

## Our Opinion – Our Danube

### ICPDR Stakeholder Consultation Workshop 2021

Workshop Report

29-30 June 2021, Online via Zoom

#### Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Before the event.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. The Event: Our Opinion – Our Danube.....</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Day 1 (29 June 2021, Danube Day) .....	3
3.2 Day 2 (30 June 2021) .....	9
<b>4. Summary of Danube Café discussions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 <b>Thematic Area 1:</b> Organic, Nutrient and Hazardous Substances Pollution of Surface and Groundwater .....	9
4.2 <b>Thematic Area 2:</b> Hydromorphological Alterations & Integration Issues (Flood Risk Management, Hydropower, Nature Protection, Navigation, Agriculture) .....	14
4.3 <b>Thematic Area 3:</b> Objectives and measures of Flood Risk Management Plans .....	17
4.4 <b>Thematic Area 4:</b> Support to implement both plans, Financing of the measures .....	20
4.5 <b>Thematic Area 5:</b> Communication and Public Participation .....	22
<b>Annex 1: Agenda .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Annex 2: List of Participants.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Annex 3: List of Facilitators &amp; Rapporteurs.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Annex 4: Post-Workshop Satisfaction Survey Results.....</b>	<b>36</b>



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## 1. Introduction

The Stakeholder Consultation Workshop, ***Our Opinion – Our Danube***, was a one-and-a-half day (online) event hosting more than 200 participants. Stakeholders and interested parties from across the Danube were invited to contribute their input to the Public Consultation process for the Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP) & Danube Flood Risk Management Plan (DFRMP) Updates 2021. Both Plans are being revised and updated to guide the direction of the ICPDR for the next six years until 2027. Holding this event was one of the pivotal aspects for their successful and effective implementation.

Representatives of civil society and stakeholders were asked to contribute their views and have their say. The people of the Danube River Basin will be affected by the measures in the plans for generations to come and it is important that they are involved in their development from the outset.

The previous workshop happened live in 2015 in Zagreb under the name ***Voice of the Danube***. Due to the pandemic restrictions, in 2021, the Danube River Basin experts, stakeholders, and members of the public convened online only. This, however, has proven to be a very effective way for many participants to comfortably join and discuss on both plans as well as pre-determined workshop topics. The outcome of the workshop was then processed in the form of this Stakeholder Consultation Workshop Report 2021.

## 2. Before the event

The preparations for the event started with ICPDR and Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe (GWP CEE) working on the framework of the event, including the scale, format, platform, and roles and responsibilities. It was decided that there would be two core blocks of the event: the *Stakeholder Statements*, and the *Danube Café* discussion sessions.

The stakeholder statements allowed the participants to address the DRBMP and DFRMP and inform the remaining audience about their findings as well as their point of view regarding related issues. These statements were collected before the event to ensure a good technical flow of the session and a proper support from the organizers.

Five pre-determined Thematic Areas, relevant to the two plans, were discussed in a series of *Danube Café* workshop sessions. The outcome of these sessions was gathered and delivered during the *We Discussed Danube* session on the second day of the workshop, and all comments will be taken into consideration during the finalization of both plans due in December 2021.

The chosen Thematic Areas included:

- Organic, Nutrient and Hazardous Substances Pollution of Surface and Groundwater
- Hydro-Morphological Alterations & Integration Issues (Flood Risk Management, Hydropower, Nature Protection, Navigation, Agriculture)
- Objectives and Measures of Flood Risk Management Plans
- Support to Implement Both Plans, Financing of the Measures
- Communication and Public Participation

### 3. The Event: *Our Opinion – Our Danube*

#### 3.1 Day 1 (29 June 2021, Danube Day)

The event was facilitated by Mr. Steve Chaid (California-born and Vienna-based journalist and a professional event moderator) Mr. Chaid welcomed the participants, opened the event, and introduced the basic rules as well as the overall agenda.

##### *3.1.1 Session 1: Introduction to the Draft Plan Updates*

#### **Keynote speech by ICPDR President, Momčilo Blagojević**

Mr. Blagojević emphasized the unusual times and the stakeholders' successful adaptation. This venue, he said was giving Danubian citizens a unique opportunity to have their say. There is a legal requirement behind the public consultation like this. i.e., it is article 14 of the EU Water Framework Directive, and both articles 9 and 10 of the EU Flood Directive that require us to conduct some level of public consultation during the process. The event also gives stakeholders an opportunity to have their say and for the ICPDR to get direct input on both plans. Mr. Blagojević wished everyone a fruitful consultation and passed the word over to the ICPDR Executive Secretary, Ivan Zavadsky.

#### **Introductory speech by ICPDR Executive Secretary, Ivan Zavadsky**

Mr. Zavadsky introduced the two plans, the DRBMP and the DFRMP. The DRBMP he explained provides a framework for operational integrated water resources management, gives an overview of key issues and challenges, and sets out the central objectives for required actions. The newest part of this plan is the fifth section called *Significant Water Management Issue on the Effects of Climate Change, Drought, Water Scarcity, Extreme Hydrological Phenomena, and other Impacts*. Mr. Zavadsky then described the plan in a deeper detail. The plan update 2021 puts a strong emphasis on the topic of integration with other sectoral policies.

The DFRMP presents the results of updated preliminary flood risk assessments, identifying potential risks from floods and endangered areas. The objectives of the DFRMP are:

- To avoid a new risk
- To work towards a reduction of existing risk
- To strengthen the resilience
- To raise awareness and promote the solidarity principle

The DFRMP update presents strategic basin-wide level measures to prevent and reduce damage to human health, environment, cultural heritage, and economy.

Both plans are based on the two EU Directives. The question is how to make them work in harmony. Mr. Zavadsky informed that the synergies of both directives have been explored and opportunities found to make this work.

## **The “Voice of the Young Stakeholders”**

The current president of the Sava Youth Parliament, Tana Bertic, spoke on behalf of the youth of the Danube Basin. Ms. Bertic summed up a history of youth activities in the Sava River Basin and their relation to the water issues. During the last Sava Youth Parliament meeting, discussions focused on defining methods to harmonize different interests between stakeholders.

The young professionals then focused on three main issues. Protection of the harmful impacts of water and managing floods, the quality of water related to waste, and the protection of water resources. Young people are aware that floods are becoming more frequent and are the result of human actions. There’s a need for a new approach to tackle these and other pressing water-related issues. It is necessary to change the mindset of people, Ms Bertic added.

Ms. Bertic emphasized that the youth is ready to support any activities that mitigate or prevent any further damage to the environment. The Sava Youth Parliament is also not forgetting to preserve the basin’s cultural heritage, as this is this year’s subject of the Parliament’s annual event.

At the end of her speech, Ms. Bertic invited all the youth of the Danube River Basin to follow the activities of the Sava Youth Parliament in a hope that one day they would be able to organize a joint event to enhance transboundary water cooperation.

### *3.1.2. Session 2: Stakeholder Input*

## **Interim results from the online public consultation questionnaire**

Mr. Chaid briefly presented the interim results from the online public consultation questionnaire. The results showed that the ratio of male to female responders was 46% to 54% in favor of female participants. About 65% of responders have heard about the DRBMP and the DFRMP. 99% believe that transboundary collaboration is most effective. The responders were also unanimous about the question of the necessity of a reduction of organic pollution insufficiency. Most of them stated that more can be done. Moving on, 87% think that the current flood protection measures won’t offer full protection against flooding. Words like “extreme temperatures” and “water levels increase” or “droughts” are the words that resonate the most today.

## **Statements from stakeholders**

Representatives from 9 key stakeholders, who are also among the ICPDR’s 24 Observers, made statements on behalf of their organizations:

### **Irene Lucius of WWF-CEE**

‘We appreciate the progress that has been made in Danube region and flood risk planning over the past two decades, such as sturgeon conservation, wetland restoration, or climate change adaptation’, said Mrs. Lucius. ‘We also want to emphasize on the numerous opportunities for discussions that ICPDR offers. We believe that need and potential for river and wetland restoration is much higher than what is in the plan. More larger scale projects are possible and needed. The focus should divert to integrated solutions such as flood management, drought mitigation, water quality improvement, or

biodiversity objectives. Secondly, overcoming the blockage by the agricultural sector by providing the right incentives. The last point is to build a capacity for project preparation within authorities', she added.

Mrs. Lucius then spoke about fish biodiversity. 'As JDS4 has shown, hydromorphological pressure on fish is apparent along the whole Danube and there's no general improvement since the last plan. We see the need of identification, restoration and monitoring of the habitats of migratory fish species.

Regarding the DFRMP, it is not clear whether the transboundary aspects of flood risk management in the frame of bilateral agreements and permissions take into account future flood risk mitigation plans and measures of neighbors.

In summary, WWF-CEE believes the implementation push is possible. That entails the following:

- Allocating financial resources to the program of measures
- Building capacity for planning and implementing restoration and conservation measures with key stakeholder representatives
- Preparing a pipeline of projects, including feasibility studies, stakeholder engagement, and landowners' agreements', she concluded.

#### **Gerd Frik of VGB Powertech e.V.**

Mr. Frik said that the VGB focuses on the issues of hydropower and its challenges, like ecological impact on the Danube River and EU Green Deal strategies and their 55% CO2 emission reduction until 2030. The hydropower sector has been involved in these processes in the last years, as well as some research projects. 'Our statement on the DRBMP has two corner stones, to support the EU community climate policy goals to cover the energy demand from renewable sources, and to continue to ensure the efficient and sustainable implementation of the objectives of the Water Framework Directive', he said.

Mr. Frik then focused on hydromorphological alterations and how stakeholder involvement and inclusion of the agricultural sector is imperative from VGB's point of view. 'Definition of sound and achievable objectives is the key to this cooperation' he also said.

'There are still considerable knowledge deficits in scientific basis of measures, monitoring, and best practices. In addition, there are also strategic deficits. The sound knowledge must be created in order to find sustainable measures and to implement them. Last but not least, the approach taken so far shows that the economy and the ecology are not mutually exclusive in case of water bodies. The Water Framework Directive offers the users the possibility to continue with new and realistic goals for the future activities.

Public funding is required, not only in case of Water Framework Directive. We are well established with this, but still need to support big ecological measures in the future. Focus on improving public funding in the south-east region is now the key', he concluded.

### **Theresia Hacksteiner of the European Barge Union**

In the context of inland navigation, Mrs. Hacksteiner recalled the publication of Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy of the EU Commission, which seeks to increase the mobile share of inland waterway transport substantially in the coming years. This is based on the Green Deal which has a key objective to deliver a 90% reduction in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Contrary to the contrasted roads of Europe, waterways dispose of free capacity and thus offer a significant mobile shift potential in line with these objectives. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2021, the EU Commission published its Inland Waterway Transport Action Plan to boost the future waterway plan for inland transport. It announced help for waterway managers to ensure a high level of service along EU waterway corridors by December 2031. The Commission will also give more support for projects aimed at completing and upgrading the inland waterway trans-European network.

‘We welcome that in the draft of the plans, the inland waterway network has also been recognized. We appreciate that climate change has been addressed as a new topic. It has a huge impact on water level and affects the reliability and services of inland navigation. We would like to fully engage in the update of the DRBMP.

