

European Union Strategy for Danube Region and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive

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The Danube River Basin (DRB) is the “most international” river basin in the world covering territories of 19 countries. With over 100 million people, and a fifth of EU surface, the area is vital for Europe. The DRB is not only characterised by its size and large number of countries but also by its diverse landscapes and the major socio-economic differences that exist between the upstream and downstream countries. The DRB has been the subject of many investigations and studies funded by the countries sharing the Basin and a wide range of organisations. The first part of the presentation will focus on the background information on the Danube Basin and Region, the EU Strategy for Danube Region (Danube Strategy), the Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP) and the Water Framework Directive.

The DRBMP identified four significant, „basin-wide” transboundary issues that are a priority for the Danube Basin and the impact of the Danube River on the Black Sea: nutrient pollution, organic pollution, hazardous substances and hydromorphological alterations. The DRBMP identifies the most urgent, basin-wide management issues in detail, but it also identifies areas where more work is needed in the future, such as sediments and climate changes.

The Danube Strategy should have an important role in the management of those significant, basin-wide transboundary issues. The objectives, the scope and the structure and organisation of the Danube Strategy, the priority areas, the actions and projects will be discussed in the second part of the presentation.

There are eleven Priority Areas identified for the Danube Strategy, that represent the main areas where the macro-regional strategy can contribute to improvements. The objective of the 4th priority area is „to restore and maintain the quality of waters” and the objective of a few actions and projects of this priority area is control of nutrient loads.

The major criteria for the selection of the actions and example projects will be discussed: issues of basin-wide importance, issues based on the Danube River Basin Management Plan adopted by the Ministerial Meeting of the Danube River Basin countries, issues that requires a basin-wide perspective and cooperation between each or most of the countries sharing the whole basin, issues that requires inter-ministerial/inter-sectoral coordinating mechanisms and integration of different policies, issues that demonstrate immediate and visible benefits for the people of the Region, that have an impact on the macro-region (or a significant part of it), projects which promote sustainable development and cover several regions and countries;

– which are coherent and mutually supportive, creating win-win solutions and are realistic (technically feasible and with credible funding).

The organisation of the implementation of the Strategy, the international and national coordination, some of the frequently asked questions, the potential financial sources, the actions and potential projects dealing with nutrient control will be discussed in the third part of the presentation. The parallels of the water resources management aspects of the EU Strategies for the Baltic Sea Region and Danube Region, and what to learn from the Baltic Sea Strategy will be also discussed.

In the DRBMP plan for 2015 (and for the period lasting until 2027), the future visions of water-environmental problems in river basin level, and the chances of the efficient implementation of the mitigation measures, were laid down. The major Danube basin-wide vision for nutrient pollution of

surface waters is „balanced management of nutrient emissions via point and diffuse sources in the entire DRB that neither the waters of the Danube nor the Black Sea are threatened or impacted by eutrophication”. In the last part of the presentation the expected role of the Danube Strategy in the implementation of the mitigation measures of the Danube River Basin Management Plan regarding nutrients will be discussed.