

# STRENGTHENING *UNIVERSITY* COOPERATION *OSIJEK – PÉCS*

## *SUNICOP*

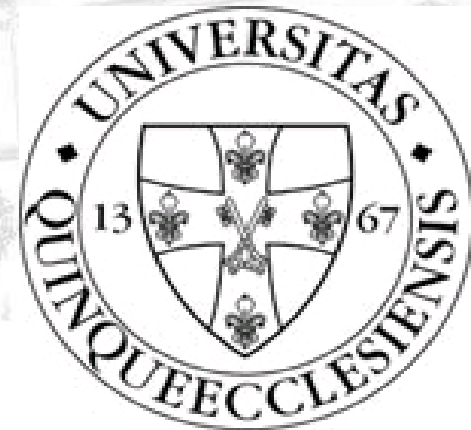


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**Hungary-Croatia**

IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme





**Danube Strategy and  
Cross- Border Region  
Hungary – Croatia:  
Protecting the Environment  
and Building Prosperity  
in the Danube Region**

Zsuzsanna Horváth – Branislav Malagurski

**CONTEMPORARY LEGAL CHALLENGES:**

**EU – HUNGARY – CROATIA**

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# EU Strategy for the Danube Region



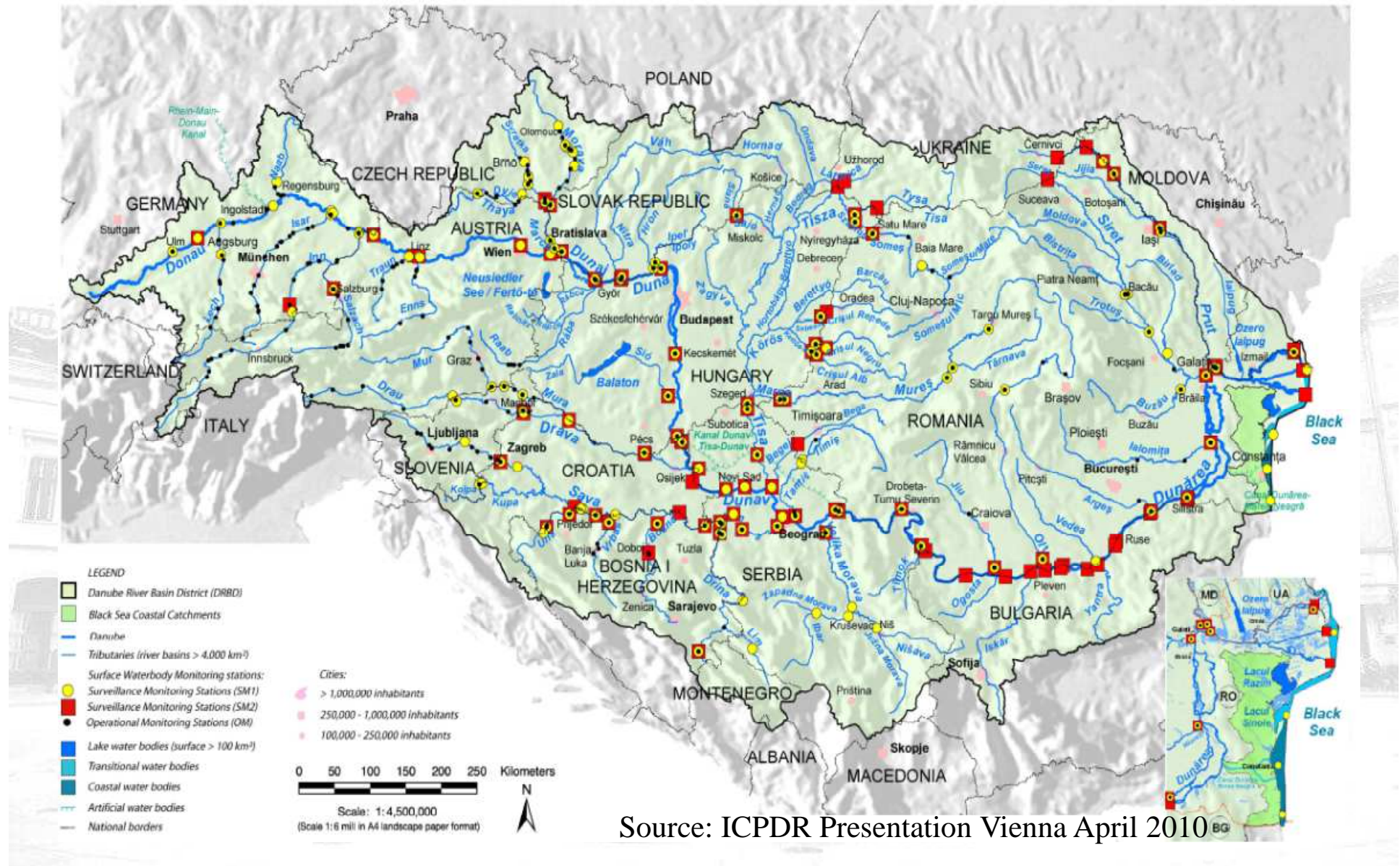
Source: [interact-eu.net](http://interact-eu.net) Danube Region Strategy website