In the update of the draft, it is ensured that the safety of inland navigation is a challenge that needs to be addressed as a climate change-related risk. Overall, we welcome the integration with other sectors that will create synergies and avoid potential conflicts. European Barge Union is ready to contribute to the consultations and intensify the discussions with the ICPDR stakeholders’, Mrs Hacksteiner concluded.

### **Gerhard Nagl of the Danube Environmental Forum**

Mr. Nagl stated that ‘we did not get as far as we should have by now. We need to have biodiversity and habitat connectivity posing as a significant water management issue. One of our goals is bringing back the beluga sturgeons. The populations of migratory fish species have been reduced in Europe since 1970 by 93%. We are at the brink of extinction of many migratory fish species. This calls for more biodiversity in the DRBMP. Member states and water administration bodies need to do more for the nature conservation.

Another important issue is a catastrophic number of dams in the European continent. We need to restore the rivers back to their natural state. Multistakeholder solutions are necessary to achieve that. We should increase ambitions, especially in the member states. We should improve the funding. Our proposal is to use 20% of the recovery funds from the EU budget on biodiversity and ecosystems to meet the climate change goals. Out of those 20%, 10% should be used on river restoration.

The whole civil society needs to be included. Water administration is often very far away from the public. We need to bring the issues we are dealing with closer to the public. 2021 marks the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration by United Nations’, Mr. Nagl concluded.

### **Peter Gammeltoft of the Danube Sturgeon Task Force**

Mr. Gammeltoft briefly introduced the Danube Sturgeon Task Force. ‘We think that DRBMP update covers all relevant water management issues and provides impressive analysis in breadth and depth. It is an excellent umbrella for national plans’, he said.

‘Critically endangered sturgeons, the flagship species for the Danube Basin, are rapidly disappearing. 2 or maybe 3 of the 6 Danube sturgeon species have already been lost. Management of sturgeons requires a management of the whole lifecycle. It is a complex issue that can only be dealt on a multi sectoral basis and transboundary level.

The DRBMP update offers good key measures to avoid the extinction of Danube sturgeons and necessary supportive actions. Establishing fish passages, for example through the Iron Gates is one of the most important current projects’, he continued.

Mr. Gammeltoft then spoke about the issues that the ICPDR can help with. Namely, it was these:

- Restore and preserve critical sturgeon habitats
- Reinforce co-ordination with development and operation of infrastructure in other sectors (e.g., hydropower and navigation)
- Implement joined-up transboundary approaches throughout the Danube Basin and the Black Sea
- Create ecological networks, strengthen biodiversity and resilience to climate change
- Save the Flagship Species will create a more resilient Danube

#### **Cristina Sandu of the International Association for Danube Research (IAD)**

Several reasons and ways for the increase of biodiversity in the Danube River Basin were presented by Mrs. Sandu. ‘The biodiversity is the very basic of our existence and yet, the conservation status of the habitat of freshwater fish species, most of them are in unfavorable status. Since so many species are endangered and environmentally friendly detectors were developed already, we propose to implement the environmental-DNA method monitoring systems. They have proven to be effective, during the Joint Danube Survey. This would mean there will be no need to remove the rare individuals from the environment and jeopardize species conservation.

If climate targets are not met, dramatic changes will occur in summer by the end of the century. The precipitation will decrease up to 30%. Temperature will rise up to 7 degrees Celsius, and the Danube discharge will decrease up to 75%. Nature-based solutions for adaptation to climate change need to be implemented urgently.

It’s the best way to mitigate climate change and reduce disasters. They are considered a key element of the Climate Adaptation Policy. Considering all these reasons, we ask ICPDR to use the financial and legal tools provided under the Green Deal and the new Multi Annual Financial Fund to implement more nature restoration solutions and increase resilience to climate change’, she said.

‘Establishing a Freshwater Biodiversity Task Group should be also considered, together with identifying key actions to improve the conservation status of species/habitats. We also need to maintain the hydromorphological integrity of freshwater habitats and establish ecological corridors.

Last but not least, the possibility to declare freshwater biodiversity a Significant Water Management Issue (SWMI) in the Danube Basin should be explored’, she concluded.

#### **Balázs Horváth of Priority Area 4 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR PA 4)**

‘Based on the memorandum of understanding, we are in a frequent contact with ICPDR and working together on the implementation of the Danube Strategy and water-related issues. We have actions on hazardous and emerging substances, wastewater treatment, issues between water and agriculture, and we are helping with migratory fish issues and climate change adaptation.

We at the Danube Strategy are able to give political support to fulfil the objectives of the plans. In the next EU financing period, it will be already visible that we have tried to help embedding the objectives into the EU financial programs so money can be better targeted’, he said.

‘In the sub-basin activities, the JointTisza project was very successful. Right now, preparations for the Tisza River Basin Management Plan are endorsed by the Governments of 5 Tisza countries’, he added. Mr. Horváth then mentioned a couple other projects where the Strategy for the Danube Region plays a supporting role, like the Danube Sediment project, the Danube Hazard project, the Tid(y)Up project, M3C project, and the Measures project.

‘Apart from the studies, we also organize workshops to bring the results closer to the stakeholders to win their support and disseminate the findings’ he concluded.

#### **László Balatonyi of Priority Area 5 of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR PA 5)**

‘The management of the environmental risks’ priority area is coordinated by the governmental bodies of Hungary and Romania since 2011. The main focus of our mission is to address the challenges of the climate change, floods, water scarcity, which goes in line with the DRBMP and DFRMP. Therefore, in the past few years, EUSDR PA 5 contributed to the elaboration of the ICPDR climate change adaptation strategy update.

Flood risk management is also a significant topic for the PA5. In order to achieve a reduction of flood risk events, EUSDR PA 5 provides continuous support to the implementation of the DFRMP. We also support assessment of disaster risk, and civil protection activities in the Danube Region’, he said.

#### **Prof. Dr. Wolfram Mauser of Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich.**

Prof. Mauser spoke about the Water-Food-Energy assessment in the Danube River Basin. First up, the water-food-energy nexus was described in order for the ICPDR and stakeholders to consider it. Just like all the statements mentioned before, Prof. Mauser also emphasized the importance of integrated solutions.

The main issue is finding the balance between supply and demand within the nexus. E.g., today’s increased irrigation demand caused the drop in runoff of many rivers in the Danube Basin by 60%. The integrated assessment tells us, he explained, that irrigation water withdrawal of ~ 29 billion m<sup>3</sup>/a has severe ecological consequences, apart from other issues. And even though the maize production roughly doubled from ~ 40 to ~ 78 Mio. t/a, the hydropower production is reduced from 37.5 to 36.7 PWh/a.

From a scientific point of view, Prof. Mauser urges the ICPDR and others to take this assessment from outside of the water sector into account before it becomes a real conflict of interest and consequences arise.



## 3.2 Day 2 (30 June 2021)

### **Moderator Steve Chaid**

welcomed the participants, reviewed what had been achieved in Day 1 and set the agenda for Day 2 – presenting the results of the breakout sessions of Danube Café.

After the presentations, **moderator Steve Chaid** summarized the results from the breakout rooms of the Danube Café.

**ICPDR Executive Secretary Ivan Zavadsky** thanked all for the preparation and two days of hard work and the wealth of opinions even if they are conflicting, an illustration of real public participation. The ICPDR, he said will support the expert and task groups in analyzing and including as far as possible, all the ideas in the two plans.

**ICPDR President Momcilo Blagojevic** thanked all stakeholders. The event, he said, was a unique opportunity for Danube citizens to state their opinion.

**Moderator Steve Chaid** had interviewed Michael Strugl, the CEO of Verbund, the Austrian electricity producer who stated the importance of stakeholder engagement and providing room for biodiversity.

Steve Chaid thanked again all participants for the important work that they have done and encouraged them to keep it up.

Participants exchanged thank-you messages before the workshop was over.

## 4. Summary of Danube Café discussions

The 5 Thematic Areas were the pivotal point of the stakeholder consultation workshop **Our Opinion – Our Danube**. This is where participants could **#HaveTheirSay**. The organizers split the participants randomly into groups where they took part in 5 x 30-minute discussions. This meant visiting 1 breakout room for each Thematic Area. After the time ran out in each room, each group rotated to the next breakout room to have a chance to **#HaveTheirSay** on every topic. The Thematic Areas overview, discussions and output are described below:

### 4.1 Thematic Area 1: Organic, Nutrient and Hazardous Substances Pollution of Surface and Groundwater

Danube countries have made significant efforts to reduce organic, nutrient, and hazardous substances pollution of the surface and groundwater bodies in the DRB by implementing respective measures in urban wastewater, industrial and agricultural sectors. However, further actions are needed in the next management cycle in terms of measures implementation (e.g., improvement of wastewater infrastructure and services, better implementation of good agricultural practices and agri-environmental measures and industrial safety measures), reducing knowledge gaps on emissions and their impacts (e.g., more information on sources and fate of nutrients and hazardous substances) and improving the relevant policy and financial frameworks.

#### 4.1.1 Questions Posed

- Do you see any important pollution-related challenges that are not yet sufficiently covered in the draft DRBMP Update 2021?
- Do you see a need for any additional basin-wide activities to be initiated or supported by the ICPDR to reduce and control pollution?
- Which specific actions would you suggest to further enhance cooperation and coordination with relevant sectors – such as agriculture, waste and wastewater management, and industry – for the sustainable management of the Danube River Basin's waters?

#### 4.1.2 Highlights of the discussion

Presented by: **Molly Robbins, GWPO**

- The ICPDR has identified three pollution-related significant water management issues, organic, nutrient and hazardous substances pollution of surface waters. Moreover, groundwater pollution by nutrients and chemicals is also considered as an issue of basin-wide relevance. For each of these issues detailed pressure assessments have been carried out and programs of measures have been elaborated in the draft DRBMP Update 2021.
- Organic pollution can disrupt the dissolved oxygen balance of surface water bodies. It stems from urban sewage collecting and treatment systems and industrial dischargers having no or insufficient wastewater treatment. Control of organic pollution needs to put in place appropriate (at least biological) treatment.
- Nutrient pollution might trigger eutrophication in lakes, reservoirs and coastal areas and might hamper the use of water resources (e.g., for drinking water supply). Nutrients are emitted either directly from point sources or via several diffuse pathways particularly from agricultural and urban areas. Management of nutrient pollution requires stringent wastewater treatment, application of nutrient free products (e.g., detergents) and best management practices to be implemented in agriculture.
- Hazardous substances pollution might have acute or chronic toxicity on living organism. Both point and diffuse sources can contribute to hazardous contamination. Moreover, operating industrial and mining facilities pose a risk to water bodies by potentially polluting them via accident events. Phasing out hazardous substances from the market products, enhanced treatment and industrial technologies, appropriate practices for safe application, runoff control and adequate safety and contingency measures at accident hotspots can help capture this type of pollution.
- Groundwater pollution is addressed by the ICPDR for 12 transboundary groundwater bodies of basin-wide importance. The overall assessment of significant pressures on the chemical status identified the nitrate and ammonium pollution as the key factor to be addressed.
- Danube countries have made significant efforts to reduce organic, nutrient, and hazardous substances pollution of the surface and groundwater bodies in the DRB by implementing respective measures in urban wastewater, industrial and agricultural sectors.

