



Final Report of the 8th Meeting on the Follow-up of the Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin

Zagreb, September 13-14, 2017

Introduction

Background

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) and the Danube Commission (DC) have jointly launched the process to develop the *Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin (Joint Statement)*. After a year-long process preparing the document, and its adoption by the three river commissions in December 2007 and January 2008, the Joint Statement was publicly announced in March 2008.

In the years that followed, the ICPDR, DC, and ISRBC each year organized a follow-up meeting where the responsible government authorities and interest groups met again to discuss the progress achieved so far and how to improve the application of the Joint Statement in waterway projects. This was the 8th of such meetings this time organised by the ISRBC, marking the "10th anniversary" of the Joint Statement.

Organization and objectives of the 8th follow-up meeting

The 8th meeting, hosted by the ISRBC, was held on September 13-14, 2017 in Zagreb.

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- inform about progress on the implementation of the *Joint Statement*,
- discuss challenges and solutions in relation to the practical application of the integrated planning approach and lessons learnt,
- inform and discuss new facts and perspectives of European inland waterway transport (IWT),
- Ensure regular information exchange and presentation of new initiatives.

Participation

The meeting was attended by 36 representatives from the European Commission (EC), national bodies, international commissions, NGOs and private companies.

The full list of participants has been provided in Annex 1 to this report.

Adopted Agenda

1. Welcome and introductory statements

- International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC)
- Danube Commission (DC)
- International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)

2. Inland waterways and the environment – Policy developments relevant for the Danube region

- Outlook for Danube navigation in the context of the Rhine-Danube Corridor
- EU policies on inland navigation and CEF supported projects – latest developments
- EU environmental policies relevant for inland navigation – latest developments

3. Overview current state of navigability and IWT projects in the Danube basin countries: Experiences with integrated planning and implementation

- Overview of navigability situation on Danube as of September 2016
 - Austria
 - Slovakia
 - Croatia
 - Serbia
 - Romania – FAST Danube, SWIM and Calarasi-Braila projects
 - Bulgaria
- Panel discussion – Ongoing inland waterways infrastructure projects and sustainable and efficient transport on the Danube – viewpoints from an industry association and environment NGO community

4. Good Navigation Status - Improvement of the navigation conditions respecting environmental issues. The elements of Good Navigation Status to be achieved by 2030 for the various waterways in Europe

- Presentation of the newest results of the Study on Good Navigation Status

5. Development of technical advisory services for the implementation of the Danube part of the TEN-T Rhine Danube Corridor, in particular with regards to projects to improve sustainable navigation conditions – METEET

6. Future plans and perspectives for enhancing navigation and environmental protection in the Danube and its navigable tributaries

- EUSDR related developments - The Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan for the Danube and its navigable tributaries
- New web portal on the DC web site

7. Discussion and conclusions on key lessons learned and future steps in support of the implementation of the Joint Statement – panellists: ISRBC, DC, ICPDR, EU

Day 1 (September 13, 2017)

Welcome and introductory statements

The meeting was opened by welcome speeches made by **Mr. Dragan Zeljko**, Secretary of the ISRBC, **Mr. Ivan Zavadsky**, Executive Secretary of the ICPDR and **Mr. Petar Margić**, Director General of the Secretariat of the DC. They welcomed all participants on behalf of the three commissions, informed about the progress made in the implementation of the Joint Statement and reaffirmed the commitment to the principles of the Joint Statement.

Mr. Zeljko informed the participants about the outline of the meeting and the agenda and stressed his satisfaction by the concrete steps that have been made since the previous meeting, held in Budapest in 2016, toward a successful implementation of the *Joint Statement*, including:

- setting-up of the Mixed Environment Transport External Expert Team (METEET) on integrated planning of IWT projects and the fact that its first field mission will be performed in Croatia very soon and
- Study on Good Navigation Status that is to be finished soon, for which involvement of all relevant stakeholders guarantees very usable results.

He also stressed the importance of the continuation of the project of rehabilitation of the navigation on the Sava River and the new approach to this task that presumed priority rehabilitation of the most critical sectors of the fairway. Mr. Zeljko also emphasized the importance of involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the planning process from the very beginning.

