

Notiz

für: ICPDR
von: Becker
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Hazardous Substances and Inland Navigation

The Roof Report 2004 gives a very good overview and also detailed information of the situation of the Danube River Basin. From my point of view - the identification of pressures and the assessment of risks consider all priority issues. Concerning navigation this is the topic „hydromorphological changes“ and (secondarily) “hazardous substances”.

Major sources of pollution with hazardous substances in the Danube Basin are: industrial and municipal waste water, land use (referring to pesticides) and old contaminated sites in potentially flooded areas. Navigation is mentioned in the Roof Report as one of the “other significant diffuse sources of pollution” (which already signifies it is not one of the major sources). Inland navigation plays only a minor role regarding pollution with hazardous substances.

Approaches to meet the problem

The most relevant point sources of pollution along the Danube and its tributaries are highlighted in the Roof Report – industrial and municipal wastewaters along the middle/lower Danube and along Drava, Sava, Tisza,... Here improvements have the largest impact (and the best “return of cost”).

But related improvement activities should be considered and supported in each contributing sector not exclusively depending on its impact, but also on the feasibility of measures - as it is the situation for inland navigation. In order to achieve relevant improvement we coordinate and implement different actions in Austria as well as on transboundary Danube level:

First step for transboundary implementation are **joint strategies and legislation**. In Austria we have a very strict water right legislation and – with focus on navigation - the Waterway Traffic Regulations. Danube and Rhine Commission give widely agreed to recommendations (respectively regulations). And now the Water Framework Directive gives transboundary Legislation.

Now to more detailed information on some ongoing projects

Referring to “strategies” the Austrian “**National Action Plan for Navigation**” should be mentioned. It defines objectives for development of navigation for Austria and also considers environmental issues. Methods and approaches could be used as draft for a joint programme on European level as the **European Communication on Inland navigation**, which is currently in preparation.

Environmental objectives and measures (regarding hazardous substances) in the NAP are:

- Reduction of emissions of vessel engines and innovations in vessel constructions
- Security concepts (River Information Services, Agreements on hazardous goods)
- Sustainable ship waste management etc.

Accident prevention: Transport of hazardous goods on ships is one potential source of pollution stated in the Roof Report. The main goods transported on the Danube are oil and coal, but also some more hazardous substances. For the handling of dangerous goods strict regulations exist. For some of the substances double shell cargo ships are compulsory.

Accidents during transport occur very seldom and can further on be prevented by the implementation of **DORIS** (Danube River Information Services). Relevant information of encountering ships can be viewed on a screen, e.g. information on position/speed, but also on hazardous goods transports.

Harmonisation with the Danube Countries and Western Europe partners is achieved within a joint technology project, where more than 40 partners from 11 countries are working on standardisation and harmonisation of the River Information Services.

Treatment and disposal of ship waste: The discharge of ship waste (including the oily and greasy waste) and the small amounts of oil leaking during engine operation into the ship's bilge are further sources of pollution mentioned in the Roof Report. For Austria both topics are covered in the **National Ship Waste Management Plan**. The conceptional work focussed on oily and greasy and other hazardous ship waste. Operational aspects as well as related financing aspects have been examined. Necessary measures for all types of ship waste have been evaluated. As one solution for the oily and greasy ship waste a mobile collection service shall be implemented on the Austrian section of the Danube (replacing the current collection duty of the harbours).

On the transboundary scale harmonised regulations and procedures regarding ship waste would be necessary to achieve a sustainable solution. An important step into this direction is the project in preparation: "**Sustainable Ship Waste Management on the Danube**" which is prepared together with German, Austrian, Slovak and Hungarian authorities and organisations. The project's main focus:

- Harmonised National Ship Waste Management Plans shall be implemented in each of these upper Danube countries.
- To prepare pilot actions
- To elaborate an international model of financing
- And it shall also serve as an information exchange platform with the river commissions and further Danube countries.

The project is currently in preparation and shall be proposed within the **INTERREG**-programme.

With this foresight into future I come to an end of my statement. I hope keeping in contact is planned and I would suggest further stakeholder-conferences like this to be organised. As I am working in the field of nature conservation and restoration ecology the topic "invasive species" would be of further interest for me (Navigation accelerated the development of species migration along waterways). This could be addressed in a following conference, together with protected areas for species and habitat protection. Thank you for your attention!