- However, further actions are needed in the next management cycle in terms of measures implementation (e.g., improvement of wastewater infrastructure and services, better implementation of good agricultural practices and agri-environmental measures and industrial safety measures), reducing knowledge gaps on emissions and their impacts (e.g., more information on sources and fate of nutrients and hazardous substances) and improving the relevant policy and financial frameworks.
- Public outreach: difference in public understanding of water quality and what data shows, and how the public sees potential interventions (there are a million pollutants, some are concerning)
- Social impacts, including equity issues, upstream/downstream dynamics (also in terms of financing)
- Biodiversity/ecosystem impacts: fish migration, ecosystem services, etc.
- Emerging issues: floating plastic, microplastics, microbiological contamination, antibiotics
- Other management instruments: UWWTD, Drinking Water Directive, Nitrates Directive, link to the WFD
- Agriculture: not just water quality and quantity, but energy (pumping), types of pollution, different impacts in different settings (e.g., floodplains) IPCDR role in harmonizing sectoral approaches
- Accident hotspots: cost-benefit analysis of prevention, source-based analysis
- Reservoirs: Accumulation of pollutants and sediment in reservoirs is an issue
- Groundwater pollution sometimes overlooked: groundwater to be considered as an ecosystem (groundwater ecology approach)
- Soil conservation, fine sediment issue
- Promoting multi-purpose measures (water retention, floodplains), considering their nutrient retention potential
- Consider nexus approach (food production, irrigation need, water demand, pollution, energy)
- Climate change: impact on quantity and quality

#### 4.1.3 Calls to action

- Global source-to-sea: more engagement with global initiatives that link source to sea management
- Translate information to the public: investigative pilot projects, “translating” information
- Align management and monitoring instruments: e.g. better links and harmonization between policies (Water Framework Directive, Drinking Water Directive, Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, Common Agricultural Policy)
- Reach out to other sectors proactively, particularly agriculture
- Assess the impact of the CAP revision: IPCDR and others to assess the impact of the CAP revision, and needs going forward
- Include considerations for transnational coordination in all projects
- Stronger attention to be granted to groundwater
- Construct plans in ways that can adapt to emerging issues (e.g., chapter on emerging pollutants that can be updated as situations evolve)
- Build the case for preventative measures for pollution accidents using cost-benefit analysis
- Shift to source-based framing and regulation (informed by better source-based analysis)
- Narrow knowledge gaps, build a science-policy interface

#### 4.1.4 Summarizing messages:

1. Data gaps: Important data gaps to be filled between scientific understandings of pollution issues and legislative aspects (e.g., groundwater, accident prevention)
2. Alignment with different directives and management mechanisms
3. Engagement with other sectors, including agriculture
4. Public engagement: Further public engagement around pollution is crucial, but the “how” deserves careful consideration
5. Social and ecosystem impacts: pollution impacts can highlight equity aspects
6. Bring forward less visible dimensions of pollution and adjust to emerging issues: groundwater, microbial pollutants, microplastics, etc.
7. Take into account climate change impacts

**Irene Lucius, WWF CEE**, stated that many harbors are not equipped to handle pollution from cruise ships.

**Gerhard Nagl, Danube Environmental Forum**, stated that pesticides impact biodiversity. Also, transboundary water bodies and ground water are affected by pollution from agriculture.

**Adam Kovacs, ICPDR**, added that taking into account reporting on groundwater bodies will put a burden on countries. A project already developed how to equip harbors and the Danube Commission is best to deal with this.

**Vania Ivanova, BAS**, stated that science for regions is important to deal with quality and scarcity of water

**Susanne Brandstetter, PP EG ICPDR**, stated that the communication of the most important issues like pollution is very important.

**Igor Liska, ICPDR**, stated that groundwater data can be found in the national plans and the JDS4 report.

**Zinoviy Broyde, Centre "EcoResource"**, stated that digitalization becomes important for the Danube basin.

## 4.2 Thematic Area 2: Hydromorphological Alterations & Integration Issues (Flood Risk Management, Hydropower, Nature Protection, Navigation, Agriculture)

- Hydromorphological conditions play an important role in the functioning of aquatic ecosystems and are therefore important elements with regard to water status. Undisturbed hydromorphological conditions are not only important in relation to habitats, but also for the reduction of nutrient concentrations, adaptation to climate change, and for managing the risk of water scarcity and droughts.
- The following three key hydromorphological alterations of basin-wide importance have been identified, considering sequence of hydromorphological quality elements in the WFD: a) Hydrological alterations (including impounded river sections, water abstractions and hydropeaking), b) Interruptions of longitudinal river continuity and sediment balance alterations, and c) Morphological alterations (related to river morphological alteration itself or to the disconnection of wetlands/floodplains).

### 4.2.1 Questions Posed

- Do you see any important hydromorphology-related challenges that are not yet sufficiently covered in the draft DRBMP Update 2021?
- Do you see a need for additional basin-wide activities to be initiated or supported by the ICPDR to address hydromorphological alterations?
- Which specific measures would you suggest to further enhance the cooperation and coordination with relevant sectors like flood risk management, navigation, nature protection or hydropower, for the sustainable management of the Danube Basin's waters?

### 4.2.2 Highlights of the Discussion

Presented by: **Anna Smetanova, GWP CEE**

- Hydromorphological conditions are to be tackled jointly in the integrated water management. Hydromorphological pressures and measures have multiple feedback loops with longitudinal and lateral management of land and catchments and are closely linked to socio-economic processes. Therefore, hydromorphological conditions should be tackled jointly in integrated water management.
- Multiple factors hinder the implementation of hydromorphological measures. Factors influencing the process of implementation are multiple (conflicting) interest, low institutional capacity to implement projects, agricultural practices and water use, and challenging cross-sectoral cooperation. Often, their effect on the processes is not clear. Analyzing the process and tackling challenges of implementation channel the improved implementation.
- Hydromorphological aspects linked to ecological corridors. Ecological corridors, which are embedded in the new EU Biodiversity Strategy, are a transboundary issue. Together with green measures, their implementation should be supported not only locally, but mainly at river basin level (regional approach). Transboundary green and blue measures including all actors and general public may necessitate support. Multipurpose prioritizing of ecological function and habitat connectivity should be always favoured over accounting for simple length of a reach. Migration

routes and habitats for sturgeon and other migratory fish should be part of multipurpose prioritization.

- Biodiversity reserves within the Danube catchment enable the improvement of ecological status within the planning cycle level. The reserves are important cornerstone for climate resilience building and tackling the neo-biota species spread. Yet, data gap exists on species extinction in rivers with good ecological status. The link to Biodiversity Strategy creates opportunities to understand the data gap and implement win-win measures leading to ecological restoration.
- Paradigm shift from grey to green and nature-based solutions has been initiated and it needs to be supported. The paradigm shift should be supported by capacity building activities and co-creation of new narratives. They should use appropriate and accessible language and be targeted across sectors and age groups of actors.
- Transdisciplinary discussion and ICPDR-fed research should seek common solution on cumulative pressures Scientific based applicable solutions targeting drought, nature-based solutions, win-win measures, and integrated measures needed to be developed. They should answer practical implementation issues and their wide application need to be ensured. Transboundary aspect should be considered in communications with stakeholders.
- Observe the existing and potential link to existing and emerging funding sources. Such calls include Green Deal, Green Recovery, CAP, Just Transition and other EU funding linked to implementation of EU Biodiversity, Climate Adaptation and other strategies. For agriculture, CAP payments need adjustments to incentivize required land use change. Foresee CAP 1st pillar direct payments for water retention on arable land and amend land use regulations to support water retention on agricultural lands. From the CAP second pillar, we would need WFD compensation schemes in case there is an obligatory restriction due to restoration or conservation measures according to the WFD.

#### *4.2.3 Calls to Action*

- Develop an action plan for improving the process of measures implementation already within the next planning cycle. Analyzing the drivers enabling rapid implementation and the obstacles slowing own the process that leads to the adoption of action plans, which enable speeding up the implementation within the next planning cycle.
- Improve the current knowledge-base on small hydropower planning and regarding the potential increase of hydropower in energy portfolio of countries.
- Prepare “pipeline projects” for incoming funding opportunities based on integrative approach. Preparing longitudinal and lateral projects at operational level generally takes a long time and requires joint efforts. Starting in advance enables reacting on emerging funding opportunities.
- Continue developing practical guidelines on green measures and nature-based solution application in tackling ecological and hydromorphological challenges. The use of those measures should be promoted on all levels. Explicitly, it is important to promote them on supra-regional level and in transboundary areas.

- Support the management of conflicts rooted in past hydromorphological alterations. Past hydromorphological alterations have legacy effects on the current status of water bodies. In many cases, win-win solutions could be found. A special focus and conflict management approach is required in areas, where improvement is needed and win-win solutions are not apparent or not applicable.
- Prepare common guidelines for issues related to agriculture and land ownership. Multiple effects of agricultural management on land and water makes it a significant leverage point for river basin management. This means that even a small improvement in land management can have many benefits on water, ecosystems, water security in landscapes. Agricultural management is often an obstacle to implementation of measures. Therefore, special attention and guidance is needed for cross-sectoral cooperation, and land ownership. Furthermore, opening of public debates and facilitated governance dialogues are needed.
- Choose holistic approach when considering the nexus between water body status and biodiversity. Water sector should be involved in the implementation of the Biodiversity Strategy. Special caution should be paid, when defining what improving of biodiversity means in different water body and river types. The focus on species ecosystem function should be balanced with the demand on increasing biodiversity, and effect of invasive species on river systems should be considered.
- Seek common solution and synergies with societally relevant and water related issues such as water scarcity and drought. Always select integrated and win-win measures where feasible.
- Support consequent respecting of principle of non-deterioration on sub-national level. Examples were given where on sub-national level, the local political will or stakeholder interests are prioritized over the goals of the management plans.
- Continue well designed data collection and monitoring as base for effective discussion for projection of impact assessment and status development.
- Include Danube Transnational Programme Danube Floodplain project results into the plans and present/identify all potential floodplains for restoration, including one on agriculture lands. It helps to define the pathway for next steps and develop the pipeline projects for floodplain restorations.

#### *4.2.4 Summarizing messages*

1. Increase the level of ambition in integration issues, working closely with the relevant sectors, including agriculture and the general public.
2. Improve public communication by explaining how people can profit personally from measures such as restoration and environmental protection measures. Use appropriate language and terminology.



3. Increase funding available for hydromorphological issues at the level similar to investments targeting pollution.
4. Share the financial burden for projects with international / basin wide benefits.
5. Support projects addressing more than one objective (seeking for synergies).
6. Focus on improvement of existing status and preventing further deterioration of water status. Properly assess new projects.
7. Talk more about solutions and potential instead of (only) problems. It is time for action!

**Gerhard Nagl, Danube Environmental Forum**, stated that building of green corridors is good, and also in light of the plan to build new 1,300 hydropower plants, ICPDR guidance on hydropower has to be revised towards biodiversity and restoration.

**Calin Dejeu** stated that the building of a dam in a Romanian river is affecting the connectivity of one of the last free flowing rivers in Romanian Carpathians

**Irene Lucius, WWF CEE**, stated that capacity building with authorities is important.

**Peter Gammeltoft** stated that there is a perception that green measures are local measures.

**Laurice Ereifej, WWF CEE**, stated that agricultural land should not be a No-Go area but CAP Pillar 1 funding should be used for water-related compensation.

