



**GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND  
FORESTS**

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**Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting of  
PA5 – “Management of Environmental Risks” of the EUSDR  
4<sup>th</sup> December 2012**

On 4 December 2012 the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Group meeting of Priority Area 5 (PA5) – “Management of Environmental Risks” of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) was organized at the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Bucharest - Romania.

After the participants completed the registration the meeting started with welcoming the participants.

**Mrs. Olimpia Negru**, Ministry of Environment and Forests, EUSDR PAC 5 – Environmental Risks, Romania welcomed the participants at the meeting.

**Mrs. Brandusa Predescu**, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EUSDR NCP, Romania, made a short presentation of the meeting held in Regensburg – Germany. The main message that came out during the meeting with the PA coordinators was that the work of the steering groups as well as substantive participation of each member of the steering group is the key for the success of the strategy. During the meeting in Regensburg, Commissionaire Hahn specifically requested the support of the governments for the members of steering groups in order to successfully implement the strategy. It was also underlined that what is produced in the Steering Groups, what is selected and labeled as flagships projects and what is fulfilling the criteria of eligibility and it is in the end eligible for financing it is the key for successfully implementing the strategy.

In order to have a more visible progress the coordinators of the steering groups must have meetings (or communicate over the internet) for exchanging ideas, opinions and experience about the procedure and mechanisms for harmonizing the procedures between countries for having a unitary process and course of action.

**Mr. Bakonyi Péter**, "VITUKI" Environmental Protection and Water Management Research Institute, EUSDR PAC 5, Hungary – considering the low attendance at the 4<sup>th</sup> Steering Group meeting of Priority Area 5 (PA5) an alternative is to schedule meetings using the internet. However with the flush of email received every day it is always easy to miss some of the messages. For this reason the meeting in Regensburg provided a good opportunity for face-to-face meetings and discussions.

**Mrs. Olimpia Negru**, Ministry of Environment and Forests, EUSDR PAC 5 – Environmental Risks, Presentation of the proposed agenda, approval of the agenda. The Agenda was approved by the participants.

**Mr. Bakonyi Péter**, "VITUKI" Environmental Protection and Water Management Research Institute, EUSDR PAC 5, Hungary, Short presentation - outputs of the "First Annual Forum EUSDR, Regensburg, 27-28 November 2012".

The main aspects underlined were the following: a number of issues in the Danube Region require working together, across borders and national interests; political commitment needs to be translated into action; actions need to be coordinated and carried out together.

*Key issues identified:* Mobility: movement of people and goods, corridors across Europe;

Energy: secure sources, diversification, especially renewable, reduction in emissions, efficiency;

Water: quality (pollution, ecosystems) and quantity (navigation, risk prevention and management);

Biodiversity: precious natural heritage as a source of well-being and prosperity; Socio-economic

development: jobs, welfare, framework for creativity and investments, IT potential; Education and

capacity: schools and universities, training, modern administration, inclusion of all citizens; Culture

and identity: rich cultural heritage, tourism potential; Safety: personal safety and protection, fight against organized crime, corruption.

Key problems/potentials identified:

*Pillar A. Connecting the Danube Region:* Navigability (waterways, ports, ships, crews); Road and railways (missing links, quality); Multimodality – lack of coherence but great potential; Energy security – not enough diversification, fragmented, missing links; Energy efficiency – improve performance, unused renewable potential; Tourism potential – many common features, need for joint promotion and product development (brand); Identity – recognized, needs clearer formulation, work on reconciliation and tolerance.

*Pillar B. Protecting the environment in the Region:* Water quality: 3 main sources of pollution: nutrients, organic, hazardous substances; too many interruptions; Fantastic biodiversity to be preserved but growing pressure to be addressed (hydromorphological alterations, economic development, transport, energy, etc. possibly resulting in loss of habitats); High risks – mainly floods, but also potential accidents.

*Pillar C. Building Prosperity in the Danube Region:* Different innovation systems, fragmented R&D, limited mobility of researchers, uneven ICT coverage, but many universities to build upon; Different competitiveness frameworks for enterprises, gaps in Single Market. Much potential in closer links, trading traditions; Uneven performance in education and training (gaps in meeting labor market needs, disparities), reduced highly skilled employment; On-going discrimination and poverty (social exclusion).