Mr. Margić, among other things, praised the common effort and hard joint work in the last ten years from the adoption of the Joint Statement, which lead to the creation of the common language between the participants in the Joint Statement process. He also emphasized the importance of bringing it to the next level through intensified cooperation and joint promotion of the sustainable inland navigation and improvement of the fairway conditions.

Mr. Zavadsky expressed the importance of challenges in this process, which during the previous 10 years have proven to make sense. He also stressed the importance of the Study on Good Navigation Status and future implementation of its results and setting up of the METEET for the Joint Statement process and emphasized how much ICPDR welcomed the process, fully recognizing all environmental issues regarding inland navigation that would contribute to the viability of Joint Statement further processes.

Inland waterways and the environment – Policy developments relevant for the Danube region

• Outlook for the Danube navigation in the context of the Rhine-Danube Corridor

Désirée Oen, EC's DG Move, provided a speech on behalf of Karla Peijs, European Coordinator for the TEN-T Rhine-Danube Corridor, pointing out that progress is made with the implementation of IWT projects, although not as many projects are implemented as she would have wished. Progress in other modes of transport, i.e. rail and road, puts navigation in a different context and difficult condition, inter alia due to poor maintenance of waterway infrastructure. Renewed efforts are needed to achieve Good Navigation Status (GNS) by 2030 as required by the TEN-T Regulation while respecting environmental legislation. Therefore, the Joint Statement remains fully valid.

• EU environmental policies relevant for inland navigation – latest developments

Mr. Raimund Mair from EC's DG Environment informed about the state of play regarding the adoption of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) River Basin Management Plans and the Flood Risk Management Plans according to the EU Floods Directive. Relevant ongoing activities in the frame of the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) for the WFD include work on hydromorphology, harmonised environmental requirements to reach "Good Ecological Potential" (workshop on inland navigation was organised in June 2017 in Brussels) and a new Guidance on WFD Article 4(7) on exemptions from the environmental objectives, where a coordinated approach with GNS is needed. Finally, some latest information on developments with regard to the EIA and SEA Directives was provided.

Further details can be obtained from Mr Mair's presentation, which is available, together with all other meeting presentations, here: http://www.savacommission.org/event_detail/8/22/382

- **EU policies on inland navigation and CEF supported projects – latest developments**

Ms. Oen, provided a presentation, pointing out that the Danube is not used for inland waterway transport as it would have the potential, and the plan to increase cargo transport by 20% until 2020 compared to 2010. Still a lot needs to be done to reach GNS by 2030, including reaching out to neighbouring countries which are not EU Member States. 97% of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) has already been committed and activities are ongoing to attract private investment. Finally, the new METEET initiative was promoted, whereas the first training workshop will be organised on 28-29 September 2017 in Vukovar (HR).

Overview of the current state of navigability and IWT projects in the Danube basin countries: Experiences with integrated planning and implementation

(Moderator: Mr. Ivan Zavadsky)

Following the information provided on the reporting sheets for the individual IWT projects, which were developed and sent out for feedback to ISRBC before the meeting, the representatives gave presentations to that regard.

Mr. Dejan Trifunović (DC) provided the **Overview of navigability situation on the Danube 2016/2017**. It was particularly significant the period during the first decade of January 2017, when the ice phenomena, caused by the invasion of the cold arctic air mass, cold snap and temperature drop at low water levels, occurred on the Middle and Lower Danube, thus interrupting the navigation at the Serbian, Hungarian, Romanian and Slovak stretches of the Danube.

He also presented the dynamics of cargo transport on the Danube, as well as water level changes at characteristic gauging stations. Generally the conditions were better compared to previous years, in particular in comparison with the year 2015 when a significant drought was observed in the Danube basin. The numbers for passenger transport continue to rise whereas a small decline for cargo transport is observed.

Mr. Gert-Jan Muilerman and Ms. Barbara Becker (ViaDonau) gave an update of the **Integrated River Engineering Project on the Danube East of Vienna** with the new implementation strategy, turning away from a large scale project towards processes and small optimisation projects presuming stabilisation of water levels, with integrative sediment management; improvement of the habitat quality in wetlands, as well as navigation conditions; realisation of small optimisation projects in parallel and their realisation in order by priority.