#### 4.3 Thematic Area 3: Objectives and measures of Flood Risk Management Plans

- Floods are natural phenomena and can appear anywhere at any time throughout the entire river basin. They can become disasters when affecting humans, damaging property and infrastructure, or even cause injuries or casualties.
- The most important principle in the international ICPDR Danube Flood Risk Management Plan Update 2021 (DFRMP) is the solidarity principle, which guarantees that regions located downstream within the basin are not negatively affected by measures that were adopted in the upstream part of the watershed and vice versa.
- The draft DFRMP Update 2021 in chapter 5 (and Annex 2) refers to the strategic basin-wide level measures to prevent and reduce damage to human health, the environment, cultural heritage, and economic activity. In the framework of their prioritization, those measures were favored which are sufficiently robust to the uncertainty in forecasting of climate change impacts.

##### 4.3.1 Questions Posed

- Are there important challenges or processes that are not yet sufficiently covered in the draft DFRMP Update 2021 at the international level and how should they be better addressed?
- Are there measures missing or need to be enhanced and/or supplemented in the draft DFRMP Update 2021?
- Are you satisfied with the coordinated development of the FD and WFD planning documents?

- Do you recommend any additional good practices or information that should be highlighted in the draft DFRMP Update 2021?

#### 4.3.2 Highlights of the discussion

Presented by: **Sabina Bokal, GWP CEE**

##### 1) *NBS/Green measures in FRMP*

ICPDR approach: Chapter on NWRMs to promote water retention as combination of natural retention measures (for smaller flood events) and flood retention measures (for larger flood events)

Strong emphasis on promoting green measures exists but there is room for improvement:

- Better explained benefits and efficiency of these measures for flood protection
- Further support research projects or network (e.g. conference) of institutions which would research further cumulative effectiveness of NBS on basin wide level.
- Improve communication and promotion of the measures continuously and add concrete examples of already implemented green measures in the Danube basin

##### 2) *List of measures*

- List of measures is like a shopping list. No information on how these measures is coordinated and implemented in practice.
- Progress achieved in implementing these measures / evaluating the progress made

##### 3) *Coordinated development of the FD and WFD planning document*

- Significant increase in coordination and cooperation between FRMP and RBMP but with different experiences on the national level (**subsidiarity**)
- Need for better integration of different directives/frameworks: flood protection, habitat directive, Natura2020, RBMP, ...

##### 4) *Upstream – downstream cooperation*

- Transparency of measures; Annex 4 covers bilateral agreements where measures that will have potential down/upstream effects are consulted and agreed
- Solidarity principle is important principles of the plan. It is well established in the countries
- Measures along bordering or trans-boundary rivers need to be negotiated and agreed upon in the frame of bilateral river commissions, not in the frame of ICPDR

##### 5) *Cross-sectoral cooperation*

- Better cooperation/coordination on cross-sectoral level when implementing measures (spatial planning, building regulation, emergency management, agriculture, forestry, environment, etc.)
- Spatial planning sector need to be included in the whole process.
- Better incorporation of the agricultural sector where farmers would offer their agriculture area for retention areas.

##### 6) *Role of the ICPDR*

- The role of the ICPDR is a coordinating one. The decisions on the implementation of the Floods Directive (FD) rest with the contracting parties and cannot be solved at ICPDR level
- Based on national data, the ICPDR achieve a common approach and method to delineate and publish the areas of potential significant flood risk as well as the flood hazard and risk maps
- The implementation of the FD and support of EU funded projects highlight the need for a harmonized data set on hydrological and hydraulic base data and basin-wide project results. A Danube Hydrological Information System is in its setup phase
- There is a strong focus of ICPDR on international cooperation projects which brings added value also to the countries.

#### *4.3.3 Calls to action*

##### *More knowledge:*

- Knowledge on benefits and efficiency of NBS for flood protection needs to be systematically collected, evaluated, and assessed and better communicated to the stakeholders
- The ICPDR could support research projects or network (e.g., conference) of institutions which would research further cumulative effectiveness of NBS on basin wide level.

##### *Efficient communication:*

- To add concrete examples of already implemented green measures in the Danube basin

##### *Better communication*

- To increase the understanding and awareness as to why this coordination supports better implementation by avoiding conflicts and implementing win-win solutions. It's much more than "selling information" to the public, it's about to show what we share interests. We need to show that the issues we care about are "win-win" situations.
- To be added: a simple summary/table how different measures are implemented/included in the national plans
- More efforts towards better evaluation of the progress with implementation of measures

#### *4.3.4 Summarizing messages*

- 1) Relevant challenges and processes are incorporated in the plan
- 2) Synergies by implementing NWRM, NBS with the implementation of the WFD, CC Adaptation Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, etc. shall be better promoted
- 3) Some extra effort is needed (e.g., executive summary) to make the DFRMP better understandable, especially for the general public

- 4) Cooperation/coordination and integration of all relevant sectors is the key element of reducing flood risk in a sustainable way.

**Clemens Neuhold**, stated that awareness raising is done on basin, regional and national level.

**Igor Liska**, ICPDR, supported the statement.

#### 4.4 Thematic Area 4: Support to implement both plans, Financing of the measures

- Implementation of specific measures in both plans are national responsibility with a support of various European (structural/cohesion funds, CAP, LIFE etc.) and international funding possibilities. A variety of funding Instruments are available for the financing of measures for this planning cycle (see chapter 8.5 and in more detail Annex 20 of the draft DRBMP Update 2021).
- At Danube basin-wide level, the draft DRBMP Update 2021 includes a “Joint Programme of Measures” in chapter 8 containing measures of basin-wide importance related to the “Significant Water Management Issues” at the Danube level. The general list of measures stipulated in the JPM should be driven by a cost-benefit approach in the national plans.

##### 4.4.1 Questions Posed

- What are new financial challenges and bottlenecks that need to be addressed in the draft DFRMP and DRBMP Updates 2021?
- What funding opportunities presented in the draft DRBMP Update 2021 do you consider to be the most important ones?
- Are there any other adequate instruments to finance the measures in both plans, which are not yet addressed in the draft DRBMP and DFRMP Updates 2021?

##### 4.4.2 Highlights of the Discussion

Presented by: **Konstantin Ivanov, GWP CEE**

- Implementation of specific measures in both plans are national responsibility with a support of various European (structural/cohesion funds, CAP, LIFE etc.) and international funding possibilities. A variety of funding Instruments are available for the financing of measures for this planning cycle (see chapter 8.5 and in more detail Annex 20 of the draft DRBMP Update 2021).
- Considerable investments have been made in the previous years, particularly in the field of urban and industrial wastewater collection and treatment and agriculture. Also, a number of Danube countries and the relevant sectors have taken measures in previous years regarding improvements of hydro morphology (river continuity, fish migration/fish passes etc.) and plan further ones in the future (see Annex 17 of the draft DRBMP Update 2021).
- At Danube basin-wide level, the draft DRBMP Update 2021 includes a “Joint Programme of Measures” in chapter 8 containing measures of basin-wide importance related to the “Significant Water Management Issues” at the Danube level. The general list of measures stipulated in the JPM should be driven by a cost-benefit approach in the national plans.

- Main funding programmes are already captured in the draft DRBMP, Annex 20 (e.g., EU OPs, Green deal, CAP, Green bonds, DTP/Life/Horizon, IPA 3, EIB, NDICI, EBRD...)
- Some additions mentioned that will be checked/integrated during the revision of the draft plan
- Proposals made for strategic improvements of the financing situation in the future (better implementation of the polluter-pays principle, strengthening the use of CAP funding for water management, consideration of integrated projects etc.)
- Despite funding opportunities, there is a lack of a pipeline of multi-benefit/restoration project proposals
- Interlinkage between water quality and health is an issue that needs to be further investigated and integrated into water management planning in the future

#### *4.4.3 Calls to action*

- Strengthen the use of CBA (Cost-Benefit-Analysis) at project level
- Increase capacity at national/regional level for the development/selection of projects
- While transboundary cooperation is already fruitful, show the benefits of upstream-downstream innovative financing through smaller scale projects

#### *4.4.4 Summarizing messages*

- 1) The recovery funds offer significant additional funding opportunities; to be used wisely - use of the Do No Harm principle when planning/executing new projects (esp. for flood protection), e.g. the Recovery and Resilience Facility in some countries
- 2) Need to prioritize projects offering multiple benefits (e.g. including ecosystem services related benefits). Nature-Based Solutions is a useful approach for this.

**Irene Lucius, WWF CEE**, stated that it is important to make sure high-level governments are interested in water management issues.

**Cristian Rusu, Romanian Waters**, stated that important green measures should be combined with grey ones, for example for flood protection and compensation should be taken into account.

**Zinoviy Broyde, Centre "EcoResource"**, stated that Prut and Siret rivers are the last river in the Danube basin that have no basin management, nor flood plans and project proposals for financing this were unfortunately rejected.

## 4.5 Thematic Area 5: Communication and Public Participation

- Article 14 ‘Public Information and Consultation’ of the EU Water Framework Directive instructs “to encourage the active involvement of all interested parties in the implementation of the Directive”. Public information and consultation are also stipulated in Articles 9 and 10 of the EU Floods Directive. At the ICPDR, however, raising awareness and wider informing our stakeholder groups goes far beyond simply meeting legal obligations. Public consultations facilitated by the ICPDR at the basin-wide level pursue public participation through 5 key activities:
  1. Direct collection of comments, including observers & other stakeholders
  2. Stakeholder consultation workshop
  3. Social media campaign (#HaveYourSay, #OurOpinion#OurDanube)
  4. Online questionnaire
  5. Dissemination of information via website dedicated page, Danube Watch
- The EU Floods Directive (Articles 6 & 10) also requires public access to the preliminary flood risk assessment, the flood hazard maps, the flood risk maps and the flood risk management plans.

### 4.5.1 Questions Posed

- When it comes to communication and public participation, it is important to work towards making a good and sound basic relevant knowledge accessible to all. Taking especially into account a “non-technical audience”, is the set of technical documents and communication materials provided sufficient, and what are the remaining information gaps to making this knowledge more accessible?
- Who are the most important target audiences for the development of the DRBMP & DFRMP Updates 2021? Who will be the most important target audiences for communication and public information efforts during the implementation of the plans (2022 to 2027)?
- What communications measures are planned for the implementation period 2022 – 2027 as per the draft DRBMP & DFRMP Updates 2021? If anything, are there vital measures missing?
- The draft DRBMP & DFRMP Updates 2021 cite a desire to both “inform the public” and “be informed by the public” with regards to implementation of the plans. What new channels could the plans include to encourage greater public participation during the implementation period 2022 – 2027, and what will be needed for their implementation?