*Pillar D. Strengthening the Danube Region:* Uneven capacity across the region, uneven public administration performance, civil society not recognized/involved everywhere in the same way – but great motivation from existing actors; Areas prone to corruption and organized crime (smuggling, laundering, etc.); Illegal migration and human trafficking.

**Mr. Bakonyi Péter**, "VITUKI" Environmental Protection and Water Management Research Institute, EUSDR PAC 5, Hungary - Review of progress of tasks drawn up in roadmaps, amendments modifications to the roadmaps.

Action 1 - *“To develop and adopt one single overarching floods management plan at basin level or a set of flood risk management plans coordinated at the level of the international river basin”.*

Action 2 - *“To support wetland and floodplain restoration as an effective mean of enhancing flood protection, and more generally to analyze and identify the best response to flood risk (including “green infrastructure”)*”. Taking into account the new challenges brought by the effects of the climate change is clear that continue to use the same approach of only building levees alongside the river in order to

keep the high level water inside will no longer work or will become a bigger threat to humans. Therefore we have to think to give back some of the floodplains and to leave more “room for rivers”. This new approach will be good both for reducing the flood risk and for improving aquatic environmental conditions.

Action 3 - *“To extend the coverage of the European Floods Awareness System (EFAS) system to the whole Danube river basin, to step up preparedness efforts at regional level (including better knowledge of each other's national systems) and to further promote joint responses to natural disasters and to flood events in particular, including early warning system.”*

Action 5 - *“To continuously update the existing database of accident risk spots (ARS Inventory), contaminated sites and sites used for the storage of dangerous substances”* – this requires to work with the institutions/organizations concerned to reduce the risk to minimum levels and should include harmonization of safety standards, increased awareness and capacity in accident response and joint crisis management.

Action 6 - *“To develop rapid response procedures and plans in case of industrial accidental river pollution”*

Action 7 - *“Anticipate regional and local impacts of climate change through research”* Initiatives in this research field should address specific concerns in the Danube Region. Research projects on the impacts of climate change on infrastructure, health, food security and the environment should be initiated. Furthermore, the international scientific cooperation in this field should be supported, while ensuring close coordination with overall action at EU level. A preparatory action *“Climate of the Carpathian Basin”* will be launched before the end of 2010. This action will contribute to regional climate variability and change studies, and applied climatology. It will also encompass an analysis of the vulnerability of water and ecosystems of the region to climate change impacts and other man-made pressures and on identifying potential adaptation measures, focusing on adaptive water management and ecosystem-based approaches. This work should be used at basin level.

Action 8 – *“To develop spatial planning and construction activities in the context of climate change and increased threats of floods”*. Flood prevention activities imply the cooperation of national, regional and local authorities in terms of land-use and physical planning. Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Danube Region needs to be developed through increased cooperation, coordination and data exchange, as required under the INSPIRE Directive. Adequate land-use needs to be identified and agreed in an integrated way, and priority actions such as the promotion of sound forest and pasture

management, the minimizing of plough lands on the slopes of hills or the protection of biodiversity and restoration of ecosystems and natural river courses need to be taken across the Danube Basin area. Urban and housing development need to take account of climate change factors. Cities and towns in the Basin should be encouraged to share experience and best practice in this field.

**Rares Bonifate**, Ministry of Environment and Forests – Romania, presentation of the "Danube WATER integrated management" – WATER.

The project is in implementation phase. During the presentation there were underlined the goals, general and specific objective of the project, the outcome and expected results of the project.

The project is proposed as flagship project considering the following: the project essentially contributes to the reduction of water pollution risk in the Lower Danube, particularly to the Danube Delta; the project contributes to the increase of capacity for intervention in case of floods, low flows and accidental pollution in the Lower Danube areas; the project covers a large spectrum of water risk from floods to radioactive pollution; the project has a regional impact on the Lower Danube area; the project has an integrated approach, including both environmental risk management and water quality protection.

It was agreed that the project documentation will be circulated electronically for the approval of the SG Members.