They also presented Integrated Approach to Navigability and Ecological Restoration in the Wachau Valley in Lower Austria along with projects executed within LIFE Programme of the EC:

- LIFE Wachau Gravel Structures (2003-2008)
- LIFE Mostviertel- Wachau (2009-2014)
- LIFE Auenwildnis Wachau (2015-2020)

General aquatic measures of those projects particularly take into consideration: the construction of gravel banks out of dredged material by maintenance of navigation channel; river bank restorations by removal of existing rip-raps and reconnection of side arms in free flowing sections.

One of the significant measures, performed in frameworks of these projects, is fish monitoring, which pointed out decrease of fish population during 1996 -2003 and slow increase after restoration projects ensued.

Furthermore, following the 3 pillars of business activity: environment (preservation and improvement of the eco-systems), economy (customer-oriented waterway management and improvement of the fairway channel) and safety (flood protection), it was presented integrative approach of ViaDonau in respect to environment and water protection.

Mr. Dusan Voleský (Slovakian Water construction state enterprise) presented the **restoration and Upgrade of Gabčíkovo locks in Slovakia**, the project that was about to be finished in December of 2020 as a strategic objective of the project Action No. 2015-SK-TM-0151-W, in order to increase the efficiency, reliability and thus the competitiveness of the Danube inland water route, as a part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

The project is cofinanced by the EU and the Prefeasibility study was elaborated within the project FAIRway Danube together with Cost-benefit analysis and other documents that set the basis for the application for the II. Call of the CEF Transport Programme. Public procurement for construction works was published in May of 2017.

Mr. Voleský also presented DaReM project – Danube Rehabilitation Measures which would last from Feb. 2017 to Dec.2020. The project will deal with evaluation of current status of sediment conditions in Hrušov reservoir after the flood flows along with the proposal for the rehabilitation of fairway parameters and the project of rehabilitation dredging. The assessment concerned has to be a part of the Final design which will be developed in line with the Habitats Directive and EIA, as well as Article 4.7. of the WFD. Excavated material will be elaborated in a special study, while the whole process will be followed by the interdisciplinary group for public consultations

Mr. Tomislav Štrus (Croatian Agency for Inland Waterways, Vukovar) presented activities on the improvement of the most critical section on the Sava River „Jaruge- Novi Grad” - Preparation of EIA Study and Design Documentation for the Sava River sections from rkm 329 to 315 and from rkm 312+200 to 300.

It is a CEF funded project, with a budget of 650.000,00 EUR that will commence in January 2018 and finish in December 2020. It will contribute to the implementation of the "Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan of the Danube and its navigable tributaries" endorsed by competent ministers in December 2014.

Project preparation will be followed by proper stakeholder involvement in order to ensure integrated approach with the implementation of appropriate compensatory measures, along with public consultations in line with the EU, national legislation and the ISRBC guidelines on integrated planning.

Mr. Zdenko Tadić (Hidroing, Croatia) gave a presentation on **Monitoring of morphological changes and proposal of technical solution for insurance of navigation on the confluence of the Drava River with the Danube River**.

The task of this project was to define variant solution for the safe navigation with valorisation on 2D hydrodynamic model including elaboration of the flow and sediment transport.

There were some specific issues that had to be taken into account, especially the fact that the left bank of the Drava River was a border of the Kopacki Rit nature reserve, where no engineering works were allowed and the significant sedimentation in the Danube channel directly upstream of the confluence.

Variant solutions considered different approaches to the problems such as doing nothing, periodic dredging, left bank protection structure, chevron groin or incline groin at the confluence. The analysis of water regime and sedimentation for proposed variant solutions has shown that the greatest influence on the fairway has variants of „left bank protection structure“ and the variant „Chevron groyn“ and „incline groyn“ as well as a combination of these solutions.

Based on the analyses presented, further detailed monitoring and analysis of morphological changes as well as potential co-operation with neighbouring countries are proposed in order to find permanent solution for this problem.

Mr. Vladimir Seničić (PLOVPUT, Serbia) gave the presentation on **Integrated planning towards sustainable results - Harmonized application of Joint Statement principles in the Republic of Serbia** with a brief overview of current state of navigability and current and future IWT projects.

Taking the current state of navigability into account, he stressed that there were 24 critical sections on the Danube and 5 critical sectors on the Sava. To that regard it was signed the contract in June 2017 for the execution of river training works at 6 critical sectors along the Serbian stretch of the Danube (Susek, Futog, Arankina Ada, Cortanovci, Beska, Preliv). Those works will consist of: dredging and the construction of 1 detached groyne, 3 bottom sills and 3 chevrons, with a construction period of 3 years and it will be in line with Joint Statement guiding principles.

