

Fact Sheet: ICPDR and Tisza Group

About the ICPDR

The ‘International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)’ is an international organization consisting of 13 Contracting Parties and the European Union. Since its establishment in 1998, it has grown into one of the largest and most active international bodies engaged in river basin management in Europe. Its activities relate not only to the Danube River, but also to the tributaries and ground water resources of the entire Danube River Basin.

The ultimate goal of the ICPDR is to implement the ‘Danube River Protection Convention’. Its mission is to promote and coordinate sustainable and equitable water management, including conservation, and the improvement and rational use of waters for the benefit of the Danube River Basin countries and their people. The ICPDR pursues its mission by making recommendations for the improvement of water quality, developing mechanisms for flood and accident control, agreeing on standards for emissions and by assuring that these measures are reflected in national legislation. The ICPDR is supported by a Secretariat based in the Vienna International Centre in Vienna, Austria.

In 2000, the ICPDR was nominated as the platform for coordinating the development of a ‘Danube River Basin Management Plan ’ to meet the requirements of the ‘EU Water Framework Directive’, the main goal of which is to ensure that all EU waters achieve ‘good status’ by 2015.

About the Tisza Group

At the first ministerial meeting of the ICPDR in 2004, representatives of the five Tisza countries – Ukraine, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia -- signed a Memorandum of Understanding ‘Towards a River Basin Management Plan for the Tisza river supporting sustainable development of the region’ and agreed to prepare a River Basin Management Plan for the Tisza Sub-river Basin by the end of 2009. As a ‘sub-basin’ of the Danube River Basin, the Tisza countries are not legally required by the EU to prepare such a plan. However, the EU does encourage detailed programmes and management plans for sub-basins. In this way, the development of the ‘Tisza River Basin Management Plan’ represents a model and pilot project for Europe, especially as it integrates issues related to water quality (e.g. pollution) and water quantity (e.g. floods).

The ‘Tisza Group’ was also created in 2004 to prepare and coordinate all activities related to the preparation of the Tisza River Basin Management Plan. The Tisza Group serves as a platform for strengthening coordination and information exchange among relevant international, regional and national bodies and projects in the Tisza River Basin. It is chaired by Joachim D’Eugenio from the European Commission’s Environment Directorate, General Water & Marine Unit.

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