# Territorial coverage of the Danube region for the Danube region strategy



Source: The EU Danube Strategy Website

# The Danube and its tributaries



## The importance of the Danube Region:

- With the accession of Central Eastern EU Countries the strategic importance of the Danube Region has been increased
- The Danube flows through 10 countries, additional 4 belong to the Danube Region, 8 are EU Members, 6 non-Members (1 Candidate, 1 potential Candidate Country)
- The Black Sea became a coastal area of the EU
- The Danube River Basin is cca. 800.000 km<sup>2</sup>, the population is cca. 100 million
- It supports the supply of drinking water, it is used by agriculture, industry, fisheries, tourism, recreation, used for power generation, transport - navigation, and final destination of waste disposal
- This intensive use caused environmental degradation; strengthened action is needed via closer and more effective cooperation

# Development of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

## **Milestones:**

- 19 June 2009: The European Council invites the European Commission to develop a strategy for the Danube area
- July 2009-December 2010: Preparation of the EUSDR by the EU Commission, consultation with participating countries and public consultations
- 8 December 2010: EU Commission adopts the Communication and the Action Plan for the EUSDR
- 3 February 2011: Commissioner Hahn designates the Priority Area Coordinators.
- 13 April 2011: Adoption of the Council Conclusions by the EU Council for General Affairs.
- 24 June 2011: Official endorsement of the EUSDR by the European Council and launch of the implementation phase.

# Concept of the Macro-Regional Strategy

- There is no standard definition yet
- There are experiences from the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region where 9 states (8 are EU Members) sharing common resources cooperates to solve common economic, environmental and social problems
- Commission: „the macro-region is an area including territory from a number of different countries or regions associated with one or more common features or challenges”
- Key words: common geographic, economic, cultural and other features and challenges that are identifiable
- It is an area covering a number of administrative regions with sufficient issues in common to justify a single strategic approach

# Concept of the Macro-Regional Strategy

- The macro-regional strategy is an integrated multi-sectoral strategy where the territorial cohesion approach is applied, and where the interventions are built around the needs of functional regions rather than according to pre-determined financial or administrative criteria (from the Baltic Sea Strategy)
- A new innovative policy instrument, to achieve common EU objectives and more effective coordination of territorial and sectoral policies
- It adds value to interventions at various levels, significantly strengthens the functioning of the macro region and cohesion. Better results can be achieved than through individual actions

# Characteristics of the EU Danube Strategy

- It involves not only EU Member States but Third Countries as well (Candidate and potential Candidate Countries too)
- It applies an integrated approach: priority areas have to be considered together with other policy fields: e.g. environmental protection priorities relate to transport, energy, and other economic issues as well as to trade and tourism
- The EUSDR supports the implementation of EU policies and legislation. It contributes to the Europe 2020 strategy (for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth) and to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy
- Commission:” By 2020 all citizens of the Region should enjoy better prospects of higher education, employment and prosperity in their own home area.” (clean and preserved environment, good living standards, security)

# Characteristics of the EU Danube Strategy

## **3 main conditions – 3 „NO”s**

- It does not provide for any new funds (better and more efficient use of existing funds (e.g. Structural Funds) is required)
- It does not require any new legislation (the EU adopts legislation for the 27 MSs, not for the macro-region alone, and not for Non-Member States)
- It does not create additional institutions, structures (the implementation is done through existing bodies acting in a complementary character)

# Implementation of the EU Danube Strategy

## Institutional Governance

1. **European Council:** decides on main policy orientations
2. **European Commission:**
  - Responsible for the coordination, and facilitates the implementation process
  - Reports on achievements and progress of the Strategy
  - Organizes annual forums (discussions, revision) of the Strategy
3. **High level group for the Danube Region**
  - Discusses and decides e.g. on revision of the action plan, on Strategy targets (all Member States and others are represented)
4. **National Contact Points**
  - Coordinate national administrations
  - Provide advice and especially information