### 4.5.2 Highlights of the Discussion

Presented by: **Jergus Semko, GWP CEE**

#### a) *Accessibility and understandability of the ICPDR Plans*

- Everyone agrees that accessibility and comprehensibility of the plans and related documentation by the general public should be prioritized during future plans.
- There is plenty of knowledge, but it’s hard to know where to find it: the accessibility of content is the real challenge

- It is essential for people to be able to relate to our messages. The ICPDR has great technical documents but need to work on more public-oriented texts.
- Solutions need to be found on how to make our work easily consumable and “light weight”. The only type of information that will have an impact is not technical but general. Using messages such as: ‘how to save water or how to have an impact on water-related issues, rather than for instance describing engineering utilities for flood protection
- Brochures, videos, and other attractive forms of communication that people prefer should be utilized.

b) *Local language adaptation*

- Local translations are imperative in order for non-English speakers to be able to use our “products”. We need to translate the plans into national languages – or at least offer a concise translation of the key messages
- We need as many people to work with us as possible. However, without understanding us, the messages won’t get across and our efforts will hit a wall and cease to progress.
- By adapting our messages, we can reach more people. And people usually become sensitive if they are directly affected.

c) *Materials need to be written in a user-friendly way:*

- Complex formulation and communication might be another obstacle.
- We should keep in mind who are audience is. People may not understand very technical speech prior knowledge or some degree of pre-existing interest.
- Cooperation between science and communication personnel goes a long way when formulating messaging.

d) *Clear definition of the target audience and the way how to reach them*

- Knowing exactly who we are dealing with, how and where they communicate, and what we can deliver to them is essential for successful cooperation.
- Limiting communication to email is not enough. Social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn are becoming increasingly important

e) *Tailor-made messaging*

- An example from was given to showcase targeting and adaptation of communicated messages.
- A tailor-made approach was utilized when compiling invitations for their event that helped them attract more stakeholders.
- Adapting the message to a specific group keeps the group’s motivation high.

f) *Communication is a “return on investment”*

- Sometimes it is unclear for stakeholders why more money should be invested in water-related projects. Communication efforts can be an effective way to confirm the investment in something that might not affect the audience directly but has a huge impact on the region where the impacted stakeholders live, or the communities they are a part of.

- good communication needs investment – we are returning the money to the people who are giving it, when we communicate well, we make sure everyone is informed, this is a return on investment

- 

g) *Danube is “within our folklore”*

- Many people associate the Danube with some sort of folklore, and romantic-like setting.

- We need to make people think about the Danube as a part of their everyday life, that has far greater impacts on the environment and which involves them as well.

- Children and youth can be reached with the ‘folklore’ aspect and with events such as Danube Day and Danube Art Master. They are an important target group; more work needs to be done in this direction. But we also need to reach out to citizens of all age groups

- 

h) *Need for “hooks” to get the public interested*

- Following trends is useful in every sector. These “hooks” can be quite easy to spot and to follow. In case of water related issues, the next big thing is definitely climate change catastrophes and rapidly increasing microplastics pollution.

- Quickly reacting to latest interests of our target groups can secure their increased support and ensure better chances of receiving funding for projects and activities.

- Finding a correlation between ‘message offer’ and ‘information demand’ proves beneficial in many ways.

i) *Biodiversity should be added to the discussion*

- the importance of bringing biodiversity to the spotlight as this is what keeps us alive was emphasized.

- this topic could be discussed with people from hydropower, marine navigation, and agriculture sectors as their projects influence the aquatic ecosystems greatly.

j) *We need to connect conflicting interests from different sectors*

- Often, two or more conflicting interests from different sectors fight for their interests in the same region.

- The question is how to reach consensus for the greater good.

k) *Who will be the driver?*

- The deficit of specialized comms personnel remains an issue.



- More communications people are needed to shape our speech and get the messages across.

l) *There's a need for private sector involvement*

- Even though the private sector has specific needs and their motives might be different from those of the water sector, they prove to be valuable support and source of financial security for upcoming projects.

m) *The agricultural sector is our next big target*

- The agricultural sector should be at least one of our primary target groups.
- All stakeholders agreed that this sector has huge influence or impact on water issues and that we need to work more with them.

#### 4.5.3 Calls to Action

- Sell the messages better: Adapting our messaging goes a long way when trying to get the attention of stakeholders and get them onboard. Use infographics.
- Establish a COMs taskforce: A form of communication taskforce could be created to work together in order to spread important messages more effectively.
- Plan ahead and use the time to get to know your audience better: Adequate time needs to be allocated for any message to be constructed according to any targeted audience.
- Create expert groups with diverse backgrounds to tackle complex problems: Expert groups have proven to be very effective when dealing with complex issues like new strategies or national policies. The whole network should be approached to localize appropriate specialists, willing to join forces and work on a common goal to achieve mutual benefits.
- Always stay professional: Every event or initiative that deals with stakeholders should be led by a professional moderator, representing the organizing entity.
- Make sure to listen to your audience and adjust to them: It is suggested to mix push and pull communication techniques to not just get your message across, but also to be responsive to your audience and listen to what their concerns and priorities are.
- Switch from “passive” to “active” communication methods: It is not enough to utilize one-way communication, or communication that neglects feedback. We need to be proactive and always seek ways how to connect with our audience on a deeper level.
- Go where your target groups are and find opportunities to meet them: Water-oriented organizations should start thinking about venues and places where their target groups will be likely to be found. For example, it is not enough to be present at a water-related symposium to attract agriculture stakeholders. Water-oriented organizations would in this case need to focus on agriculture fairs and similar events to effectively target their desired stakeholder groups.

- When organizing stakeholder workshops – send different invitation letter for the same event to make sure that everyone gets their sectors covered.
- Use help of the observers to get messages across: Partnered organizations usually share goals or are eager to support a good cause. Asking for help in promoting of a given message goes a long way.
- Communicate frequently and reply swiftly: This applies especially in a digital sphere of communication. It is very dynamic, and people require instant reactions. A frequent communication is necessary to keep the momentum, and swift replies help maintain and develop an organization’s reputation.
- Make citizens fall in love with our work: People follow what they love – and what affects them. Water-related organizations need to identify the current trends and issues people care about to be able to attract and expand their base of followers and supporters.
- Use your network to reach more people: A network of partners, members, or followers of a given organization should, in this case, be seen as an extension of possible promotion. These stakeholders can usually reach audiences that would otherwise remain inaccessible.

#### 4.5.4 Summarizing messages

- 1) The 3 pillars of “Cleaner, Healthier, and Safer” represent pivotal points of the future communication
- 2) “Popularize the plans”
- 3) You “can’t spend water twice”: you need to know – On the farmers? On the sturgeons?
- 4) It is imperative to involve younger generations
- 5) The agricultural sector needs to be brought on the table
- 6) There is a capacity issue: too few people for COMs
- 7) Make it clear that you’re a partner for the public
- 8) People are more interested in topics that relate to them
- 9) Converting national questions to local ones helps securing support among people
- 10) Positive framing – make sure to always present win-win situations. The ‘win-win’ situation paradigm is a good one if the situation is not critical
- 11) Water sector issues can only be solved in an integrated way with other sectors
- 12) Search and present ‘hot topics’ such as: Climate change and Microplastics that get the public’s attention

**Susanne Brandstetter, PP EG ICPDR**, stated the importance of involving the young generation.

**Irene Lucius, WWF CEE**, stated that young people 18-30 years old are ready to act, they are needed as multipliers.

**Lotta Blaskovicova, Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute**, stated her experience from an Interreg project with schoolchildren in Hungary and Slovakia.



**Our Opinion – Our Danube**  
**ICPDR Stakeholder Consultation Workshop 2021**

29-30 June 2021, Online

*Agenda Day 1 (Tuesday, 29 June 2021)*

09:00 – 09:40 Participants gather in the Waiting Room

09:40 – 10:15 Session 1: Introduction to the Draft Plan Updates

- Introduction by moderator, Steve Chaid
- Keynote speech by ICDPR President, Momčilo Blagojević
- Introductory speech by ICDPR Executive Secretary, Ivan Zavadsky
- The “Voice of the Young Stakeholders”

10:15 – 10:25 Screen break (10 min.)

10:25 – 12:50 Session 2: Stakeholder Input

- Interim results and from the public consultation
- Statements from Stakeholders
- ‘Danube Café’ ○ Participants will be divided into 5 groups ○ All participants can #Have Their Say ○ Discussion of 5 Thematic Areas Important to the Plans

12:50 – 14:00 Lunch break (60 min.)

14:00 – 15:00 Session 3: Danube Café (cont’d)

15:00 – 15:10 Closing Day 1 of the Stakeholder Workshop

*Day 2 (Wednesday, 30 June 2021)*

08:30 – 09:00 Participants gather in the Waiting Room

09:00 – 11:10 Session 4: Danube Café Results

- Summary of Day 1 and Outlook of Day 2
- Danube Café – Results + Q&A from Day 1
  - Thematic Area 1: Organic, Nutrient and Hazardous Substances Pollution of Surface and Groundwater
  - Thematic Area 2: Hydromorphological Alterations & Integration Issues (Flood Risk Management, Hydropower, Nature Protection, Navigation, Agriculture)
  - Thematic Area 3: Objectives and Measures of Flood Risk Management Plans

10:25 – 10:30 Screen break (5 min.)

o Thematic Area 4: Support to Implement Both Plans, Financing of the Measures

o Thematic Area 5: Communication and Public Participation

11:20 – 11:30 Screen break (10 min.)

11:30 – 12:00 Session 5: We Discussed Danube

- Conclusions, next steps and closing of the Stakeholder Workshop

- o Closing words from the ICPDR President

12:00 End of the Workshop

## Annex 2: List of Participants

#	First Name	Surname	Organisation
1	Adam	Kovacs	ICPDR
2	Albena	Vatralova	Climate, Atmosphere and Water Research Institute -CAWRI at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences -BAS
3	Albert	Scriciu	GeoEcoMar
4	Alena	Kurecova	Water Research Institute
5			
6	Alessandra	Giolo	GWP
7	Alexander	Höbart	ICPDR
8	Aliona	Isac	RPC Eco Logistica
9	Amparo	Samper Hiraldo	World Bank
10	Anca	Finantu	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
11	Andrea	Palasti	Danube Transformation Agency for Agency
12	Andreas	Beckmann	WWF-CEE
13	Andreas	Scheidleder	Umweltbundesamt - Environment Agency Austria
14	Anna	Smetanova	GWP CEE
15	Attila	Nagy	University of Debrecen
16	Aurelia	Tafta	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests - Romania
17	Balázs	Horváth	EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 4 "Water Quality"
18	Biljana	Savić	JVP "Srbijavode"
19	Blaz	Pokersnik	Ministry of environmental and spatial planning
20	Borjan	Brankov	IAUS
21	Călin	Dejeu	Declic
22	CATANA	Daniela	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
23	Chris	Fischer	Development
24	Clemens	Neuhold	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism
25	Corina-Cosmina	Boscornea	National Administration "Romanian Waters"
26	Cosmin	Feodorov	World Bank
27	Cristian	Rusu	RO Water
28	Cristina	Cuc	Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure

29	Cristina	Sandu	International Association for Danube Research
30	Daniela	Neubacher	Institut für den Donaauraum und Mitteleuropa
31	Daniela	Stojković Jovanović	NGO World and Danube
32	Darko	Barbalić	Hrvatske vode
33	Dejan	Trifunovic	The Danube Commission
34	Diana	Heilmann	EUSDR PA4
35	Dijana	Varlec	Croatian Chamber of Economy
36	Donka	Shopova	Climate, Atmosphere and Water Research Institute at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (CAWRI-BAS)
37	Dragos	Ungureanu	National Administration Romanian Waters
38	Dušica	Bogdanović	Young Researchers of Serbia
39	Duška	Kunštek	MMPI
40	Edgar	Michahelles	KooKoo
41	Edith	Hödl	ICPDR
42	Eduard	Interwies	Intersus
43	Elena	TUCHIU	National Administration Romanian Waters
44	Elena	Ghita	WBG
45	Elena	Rajczykova	WRI Bratislava
46	Elisabeth	Bondar-Kunze	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna
47	Elvira	Marchidan	National Administration Romanian Waters
48	Emöke	Györfi	WWF Austria
49	Erhard	Busek	IDM - Institut für den Donaauraum und Mitteleuropa
50	Erik	Harman	SVP
51	Erla	Gjinishi	GWPO
52	Eva	Juranová	T. G. Masaryk Water Research Institute, public research institution
53	Fabien	Techene	WWF Adria
54	Ferdinando	Didonna	Italian Speleological Society
55	Florica	Corobea	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests - Romania
56	Franz	Ueberwimmer	Regional Government "Land Oberösterreich"
57	Franz	Wagner	BMLRT
58	Gerd	Frik	VERBUND Hydro Power GmbH
59	Gerhard	Nagl	Danube Environmental Forum
60	Gerhard	Merches	Bund Naturschutz
61	Gertrud	Haidvogl	University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna
62	Gheorghe	Constantin	ministry of Environment, Waters and Forest - Romania
63	Gordana	Grujic	OASIS
64	Grigoriy	Kykerchuk	Basin Management Water Resources Prut & Siret
65	Gusztáv	Csomor	Danube Transnational Programme MA/JS
66	György	Rátfai	Middle Tisza District Water Directorate Tisza Office
67	Heide	Jekel	German Federal Environment Ministry

68	Helene	Masliah	ICPDR
69	HELMUT	BELANYECZ	'österr. Kuratorium für Fischerei und Gewässerschutz für EAA
70	Helmut	Belanyecz	European Angler Alliance/ÖKF FishLife
71	Ida	Nagyné Sós	Ministry of Interior
72	Igor	Barna	Public ports, JSC
73	Igor	Liska	ICPDR
74	Igor	Stanković	Hrvatske vode
75	Ionel Sorin	Rindasu-Beuran	National Administration" Romanian Waters"
76	Irene	Lucius	WWF-Central and Eastern Europe
77	Irina	Cozma	PA3-SUERD
78	Iva	Sutic	Hrvatske vode
79	Ivan	Zavadsky	ICPDR
80	Ivana	Bajkovicova	Water Research Institute
81	Jana	Zatlakovičová	SVP, š.p. OZ Bratislava
82	Jana	Valachová	Slovak Water Management Enterprise
83	Jane	Korck	Bavarian State Ministry for the Environment and Consumer Protection
84	Janine	Schwalm	ICPDR
85	Jarmila	Trenčanská	The Ministry of Regional Development, Investments and Informatization of the Slovak Republic
86	Jelena	S.	Faculty of Science and Mathematics
87	Jelisaveta	Nikolic	JVP Srbijavode
88	Jergus	Semko	GWP CEE
89	Jovana	Bastić	ISRBC
90	Joze	Cvetko	Water agency association
91	Jozef	Hriva	Slovenský vodohospodársky podnik š.p. OZ Piešťany
92	Julie	Magnier	OiEau
93	Juraj	Staron	Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic
94	Katalin	Szabó	General Directorate of Water Management
95	Katarina	Mravcova	VUVH
96	Katarina	Jeneiova	Slovak hydrometeorological institute
97	Katarína	Kučerová	Water Research Institute
98	Kitti	Miklánne Szávai	Ministry of Interior
99	Konrad	Stania	BMLRT
100	Konstantin	Ivanov	Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe
101	Lana	Deraković-Rakas	Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure, Croatia
102	László	Balatonyi	EUSDR PA5 (Environmental Risks priority area)
103	Laurice	Ereifej	WWF CEE
104	LenaVioletta	Leitner	Dtafa (Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien)
105	Lidia-Lenuta	Balan	Geological Institute of Romania

106	Livia	Gisca	Administrația Națională „Apele Române
107	Lotta	Blašková	Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute
108	Lucia	Capatina	Tiraspol State University
109	Lucia	Ruffato	Coordinamento Nazionale Tutela Fiumi Free Rivers Italia
110	Ludmila	Strelkova	MŽP SR
111	Malvyna	Genych	Basin Management Water Resources Prut & Siret
112	maria	temelkova	BAS
113	Maria	Galambos	Ministry of Agriculture
114	MARIA	SZOMOLANYI RITVAYNE	Ministry of Interior, Department of RBM and Water Protection
115	Marian	Kucera	DHI Slovakia
116	Marie	Pfeiffer	WWF
117	Mariia	Shpanchyk	State Agency of Water Resources of Ukraine
118	Marija	Ivković	JVP Srbijavode
119	Marijana	Cindrić	MMPI
120	Marijana	Miletić-Radić	Jaroslav Černi Water Institute
121	Marina	Nenkovic Riznic	Institute of architecture and urban & spatial planning of Serbia
122	Marion	Zilker	Verband Kommunalen Unternehmen e. V.
123	Marta	Cermakova	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
124	Marta	Mihailovic	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management - Republic Directorate for Water
125	Marta	Havlickova	Ministry of the Environment
126	Martin	Pusch	Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB), Berlin
127	Martin	Mišík	ALCEDO RIVER CLINIC s.r.o.
128	Martin	Goliaš	Public ports, JSC
129	Martina	Noitzmüller	ICPDR
130	Marton	Pesel	General Directorate of Water Management Hungary
131	Melinda	Szappanyos	University of Pécs
132	Merita	Borota	Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Water- Republic Directorate for Water management
133	Miklós	Szalay	General Directorate of Water Management
134	Miklós	Marton	Hungarian Government
135	Mile	Krstev	GWPO
136	Mirjana	Lenhardt	Institute for Multidisciplinary Research
137	Mirza	Sarač	International Sava River Basin Commission
138	Molly	Robbins	GWPO
139	Momčilo	Blagoević	Montenegro
140	Monika	Supeková	Slovak Water Management Enterprise, state enterprise
141	Natalya	Fulim	Department of ecology and natural resources, Zakarpattia Region
142	Nenad	Nikolic	Local Agenda 21 for Kostolac Municipality



143	Nike	Sommerwerk	Museum für Naturkunde Berlin
144	Nikoletta	Revallo	Tisza River Basin Water Resources Directorate
145	Nino	Wartmann	Pure Water for Generations
146	Norbert	Csatári	General Directorate of Water Management
147	Oksana	Metlashevskaja	State Agency of Water Resources of Ukraine
148	Oleg	Rubel	DEF
149	Olga	Nitcheva	CAWRI at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
150	Olimpia	Negru	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
151	Olivia	Tesic	Provincial Secretariat for Urban Planning and Environmental Protection
152	Ondřej	Ulrich	Mendel University in Brno
153	Otilia	Mihail	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
154	Pascal	Roesler	Pure Water for Generations e.V.
155	Pavla	'Štěpánková	T. G. Masaryk Water Research Institute
156	Pavla	Pekárová	Institute of Hydrology, Slovak Academy of Sciences
157	Peter	Kovacs	Ministry of Interior
158	Peter	Gammeltoft	Danube Sturgeon Task Force
159	Peter	Ilcik	Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic
160	Petra	Repnik	Slovenian Water Agency
161	Petra	Csizmadia	EUSDR PA5 (HU)
162	Petrisor	Mazilu	National Administration Romanian Waters
163	PETRUTA	MOISI	Eco Counselling Centre Galati, Romania
164	PETRUTA	MOISI	CENTRUL DE CONSULTANTA ECOLOGICA
165	RADE	MARCETIC	PWMC Vode Vojvodine Novi Sad
166	Radosav	Rasovic	Freelance
167	Raimund	Mair	World Bank
168	Razvan	Bogzianu	National Administration "Romanian Waters"
169	Rianna	Gonzales	Global Water Partnership
170	Roman	Viorica - Dana	INCD GEOECOMAR
171	Roman	Lunda	Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic
172	Rosie	Oakes	Met Office (UK)
173	Ruxandra	Balaet	Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests
174	Sabina	Bokal	GWP CEE
175	Sandra	Rajcic	ICPDR
176	Sanja	Genzić Jurišević	Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
177	Sanja	Ruzin	Public water management company "Vode Vojvodine"
178	Sanja	Simonović Alfirević	IAUS
179	Sanja	Pantelic- Miralem	PWMC Vode Vojvodine Novi Sad
180	Silvia	Csobokova	Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic

181	Solmaz	Farhang	DTAFA
182	Sonja	Behr	'ÖKF Fishlife / European Anglers Alliance
183	Stefan	Ossyssek	WWF Germany
184	Stefania	Viszlaiová	Slovenský Vodohospodársky Podnik
185	Stefanie	Berg	Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege
186	Steve	Chaid	ORF
187	Stoyan	Mihov	WWF Bulgaria
188	Susanne	Brandstetter	BMLRT
189	Suzana	Alcinova Monevska	Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of North Macedonia
190	Svitlana	Rebryk	Tisza River Basin Water Resources Directorate
191	Sylvia	Koch	ICPDR
192	T.	Hacksteiner	European Barge Union EBU
193	Tamás	Gruber	WWF Hungary
194	Tana	Bertic	Sava Youth Parliament
195	Thomas	Schneider	City of Ingolstadt
196	Thomas	Fiebiger	Golding Capital Partners
197	Thore	Gauda	Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment & Consumer Protection
198	Tobias	Schäfer	WWF Deutschland
199	Tristan	Bath	ICPDR
200	Valentyn	Voloshyn	RTO Zakarpattia
201	Valeria	Wendlova	Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute
202	Valeriya	Gyosheva	Danube River Basin Directorate
203	Vania	Ivanova	European Commission
204	Verena	Wieser	Pure Water for Generations e.V.
205	Veronika	Koller-Kreimel	IAD
206	Veronika	Vagoova	GWP CEE
207	Vesna	Jakovljevic	Organisation for Saving Nature and Animals - OSNA
208	Vesna	Jakovljević	OSNA
209	Vogel	Baerbel	German Speleological Federation
210	Walter	Reckendorfer	Verbund
211	Wolfram	Mausser	Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München
212	Xaver	Schruhl	Deutsche Lebens-Rettungs-Gesellschaft, Landesverband Bayern
213	Yelysaveta	Demydenko	GWPO
214	Željka	Kordej-De Villa	The Institute of Economics, Zagreb
215	Zinoviy	Broyde	Centre "EcoResource"
216	Zoran	Major	ICPDR
217	Zoya	Mateeva	Climate, Atmosphere and Water Research Institute at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
218	Zsuzsa	Steindl	GWP Hungary Foundation

