020, and he will be replaced by Ms. Bettina Doeser. Mr. Mišiga appreciated the work done by the ICPDR and considered it to be very important for transboundary river basin and flood risk management.

9.2. End of Meeting

The President appreciated the work done, thanked for the excellent spirit during the Czech Presidency and thanked the Secretariat for an excellent cooperation. The President closed the meeting and wished all safe travels home.

Glossary

ACCOBAMS - Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area

AEWS - Accident Emergency Warning System

APC EG - Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group

AQC - Analytical Quality Control

ARS - Accident Risk Sites

AT - Austria

BA - Bosnia and Herzegovina

BayFOR - Bayerische Forschungsallianz

BfG - Bundesanstalt für Gewässerkunde

BG - Bulgaria

BQE - Biological quality elements

BSC - Black Sea Commission

BSIMAP - Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program

CEF - Connecting Europe Facility

CIS - Common Implementation Strategy

CS - Contaminated Sites

CZ - Czech Republic

DAMWARM - Drava And Mura Water and Risk Management

DANICE - DANube river basin ICE conveyance investigation and icy flood management Project

Danube HIS - Danube Hydrological Information System

DAREnet - Danube river region resilience exchange network project

DDAR - Danube Delta Analysis Report

DE - Germany

DEF - Danube Environmental Forum

DFRMP – Danube Flood Risk *Management Plan*

DG AGRI - Directorate-General for the Agriculture

DG CLIMA - Directorate-General for Climate Action

DG ENV - Directorate-General for the Environment

DG NEAR- Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations

DG-MOVE - Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport

DG-REGIO - Directorate General Regional Policy

DRB - Danube River Basin

DRBMP - *Danube River Basin Management Plan*

DTP - Danube Translation Programme
EAA - European Anglers Alliance
EBRD - European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC - European Commission
ECON TG - Economic Task Group
EFAS - European Flood Alert System
EGs - Expert Groups
EIB - European Investment Bank
ENVSEC - Environment and Security Initiative
EoI - Expression of Interest
EPIRB - Environmental Protection of International River Basins
EU - European Union
EU MS - European Union Member States
EU MSFD - *European Union Marine Strategy Framework Directive*
EUSDR - European Union Strategy for the Danube Region
FP EG - Flood Protection Expert Group
GEF - Global Environment Facility
GEO - Global Earth Observation Organization
GEP - Good Ecological Potential
GES - Good Environmental Status
GFCM - General Fisheries Commission on Mediterranean
GW TG - Ground Water Task Group
H2020 - *Horizon 2020*
HoD - Heads of Delegations
HR - Croatia
HU - Hungary
HYMO TG - Hydromorphology Task Group
IAD - International Association for Danube Research
IAS - Invasive Alien Species
IAS-RAP - Invasive Alien Species Danube, Risk Assessment Procedure
IAWD - International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area
ICPDR - International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
ICPE - International Commission for the Protection of the River Elbe
IKSR - International Commission for the Protection of the River Rhine
IMGIS EG - Information Management and Geographical Information System Expert Group
IPA - Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ISRBC - International Sava River Basin Commission

ITRBM - International Tisza River Basin Management
IWT - Inland Waterways Transport
JDS - Joint Danube Survey
JRC - Joint Research Center
JTWG - Joint Technical Working Group
MA EG - Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group
MARS - Managing Aquatic ecosystems and water Resources under multiple Stress
MD - Moldova
METEET - Mixed Environment Transport External Expert Team
MONERIS - Modelling Nutrient Emissions in River Systems
MSFD - Marine Strategy Framework Directive
NORMAN - Network for monitoring of emerging environmental substances
NTG - Nutrient Task Group
OM - Ordinary Meeting
OSPAR - Oslo-Paris Convention
OVF - Open Virtualization Format
PA - Priority Area
PFOA - Perfluorooctanoic acid
PIACs - Principal International Alert Centres
PIF - Project Identification Form
PM EG - Pressures and Measures Expert Group
PNEC - Predicted no-effect concentrations
PP EG - Public Participation Expert Group
PRTR - Pollutant Release and Transfer Register
RBM EG - River Basin Management Expert Group
RBSPs - River Basin Specific Pollutants
REVISTUR - Revival of Danube Sturgeons
RO - Romania
RS - Republic of Serbia
S EG - Strategic Expert Group
SedNet - European Sediment Network
SI - Slovenia
SK - Slovakia
StWG - Standing Working Group
SWAT - Soil and water assessment
TAF - Technical Assistance Facility
TCCC - The Coca-Cola Company

TE IMGIS - Technical Expert Information Management and Geographical Information System Expert

TE WM/WQ – Technical Expert Water Monitoring / Water quality

TMFs - Tailing Management Facilities

TNMN - TransNational Monitoring Network

ToRs - Terms of References

UA - Ukraine

UN - United Nations

UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNEP - *United Nations Environment Programme*