Another major projects on the Serbian stretch of the Danube are **Rehabilitation of the Iron Gate I navigational lock** after 47 years without significant maintenance and **Danube navigation monitoring and reaction system** with installation of AIS transponders on buoys and development of custom software tools for the creation of the interactive network of real and virtual AtoNs integrated into existing RIS system.

As to the activities on the Sava River, there will be **Dredging works on critical sector “Kamicak” from rkm 87 to rkm 83** for the improvement of navigation conditions on Sava River during the low water periods, which are expected to be finished in September 2017.

Mr. Romeo Soare and **Ms. Mihaela Irimia** (River Administration of The Lower Danube, Romania - AFDJ Galati) presented the basics of the project **FAST DANUBE** for the improvement of navigation conditions at the Romanian-Bulgarian common sector of the Danube and complementary studies. Preparatory work for the project started in 2007, draft Feasibility Study with EIA was completed in November 2011, while the “optimized alternative” was selected in 2011. In 2017 AFDJ Galati and Halcrow Romania signed the contract for **Technical Assistance for Revising and Complementing the Feasibility Study** which should be finalized in March 2019.

Project activities include: hydrological, hydrodynamic and bathymetry surveys, sediment surveys, topography – LiDAR scanning, ground level and geotechnical drilling. Following the initial activities, 1D, 2D and sediment transport models will be developed, along with EIA and AA, navigation simulation modelling and the preparation of Feasibility Study.

All activities will be in line with publicity obligations, i.e. compliant with the requirements of the Publicity guidelines & logos (CONNECTING EUROPE FACILITY), including NATURA 2000 Forum, as well as accompanying working groups and workshops.

They also presented general information on the **SWIM PROJECT** (SMART Waterway Integrated

Management). It will be executed over the period July 01, 2016 –December 31, 2020.

One of the project targets deals with the issues of sedimentation near the **Calafat bridge** which causes the prevention of navigation through two bridge openings as were initially designed for, thus involving measures by imposing restrictions to navigation and installing multiple navigation equipment to monitor the sector.

Other topics of the project deal with **Bechet stretch** from rkm 678 and rkm 674, which distinguishes with unfavourable hydrological situation with fairway dimensions below recommended values since morphological changes in the sector reduced the width of the fairway from 220m to 90m, as well as **Corabia port access** characterized by deposition of silt in the upstream area, which led to the closure of the port access for cca. 120 days a year.

So, the pilot actions will focus on restoration of a good navigation status in most critical sections on common Romanian-Bulgarian sector, with necessary capital dredging works at above mentioned three critical points.

Ms. Catalina Dumbrava and **Carmen Andrei** on behalf of AFDJ Galati, Romania presented **Improvement of the navigation conditions on the Danube between Calarasi and Braila.**

A brief project history was provided, including the latest developments with regard to the alternatives study (EGIS Consortium) financed by DG REGIO to find a solution at the Bala bifurcation which together with the works already executed to ensure an increase up to 1.2 m on old Danube, because due to the NGOs concerns on the sturgeons' migration, the construction of the bottom sill on Bala was stopped at half of the initially designed level. As a result of the project 3D modelling of two alternative solutions, whereas the Alternative A - a renatured channel with an increased bifurcation angle - was pointed out to offer the most potential and Romania authorities outlined the next steps (full feasibility study, environmental impact assessment, cost-benefit analysis). The second part of presentation was focusing on the integrated monitoring program results, especially on the sturgeon's migration over the bottom sill on Bala. In the presentation held by the Romanians it was concluded, as a result of the monitoring program, that 23 sturgeons were monitored migrating upstream on the Bala branch before, during and after the construction of the bottom sill between 2011 and 2016. No sturgeon has returned from upstream migration because of failing to pass the bottom sill on Bala branch. Environmental monitoring contract will continue up to April 2019.

Since the representative of Bulgaria was not able to attend the Joint Statement Meeting, **Mr. Željko Milković** from ISRBC informed the attendees that presentation on **Current and future projects to improve the navigational conditions in the common BG-RO section of the Danube** implemented by Executive Agency for Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River, Bulgaria would be found on the ISRBC web site along with all other presentations from the meeting.

