

## PRESS INFORMATION

### **International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)**

#### **Working for the Danube River Basin and Its People**

The **Danube River Protection Convention**, which was signed in 1994, came into force in 1998 and today 13 Danube River Basin countries use it as the legal basis for their efforts geared towards the protection and sustainable use of water and other ecological resources. In addition to the European Union, parties to the Convention include: Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina\*, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

#### **ICPDR – Part of the Solution**

To make the Danube River Protection Convention a living tool, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin (ICPDR) has been created. Since its establishment in 1998, the ICPDR has grown into one of the largest and most active international bodies of river basin management expert in Europe. ICPDR does not only deal with the Danube itself, but with the whole Danube River Basin, which includes also tributaries and the ground water resources.

Its ambitious mission is to promote and co-ordinate sustainable and equitable water management, including conservation, 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 standards for emissions and by assuring that these are reflected in the Contracting Parties' national legislations and applied in their policies.

The ICPDR is formed by the contracting countries' national delegations, which are made up of representatives from the highest ministerial levels, technical experts, and representatives of the civil society and of the scientific community.

#### **ICPDR Expert Groups - Working for the Danube**

ICPDR divides its work into six thematic work areas, for which strategies, guidelines and joint activities are developed:

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\* Ratification process under way

- **Flood Protection** (Development of the action programme for sustainable flood prevention)
- **River Basin Management** (Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive)
- **Ecology** (Management of wetlands and floodplains)
- **Emission** (Emission and pollution control from point and diffuse sources)
- **Water Quality** (Monitoring and assessment of water quality)
- **Accident Prevention and Control** (Operation of an Accident Emergency Warning System)

In order to make the ICPDR effective and operational, international Expert Groups have been set up to develop strategies and guidelines for themes of importance for the Danube Basin. Regular expert group meetings on different levels ensure close cooperation and efficient information exchange between the Basin countries.

### **ICPDR – 10 Years of Successful Cooperation in the Danube River Basin**

Environmental protection is a community responsibility. To encourage public participation in the assessment and governance of environmental measures and in the decision making process, the ICPDR cooperates with regional and international organizations, non-governmental agencies, and the scientific community.

Today the ICPDR is seen not only as a role model platform for sustainable river basin management, but also for transboundary cooperation within a variety of different countries. The well functioning cooperation in the Danube River Basin attracted the attention and appreciation in international and global fora. The milestones in ICPDR's successful work include:

- Development of a cooperative strategy for setting up the Danube River Basin Management Plan
- Setting up of over 75 water quality monitoring stations throughout the Danube River Basin
- Development of an Emission Inventory for pollution originating from municipalities, industry and agriculture
- Operation of a basin-wide early warning system helping to reduce damages from accidental spills
- Preparation of a basin-wide Action Programme for Sustainable Flood Prevention
- Launch of Danube Day on June 29: the inauguration in 2004 included more than 100 events held basin-wide to raise awareness and strengthen "Danube Solidarity"

### **Challenges facing the ICPDR**

The challenging tasks of the ICPDR are not likely to decrease in the future; rather, they are to grow as the European Union grows and consolidates. In order for the Danube region to thrive, it is critical that socio-economic innovation should be pursued without jeopardising the Basin's

important ecological resources and values. This can only be done if international cooperation in the Danube Basin is further developed and enhanced.

The ICPDR strives to actively contribute towards this goal by launching a number of initiatives, such as the further reduction of the pollution and the restoring of the ecological network, which should make the Danube Basin a showcase for sustainable water management in a changing world.

**Further information and contact:**

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the Danube River (ICPDR)**

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