UNGA - *United Nations General Assembly*

UWW - Urban Waste Water

WBIF - Western Balkan Investment Framework

WFD - Water Framework Directive

WISE - Water Information System for Europe

WP - Work Package

WWF - World Wildlife Fund for Nature

WWF-DCP - World Wildlife Fund for Nature, Danube Carpathian Programme

Annex 1

Agenda of the 19th Ordinary Meeting of the ICPDR

6-7 December 2016
Vienna – Austria

**Meeting venue: Vienna International Centre, C-Building, 7th Floor, Meeting Room C-C2,
Wagramer Strasse 5, 1220 Vienna, Austria**

DRAFT AGENDA

Monday, 05 December 2016

19:00 *Special Heads of Delegation+ 1 Dinner at the Wiener Rathauskeller, Rathausplatz 1,
1010 Vienna, Austria*

Tuesday, 06 December 2016

09:00 Registration at Vienna International Centre

09:30 **1. GENERAL ISSUES** (ICPDR Delegations only)

- 1.1 Opening: by the President of the ICPDR
- 1.2 Adoption of the Agenda
- 1.3 Adoption of the Summary Report of the 14th Standing Working Group Meeting, Modra, Czech Republic
- 1.4 Briefing of the President on 2016 Presidency activities
- 1.5 Announcement of the President of the ICPDR for 2017
- 1.6 ICPDR Membership / Observership
- 1.7 Chairpersonship in EGs and TGs
- 1.8 Information by Ukraine

10:30 *Coffee Break – next to C07 Coffee Corner on the very left side*

11:00 **2. FINANCE, STAFF, ADMINISTRATION** (ICPDR Delegations only)

- 2.1 Budgetary situation of the ICPDR
 - Statement of Accounts as of 31 October 2016
- 2.2 ICPDR Budget 2017 and 2018, 2019, 2020 (proposal)
- 2.3 Contribution Keys 2017 - 2020
- 2.4 Adoption of the Auditors Report 2015
- 2.5 Staff-related issues
 - Overview of Staff Positions
- 2.6 Internal Regulations

12:00 *Lunch Break – next to C07 Coffee Corner on the very left side*

13:00 Greeting of Observers and Guests by the President

13:10 **3. EXPERT GROUP ACTIVITIES**

(Chairperson's Reports, Future Work Plans and Proposed Task Groups)

- 3.0 Expert Groups ToRs and Work Programmes
- 3.1 Flood Protection Expert Group (Chairperson's report)
 - Projects supporting the Danube flood risk management plan
 - Danube hydrological information system
- 3.2 Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group (Chairperson's report)
 - JDS4
 - TNMN Yearbook 2014
 - Report to BSC on Danube loads 2015
 - AQC
 - Groundwater issues

Tuesday, 06 December 2016**3. EXPERT GROUP ACTIVITIES (continued)****3.3 Pressures and Measures Expert Group (Chairperson's report)**

- Hazardous substances pollution
- Cooperation with other institutions
- PM EG data integration
- Nutrient Task Group Activities (sustainable agriculture)
- PM EG Chairpersonship

15:15 *Coffee Break – next to C07 Coffee corner on the very left side*

15:45 3.4 River Basin Management Expert Group (Chairperson's Report)

- Hymo & Economics Task Groups
- Report on 2015 Drought in the Danube River Basin
- Other issues (Climate Adaptation, Sturgeons)

16:30 *Special Items Discussion*

- **Sediment Management**
 - Sediment Project (*Lead Partner TU Budapest*)
 - SedNet/ICPDR/IKSE round table on sediment management (*Secretariat*)
- **ICPDR Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropower**
 - ICPDR Workshop on Implementation in the DRB "Sustainable hydropower in the Danube Basin: Progress, solutions and remaining challenges"
 - Regional Hydro Master-Plan for the Western Balkans
- **Joint Statement on Navigation**
 - 7th Meeting on Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environment
 - Mixed Environment-Transport External Expert Team (METEET)
- **Floodplain Management**
 - Floodplain Project (*Romanian Delegation*)

18:00 *End of Day 1*

19:00 *Formal Reception at the Diplomatic Academy (Hörsaal), Favoritenstrasse 15 a, 1040 Vienna*

Wednesday, 07 December 2016**09:00 3. EXPERT GROUP ACTIVITIES (continued)****3.5 Information Management and GIS Expert Group (Chairperson's Report)**

- Development of the DanubeGIS
- Support to other Expert Groups

3.6 Accident Prevention and Control Expert Group (Chairperson's Report)

- AEWS operation and testing
- Risk assessment and accident prevention

3.7 Public Participation Expert Group (Chairperson's Report)

- Danube Day 2016
- Sturgeon Communication Strategy and Task Force
- Fundraising Project with AQA
- Danube Art Master relaunch 2017