- **Panel discussion – Ongoing inland waterways infrastructure projects and sustainable and efficient transport on the Danube – viewpoints from an industry association and environment NGO community**

Mr. Robert Rafael from Pro Danube International presented **Introduction to the panel discussion-Green Deal for Danube River Transport** with its rationale and the concept, as well as the basics of benefits and implementation of Green Deal, such as: support to key policy objectives in transport and environment, regional development, with special focus on the greening of the waterborne transport system. Currently this is being rolled out by the DANTE and DAPHNE projects in the Danube Transnational Programme and a third proposal (GRENDEL) was submitted

in the field of fleet modernisation as well. He also mentioned other projects w.r.t. greening the IWT fleet, such as the LNG Masterplan and the PROMINENT projects as good examples with industry involvement.

He also stressed that Green Deal is the private sector's active contribution for ecologically and environmentally sustainable waterborne transport on the Danube.

Mr. Andreas Beckmann from **WWF** expressed the support to the overall process of the Joint Statement and stressed that the progress in its implementation is evident, what is obvious from some of the project presentations. He also expressed support to the development of navigation in the Danube Region but only if the main principles of the Joint Statement were implemented, especially:

- establishment of the joint team of experts with all relevant stakeholders included,
- case by case approach
- importance of the principle “working with nature”
- all measures must be implemented in adaptive form
- potentials for river restoration measures must be exploited

River bed incision was underlined as one of the ecological problems on Danube and it must be taken into account during the infrastructure planning process and as much as possible prevented.

In spite of progress in Joint Statement implementation there are still some problems, especially in ToR for navigation development projects where, in his opinion, the Joint Statement principles are still insufficiently included.

Furthermore Mr. Beckmann referred to some of the most important ongoing projects in Danube Region countries:

- **Germany (Starubing-Vilshofen sector)** – there are genuine efforts to find the real sustainable solutions in the framework of this project and the WWF are cautiously optimistic,
- **Austria** – projects in Austria represent a very successful story and good practice examples,
- **Slovakia** – the upgrade of Gapčikovo locks should take into account possibilities for the mitigation measures (fish passages if possible). In DaReM project crossborder cooperation with Hungary is necessary,
- **Hungary** – according to WWF, the upgrade of the project documentation for the project concerned is necessary if it is intended to start with implementation,
- **Croatia** – in the Sava Rehabilitation project (Novi Grad) implementation of the Joint Statement principles is of great importance for the success of the project,
- **Serbia** – rehabilitation of critical sectors on Danube exemplify a very successful story and good practice example. In rehabilitation of the Iron Gate I navigational lock should be taken into account possibilities for the mitigation measures (fish passages if possible),
- **Romania** – in FAST DANUBE project there is stakeholder involvement, but more information for the NGO sector is needed. Calarasi-Braila project is still a problem and duration of the project is too long and very demanding for all participants. Present solutions are not good neither for the navigation nor environment protection. There is a serious problem with trust on data presented by the Romanian authorities and WWF are seriously thinking to pull out from this process. They are of the opinion, that at this point of the project development, the involvement of some independent experts (in which all stakeholders can trust) is necessary.

In further discussion:

Mr. Milković from ISRBC emphasized the severe financial damages suffered by the shipping companies because of the poor fairway conditions caused by delays in the implementation of the

projects for the rehabilitation of the Danube and Sava fairway, which was also confirmed with some newest data by **Mr. Rafael** from Pro Danube International.

Mr. Mair expressed his satisfaction with the course of this meeting which clearly showed that the Joint Statement entered the new phase where we were discussing the real sustainable technical solutions for the improvement of navigation and not the question whether the navigation conditions must be improved or environment protection conditions must be respected.

Ms. Dumbrava as a direct response to the introduction of the WWF informed the participants that the Romanian authority responsible for the Calarasi-Braila project provided all necessary data to involved NGOs on the authority web-site. At NGOs request also the raw data was provided but they couldn't open the raw data because they didn't have the equipment software. Also at the NGOs request on 28th November 2016, at the Romanian Ministry of European Funds premises it was agreed that NGOs experts analyse the raw data at the INCDPM premises because of their problem with the software. The DG REGIO representatives also participated to the meeting. But afterwards they stated that they haven't founding an expert and at the third project workshop on 17th May 2017, WWF representatives left the meeting before the presentation of INCDPM containing the results on sturgeon's migration. No documented/technical opinion was formulated on the alternative solutions presented which determined the Romanian authorities to start the dialogs with JASPERS and EC to support the process of hiring an independent pool of experts in order to assess the alternatives and the sturgeons' migration results and creating trust on both sides. .