## Annex 3: List of Facilitators & Rapporteurs

<i>Thematic Area Team Name</i>	<i>Facilitator</i>	<i>ICPDR Support</i>	<i>PP EG Support</i>	<i>GWP Rapporteur</i>	<i>Miro Artist</i>
<i>TA1 – Pollution</i>	Elena Tuchiu (PM EG)	Adam Kovacs	Ida Nagyné Sós	Molly Robbins	Alessandra Giolo
<i>TA2 – Hydromorphology</i>	Jane Korck (RBM EG) & Petra Repnik-Mah (HYMO TG)	Edith Hödl	Thore Gauda	Anna Smetanova	Rianna Gonzales
<i>TA3 – Flood Risk</i>	Clemens Neuhold (FP EG)	Igor Liska	Alena Kurecova	Sabina Bokal	Yelisaveta Demydenko
<i>TA4 – Financing</i>	Cristian Rusu (ECON TG)	Eduard Interwies	Monika Supekova	Konstantin Ivanov	Mile Krstev & Erla Gjinishi
<i>TA5 – Public Participation</i>	Susanne Brandstetter (PP EG)	Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov	Sanja Genzic-Jurisevic	Jergus Semko	Veronika Vagoova

Special thanks to:

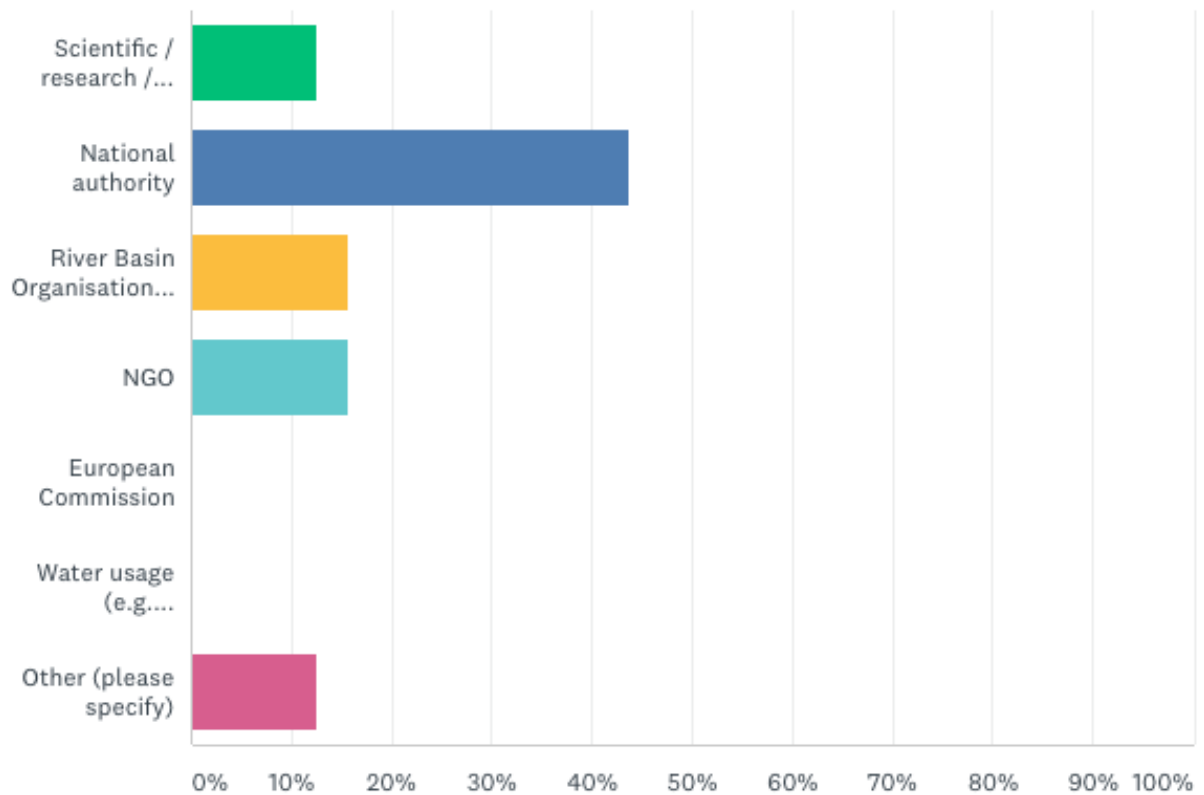
- Mario Lamban, for technical support
- Tristan Bath & Sandra Rajcic, for coordination and general support

## Annex 4: Post-Workshop Satisfaction Survey Results

Number of respondents: 32

Platform used: Survey Monkey

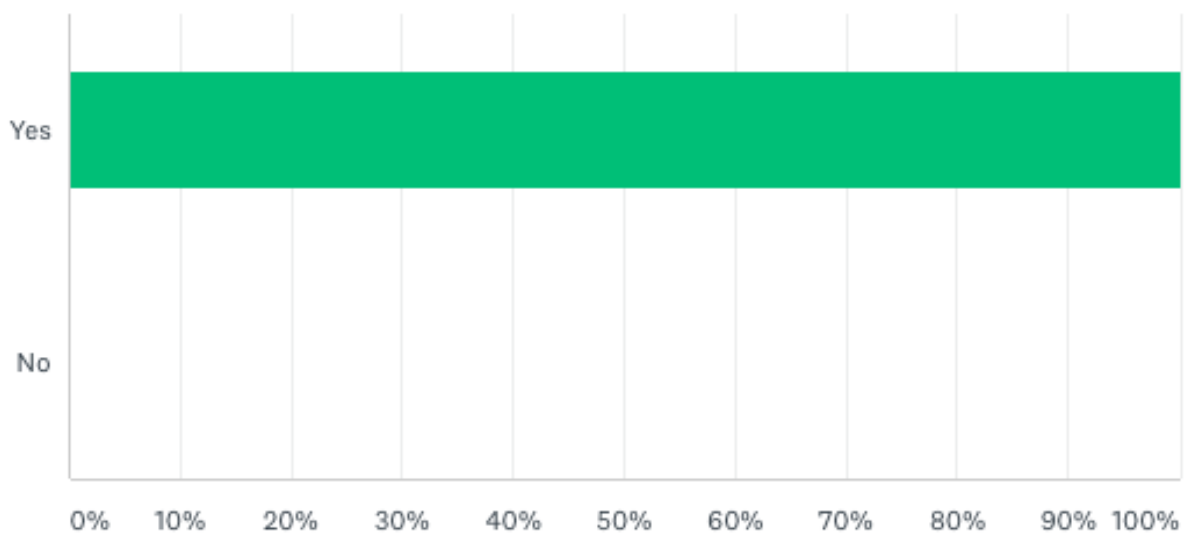
Question 1: Which sector do you represent?



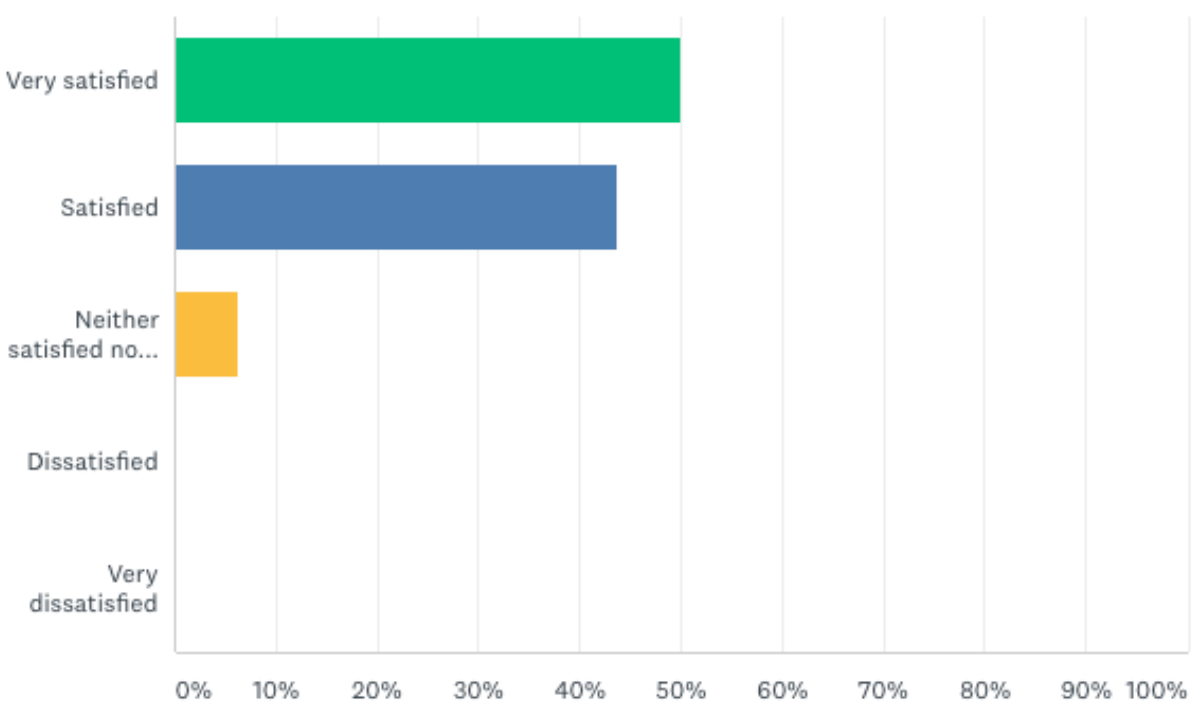
“Other” Responses:

- Business association
- Public water management company
- Freelance expert for climate change and water protection
- Consulting

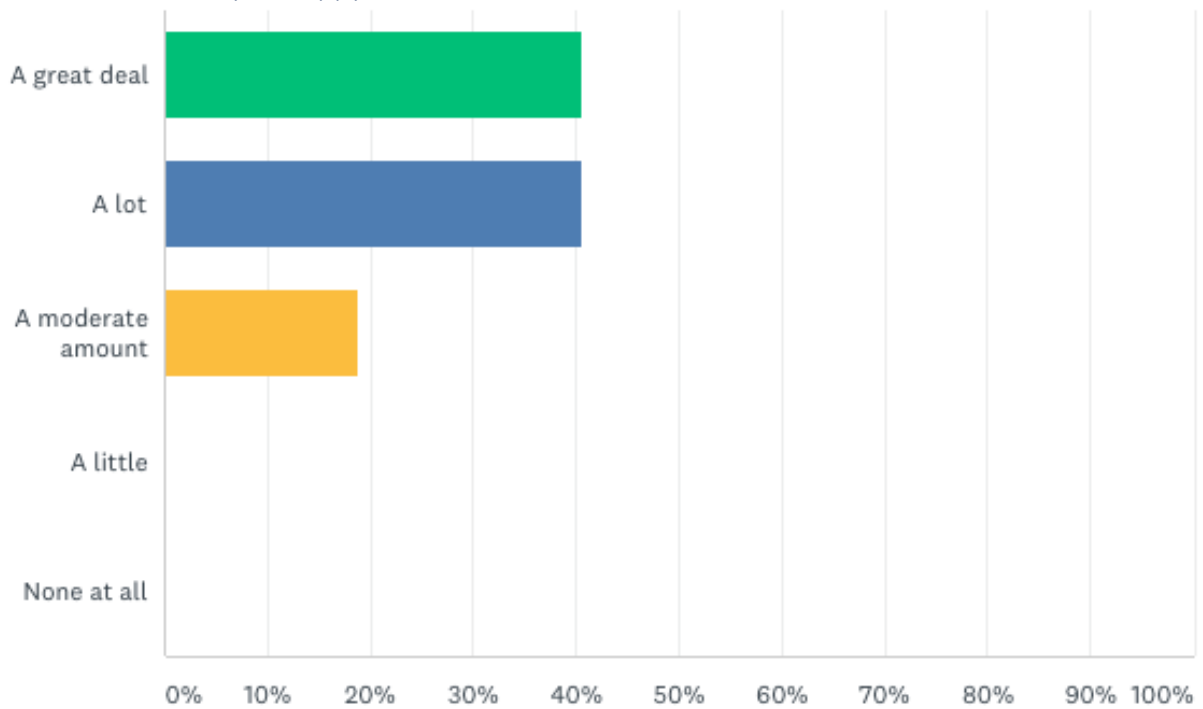
Question 2: Do you feel you got to have your say?