10:30 *Coffee Break – next to C07 Coffee Corner on the very left side*

11:00 **4. SUB-BASIN INITIATIVES**

- 4.1 International Sava Commission
- 4.2 Tisza River Basin (including Tisza Project)
- 4.3 Prut River Basin (including EPIRB project)
- 4.4 Danube Delta (including Danube Delta Project)

5. COOPERATION & PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1 EU Grant (Implementation of 2nd DRBMP & 1st DFRMP)
- 5.2 EU Danube Strategy
 - PA4 Water Quality/PA5 Environmental Risks
 - PA6/Danube Sturgeon Task Force
 - P1A/Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan
- 5.3 Black Sea
- 5.4 Visits from Countries, Commissions & Academia
- 5.5 Business Partnership

6. PROJECTS WITH ICPDR INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 SOLUTIONS Project
- 6.2 Coca-Cola – WWF “Partnership” for a living Danube”
- 6.3 MARS Project
- 6.4 FAIRway Project
- 6.5 AquaCross
- 6.6 STURGENE Project
- 6.7 Iron Gates Follow-up Monitoring Project
- 6.8 Danube GEF project on hydro-morphology and river restoration
- 6.9 Danubius
- 6.10 REVISTUR

7. INFORMATION ON PROJECTS WITH TRANSBOUNDARY RELEVANCE

- 7.1 Information from countries on Projects

8. MEETINGS & EVENTS

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13:00 *End of the 19th Ordinary Meeting of the ICPDR*

Followed by a Sandwich Lunch – next to C07 Coffee Corner on the very left side

Annex 2 - List of Participants

**19th Ordinary Meeting of the ICPDR
6-7 December 2016 in Vienna, Austria**

	Country / Position		Name	Organization and Address	Contact
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Annex 3

ADDRESS FROM PROF. HALIL IBRAHIM SUR, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE BLACK SEA COMMISSION'S PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

Dear ICPDR President, Executive Secretary, distinguished colleagues from the Danube Region, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is my great pleasure to extend the warmest gratitude to the ICPDR Secretariat for the invitation to join your Ordinary Meeting which I, to my regret, was not able to attend.

Let me use this chance also to express gratitude to ICPDR for continuous efforts to improve the environment of the Black Sea and support of our day-to-day activities.

It is my great pleasure to inform you on the progress in the Black Sea since last year.

First of all, we made significant steps in addressing the issues of marine litter management in the Black Sea, I wish to thank the Bulgarian Party for initiation of this important dialogue and elaborating on the first draft of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the Black Sea. This work was further supported by our colleagues from UNEP and now monitoring of Marine Litter is number one item of agenda in our cooperation with Mediterranean Sea within the MoU between the Black Sea Commission and Barcelona Convention signed earlier this year.

Secondly, the nominated experts from the Black Sea region are contributing to the elaboration of the important report: State of the Black Sea Environment Report (SoE) for 2009-2014.

During last year the Black Sea Commission also became a member of the Global Earth Observation Organization (GEO) and deepened collaboration with other Regional Sea Conventions and Action Plans.

But the most pleasant news is that just recently in October, the Black Sea Commission held its 32nd regular meeting in Istanbul, and some important decisions were taken. One of them was the adoption of the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Program for 2017-2022 (BSIMAP). This Program now foresees harmonization of Ecosystem Quality Objectives reflected in the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan and the provisions of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD); makes steps to define the Good Environmental Status (GES) for the Black Sea; provides the common lists of indicators and parameters of reporting coordinated with our partners from UNEP, FAO General Fisheries Commission for Mediterranean and Black Sea, ACCOBAMS Agreement and the ICPDR.

In fact, the BSIMAP 2017-2022 separately includes annex reflecting the BSC – ICPDR Reporting format. In accordance to this annex, a short written report assessing the Black Sea ecosystem together with selected data on the selected indicators will be presented to the ICPDR by the end of the respective year. This report would be the official Black Sea report that would involve synthesis and interpretation of the data from the Advisory Groups of the Black Sea Commission on the ecosystem status of the Black Sea. We currently work on the first report to be presented to ICPDR Secretariat in the nearest future.

As regards the BSC-ICPDR technical cooperation, let me recall you that the Danube – Black Sea Joint Technical Working Group (JTWG) was re-established between our organizations. During its last meeting in Istanbul, the abovementioned BSC-ICPDR reporting format was elaborated and agreed between the experts and now we are waiting forward to carry out the next meeting of this Joint Technical Working Group to continue these important efforts in 2017.

To conclude, let me assure you in our continuous support of the ICPDR activities and I would like to encourage us to identify some new possibilities to implement some more joint initiatives between our organizations related to the implementation of our common goals.

Let me thank you for your kind attention and wish you a successful meeting.