Ms. Irena Brnada from REC Croatia expressed the support to the Joint Statement process and REC commitment to the further participation. She also proposed the establishment of the database for the projects and forum for the exchange of the information on the good practises in the rehabilitation of the navigation.

Day 2 (September 14, 2017)

Good Navigation Status - Improvement of the navigation conditions respecting environmental issues. The elements of Good Navigation Status to be achieved by 2030 for the various waterways in Europe

(Moderator Mr. Petar Margić)

• Presentation of the newest results of the Study on Good Navigation Status

Mr. Gert-Jan Muilerman from ViaDonau presented **Study on Good Navigation Status (GNS)**, in which he referred to the Joint Statement in a nutshell as well, particularly to the rivers maintained in line with Joint Statement in order to preserve GNS with wide socio-economic and environmental sustainability of waterway management.

As to GNS scope and components, he stressed that no new targets will be set by the study, while proposals were oriented toward existing standards and agreements. Study outcomes will be published at the end of 2017 with the following set of deliverables: Concept for GNS; Network assessment; Roadmaps for critical sections on TEN-T network; Good practice guidelines for implementation.

Implementation process presumes the achievement of GNS by 2030, including significant role for the involvement of users and wide range of stakeholders. GNS implementation process is envisaged to be performed in steps:

- Step 0: Review and specification of targets
- Step 1: Monitoring (data collection + Data analyses / network assessment)
- Step 2: Plan measures

- Step 3: Agreement
- Step 4: Execution
- Step 6: Evaluation

Development of technical advisory services for the implementation of the Danube part of the TEN-T Rhine Danube Corridor

(Moderator Mr. Petar Margić)

- **Presentation of the newest results of the METEET on integrated planning of IWT projects**

Désirée Oen informed about the state of play for the new initiative to establish a METEET. The external experts are selected and a pilot training workshop will be organised on 28-29 September 2017 in Vukovar (HR). The need of sufficient participation of relevant actors from HR institutions was pointed out.

- **New web portal on the DC web site**

Mr. Trifunovic (DC) presented new web portal on the DC web site **Joint Statement process group** that was set up to discuss Joint Statement process related issues, in order to improve communication process for all involved Joint Statement stakeholders.

That portal consists of 3 pillars (Home, Forum, Members), out of which the most important is Forum where all documents related to Joint Statement process can be found. It should serve as a step forward in the whole Joint Statement process and the first step for some other activities discussed at this meeting.

Future plans and perspectives for enhancing navigation and environmental protection in the Danube and its navigable tributaries

(Moderator Mr. Dragan Zeljko)

- **EUSDR related developments - The Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan for the Danube and its navigable tributaries**

Mr. Muilerman (ViaDonau) and **Ms Kristina Cuc** (Ministry of Transport, Romania) gave a joint presentation on **EUSDR related developments - The Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan for the Danube and its navigable tributaries** with the targets of PA1a (Increase the cargo transport on the river by 20% by 2020) with PA1a Policy-Projects connection (Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan).

EUSDR PA1a developed first version of the National Action Plans based on the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan as asked for in the Ministerial Conclusions from Dec 2014 with status and outlook on: critical sections, hydrological conditions, rehabilitation and maintenance activities, environmental impacts, and financial needs, while the updates will be performed twice a year.

National Action Plans should particularly focus on measures related to fairway realignment, signalisation, surveys and targeted dredging for minimal physical interventions.

They also briefly addressed ongoing waterway infrastructure projects on the Danube and its tributaries

Discussion on key lessons learned and future steps in support of the implementation of the Joint Statement

(Moderator Mr. Dragan Zeljko)

Ms Oen expressed her satisfaction with what was presented at the meeting, finding it very useful, as well as seeing that it followed the idea that we were on the right path working together, trying to combine both transport and environment sectors. So, she was of the opinion that it was a good way to go forward and was very happy to see that we were able to freely discuss the all aspects of projects and work together.