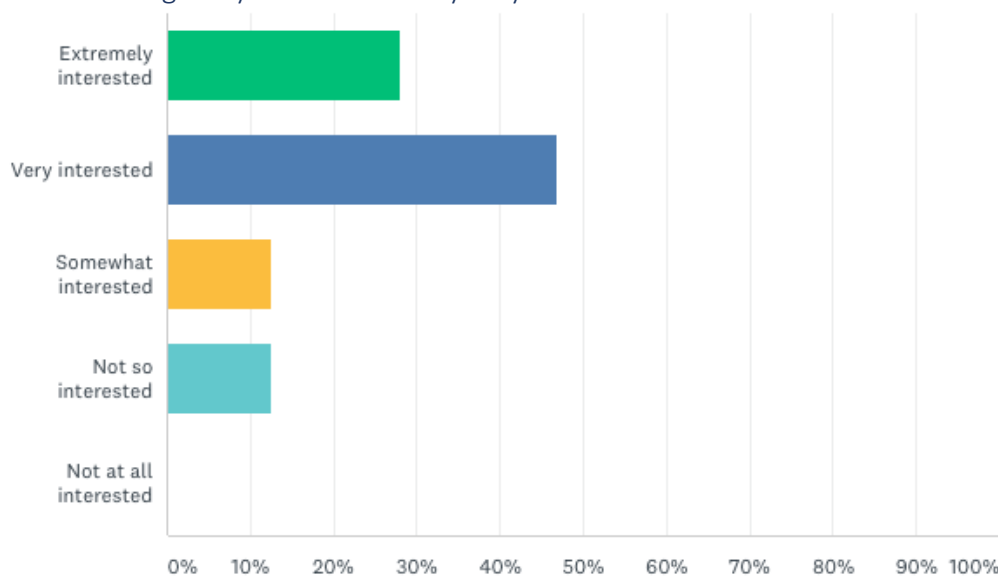
Question 3: Overall, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the workshop?



Question 4: Were you happy with the Danube Café Breakout Session format?



Question 5: How would you feel about continuing the conversation and attending workshops such as this more regularly than once every six years?



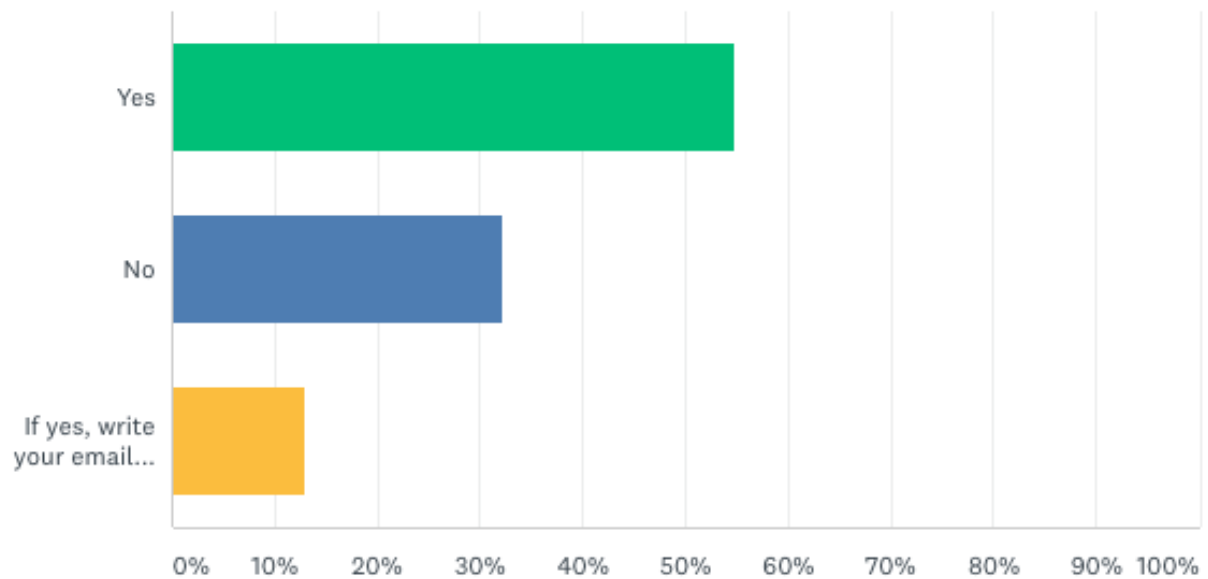
Comments:

- e.g. once in two years
- once or twice a year
- every two years
- twice a year
- once per year
- every year, but between the RBMPs the events should be shorter - more a

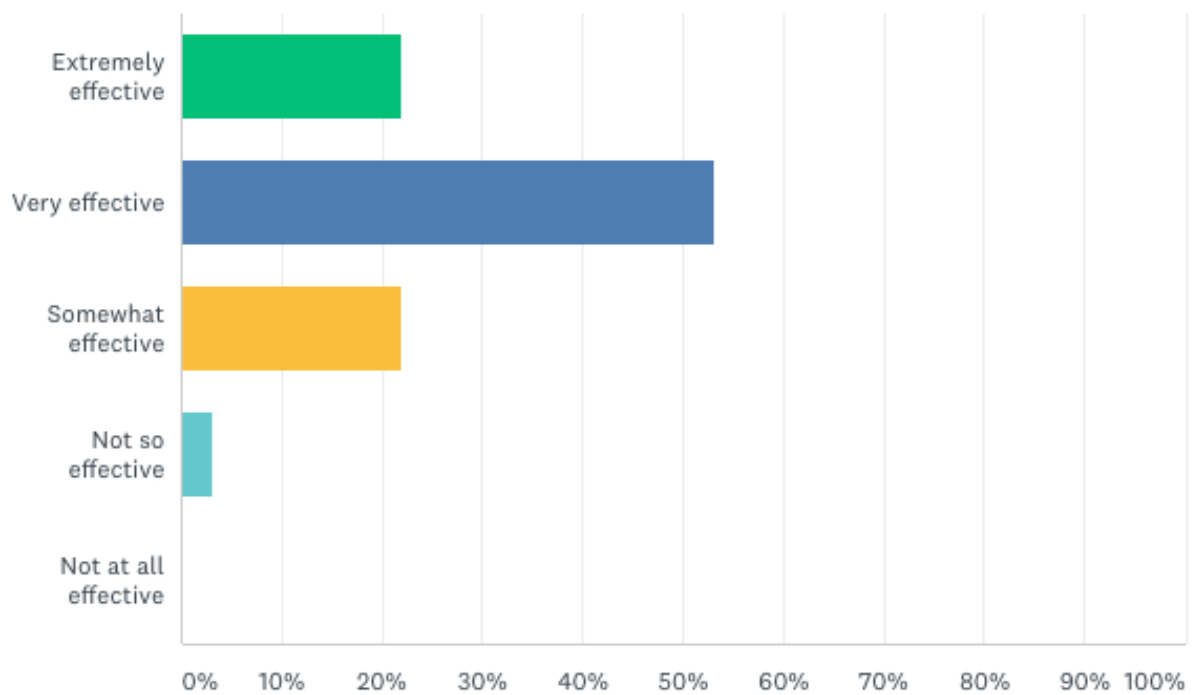
brainstorming of what people think that is important for the Danube - and as an information platform

- once, twice a year
- 1 per 3 years
- Annually

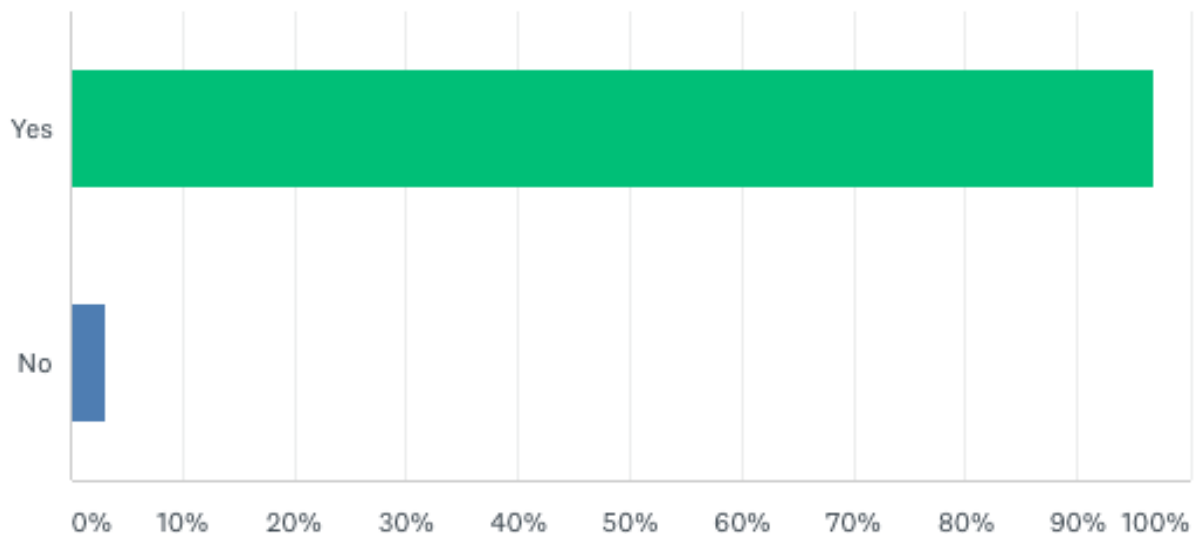
Question 6: Would you like to get involved in further activities based on the Workshop results?



Question 7: Do you think the Zoom format in general was effective?



Question 8: Did you feel that all essential topics related to the DRBMP & DFRMP were covered?



Comment:

- Nature restoration, biodiversity protection, ecosystem services

Question 9: Do you have any final thoughts or comments you would like to share with us?

- No, I don't have any comments
- There were too many and too long keynote speeches at the beginning of Day1. This should be significantly less, or replaced by a short overview about the draft plans which are discussed in the breakout rooms.
- no
- Great job
- Communication is a key challenge
- How to get feedback from the large public in real time is the challenge. And how to help those responsible for decision -making to have read, and even studied carefully, the documents.
- No, for this format it was very good.
- Thank you very much for your efforts done, and I am waiting for workshop of next year
- Great work with such a complicated workshop! Definitely one of the better zoom conferences I've attended in the last year
- Not enough preparation before the workshop. It would have been better to receive less emails, but one with a clear and short explanation of the expected outcome. I did not know e.g. that you cannot chose among the presented topics/groups but have to attend all of them.
- No
- ICPDR did a very good job! Thank you!
- Introduced presentations would be useful to be shared. :)
- I am very content with this workshop. Keep up with good work!
- Very well-prepared workshop, very professional. Really good moderator.