# Main Pillars of the EU Danube Strategy

1. **Connecting the Danube Region** (to improve mobility, multimodality through inland waterways, road, rail, etc.; to encourage more sustainable energy use; to promote culture and tourism)
2. **Protecting the environment** (to restore and maintain water quality, to manage environmental risks, to preserve biodiversity, landscapes, the quality of air and soils)
3. **Building prosperity in the Danube Region** (to develop the knowledge society, research, education, information technologies; to support the competitiveness of enterprises; to invest in people and skills)
4. **Strengthening the Danube Region** (to set up institutional capacity for cooperation; to promote security, to tackle organised crime)

## Environmental Priorities of the Danube Strategy

- **To restore and maintain the quality of waters:** good water quality for the Danube tributaries, lakes and groundwater, sustainable water management and reducing pollution from organic, nutrient and hazardous substances is required, through the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and the joint River Basin Management Plan adopted jointly by all Danube States in 2009
- **To manage environmental risks:** disasters such as floods, droughts and industrial accidents should be prevented – implementation of relevant EU directives, e.g. on floods, mining, waste, environmental liability, etc. is required
- **To preserve biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils** (EU targets: to halt the biodiversity loss by 2020, to reach the Natura 2000 project objectives, to recover of the Black Sea ecosystems)

# Action Plan to the EUSDR

## environmental actions and projects

- The Action Plan lists several concrete actions to each priority field, and examples of projects within these actions
- Examples for Actions: to implement fully the Danube River Basin Management Plan; to promote alternative collection and treatment of waste to reduce polluting discharges into rivers; to develop cooperation between authorities responsible for agriculture and environment to prevent agricultural pollution.
- Examples for proposed projects: to complete and adopt Danube Tributaries' River Basin Management Plans, and to complete and adopt a Management Plan for the Danube Delta; to establish fully the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere reserve; to identify and protect old growth forests of the Danube Basin; to promote the conservation of the genetic pool and gene bank cooperation along the Danube, etc.

# Hungarian environmental priorities in the EUSDR

- The EUSDR was completed under the Hungarian EU Presidency (2011)
- Hungary is the sole country along the Danube with its total territory belonging to the Danube catchment area. It has one of the largest stocks of sub-surface fresh water in the Carpathian Basin. Hungarian environmental priorities are, e.g.:
  - moderating the social, economic and environmental consequences of climate-change;
  - coordinated water management: a ‘responsible water governance’ to reconcile contradictory interests to preserve strategic water reserves, to satisfy demand for water (drinking, industrial, transport, regional, etc.), to maintain satisfactory water quality, ensuring the navigability of the Danube
  - ensuring the security of energy supply, support to new European Transmission Systems (unified gas network), the use of renewable energy resources
- Hungary is the coordinator of 3 priority fields: to encourage more sustainable energy (with Czech Republic); to restore and maintain the quality of waters (with Slovakia); and to manage environmental risks (with Romania)

# Croatian environmental priorities in the EUSDR

- In the preparatory phase, in its „Non-paper” Croatia fully supported the integrated European transnational approach, its involvement into the EUSDR is an added value in its accession to the European Union
- Due to its geographical position Croatia can be a bridge between the Danube and the Adriatic (Mediterranean) areas. Its priorities are:
  - Revitalisation of Drava-Sava waterway
  - Risk prevention (flood)
  - Development of energy supplies, renewable energy resources
  - Improvement of ecological network, protection of nature, wetland areas, biological diversity (Mura-Drava Regional Park), Natura 2000 sites
  - Integrated water management
  - interconnection of tourism and environmental protection
  - mitigate the effects of climate change (cooperation)
  - Integration of environmental requirements into agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism
- Croatia is a coordinator for 2 priority areas: to preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils (with Germany - Bavaria), and to support the competitiveness of enterprises (with Germany - Baden-Württemberg)

Priority Area	Countries in charge of coordination
P1   Mobility and intermodality	<u>Inland waterways:</u> Austria, Romania <u>Rail, road and air:</u> Slovenia, Serbia
P2   More sustainable energy	Hungary, Czech Republic
P3   Culture and tourism, people to people	Bulgaria, Romania
P4   Water Quality	Hungary, Slovakia
P5   Environmental risks	Hungary, Romania
P6   Biodiversity, landscapes, quality of air and soils	Germany (Bavaria), Croatia
P7   Knowledge society (research, education and ICT)	Slovakia, Serbia
P8   Competitiveness of enterprises	Germany (Baden-Württemberg), Croatia
P9   People and skills	Austria, Moldova
P10   Institutional capacity and cooperation	Austria (Vienna), Slovenia
P11   Security and organised crime	Germany, Bulgaria

Thank you very much for your  
attention!