Taking the process related issues into account, **Mr. Mair** expressed his feeling that what was important came to results. He thought that he observed little shift, and that we could rethink which direction we wanted to go and that we were entering now technical ground. He also liked to reference the statements from the states` presentations and technical discussions regarding the projects and found the exchange of experience and different solutions presented very useful. It is important to learn from each other and then we will come to the right solutions.

Mr. Margic confirmed that we were on the right way and gave one proposal from the position of the Secretariat of the DC, to organize a yearly workshop as addition to the Joint statement follow up meetings and the first one is proposed for spring of 2018. He also mentioned the initiative received from Nanjing Hydraulic Research Institute form China to visit the DC in November in order to exchange navigation data of the Danube and Yangtze and that he would inform Joint Statement process participant accordingly. The same institute showed the great interest to cooperate with the DC and maybe it will be also the opportunity to include the other river commission in the cooperation depending on the wishes of the partner from China.

Mr. Zavadsky said that what was important for him referring to the couple of points from the meeting was to see the future and wanted to encourage the whole community from both sectors. He was happy seeing how Joint Statement process served for the exchange of the information on projects and how serious we were about issues and roadmaps. So, he found the process quite helpful and that we were on the right track. Fortunately we were able to make a progress in certain areas such as GNS and METEET.

Mr. Zeljko expressed the satisfaction, particularly how the progress of the Joint Statement progress became visible and its importance for the integrated management and cooperation. He also addressed the rehabilitation of the bottlenecks on the Sava River waterway and the fact that the ISRBC had already established the multidisciplinary Steering Committee for the monitoring and coordination of implementation of the rehabilitation of the Sava River waterway. He emphasized the new Joint Statement Forum on the web site of the DC as a good first step toward exchange of the information in the framework of the Joint Statement process. He added that it might be a good idea to collect also the information on the projects through the newly-established DC web portal.

Mr. Rafael expressed the satisfaction with the proceedings and results of this meeting and willingness of the Pro Danube International to support the Joint Statement process in the future.

Mr. Muilerman informed participants that in the next year, in the framework of the Danube Stream Project, the multidisciplinary seminar with participation of the waterway managers and environmental sector representatives would be organized and proposed to join the seminar with the next Joint Statement meeting.

Mr. Beckmann said that in spite some of his critical comments from yesterday, the progress was

obvious, especially in shifting focus of discussions from general issues to specific technical solutions for the projects. He sees this process as a very good example for the other river basins, not only in Europe, but in the whole world and taking this into account he is of the opinion that it will be important to promote the process in more active way. As a way forward, the METEET activities should be continued and during the project presentation it will be necessary to speak less about the pure description of the project basic facts but more about lessons learned on the problems which we experienced in projects development.

All participants agreed on following ideas and issues raised during the discussions:

- Shift of focus in the future of the Joint Statement process more on the exchange of technical questions related to measures to improve the navigation conditions and their potential impacts on the environment; potential future contribution of METEET in this regard;
- Establishment of a platform for the exchange on technical and project-related issues, e.g. by extending the existing DC web portal;
- Need to find a well-coordinated and aligned approach for Good Ecological Status (WFD) and Good Navigation Status (TEN-T);
- Potential organisation of Joint Statement workshops twice a year which would need to be further elaborated (idea raised by the DC – potential workshop in March/April 2018 in Budapest);
- Ensuring future participation from all relevant Danube countries (Germany and Bulgaria were missing) and from the Environmental Ministries;
- Next Joint Statement meeting to be organised by the ICPDR in 2018 in Vienna, potentially back-to-back with a workshop in the frame of the Danube STREAM Project and with Danube Parks connected.

In the end, Mr. Zeljko informed that the draft report of the meeting would be distributed in a due time and all participants would have the opportunity to provide their comments.

All statements and presentations from the meeting will be available on the web site of the ISRBC and at the Joint Statement Forum on the web site of the DC.

Finally, the group was informed that the next Joint Statement will be organised by the ICPDR in autumn 2018 in Vienna (date to be fixed).

Annexes:

- Annex 1: List of participants

Annex 1: List of participants

No.	Name	Organization/Company	E-mail
1.	Andrei Carmen	Lower Danube River Administration, Romania	Andrei.carmen@afdj.ro
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