

International Roundtable
on
**“Stakeholder / Public Participation for the
Integrated Management of Shared Water Resources –
The Case of Nestos / Mesta River Basin”**

Princess Hotel, Sofia, Bulgaria, 15-16 April 2008

Public Participation Issues in the Danube River
Basin and the experience of Danube
Environmental Forum (DEF)

by Milena Dimitrova
DEF NFP - Bulgaria; DEF Board Member
Danube Environmental Forum – DEF

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Overview

- The Danube River Basin, the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)
- Public Participation Practice in framework of the ICPDR
- The Danube Environmental Forum (DEF)
- Experience of DEF about Public Participation

The Danube River Basin

- The Danube River Basin is Europe's second largest river basin, with a total area of 801,463 km².
- It is the world's most international river basin as it includes the territories of 19 countries. The Danube River Basin is home to 81 million people with a wide range of cultures, languages and historical backgrounds.
- The ecosystems of the Danube River Basin are highly valuable in environmental, economic, historical and social terms, but they are subject to increasing pressure and serious pollution from agriculture, industry and cities.

The Danube River Basin

- The increasing human impacts - pressure and serious pollution from agriculture, industry and municipalities affect the water supply for communities, irrigation, hydropower generation and industry, as well as opportunities for transportation, tourism and fishing.
- The Danube River and many of its tributaries form the spawning grounds for many fish, but they receive variously treated wastewater from many sources, which ultimately ends up in the Black Sea, affecting a large area of its waters. In this way the River Danube is the single most important contributor to nutrient pollution in the Black Sea.

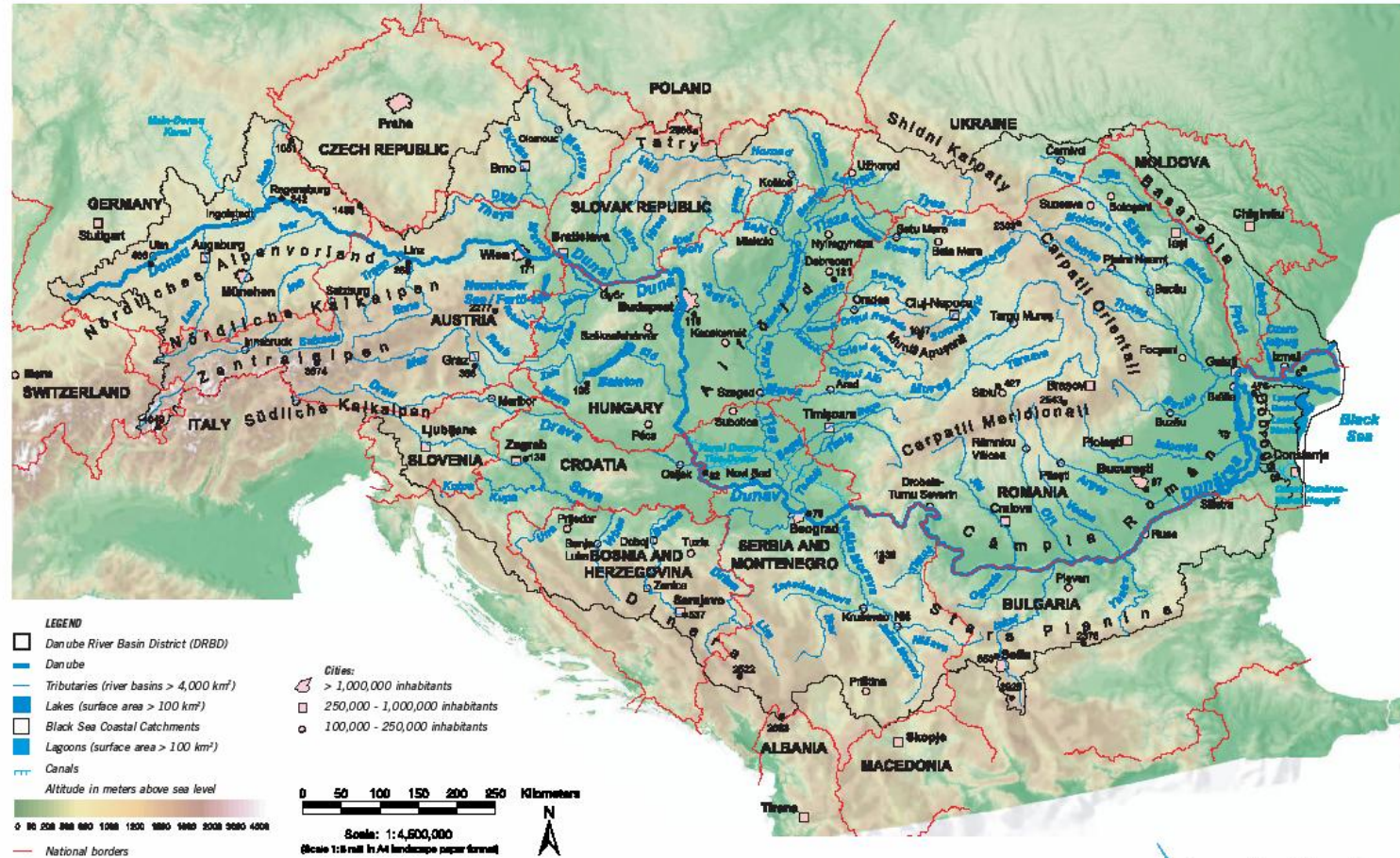
The Danube River Basin

- The Danube River Basin can be divided into three sub-regions: the upper basin, the middle basin, and the lower basin (including the Danube Delta).
- The Upper Basin extends from the source of the Danube in Germany to Bratislava in Slovakia.
- The Middle Basin is the largest of the three sub-regions, extending from Bratislava to the dams of the Iron Gate Gorge on the border between Serbia and Romania.
- The lowlands, plateaus and mountains of Romania and Bulgaria form the Lower Basin of the River Danube.
- Finally, the river divides into three main branches, forming the Danube Delta, which covers an area of about 6,750 km².

The Danube River Basin

Danube River Basin District: Relief and Topography

MAP 2



The digital elevation model (DEM) is based on the global GTOPO30 data with a horizontal grid spacing of approximately one kilometer.

Product of ICPDR, Vienna

This product includes geographical data licensed from European National Mapping Agencies, EuroGlobalMap v1.0 (EuroGeographics) was used as the basic topographic layer for DE, AT, CZ, IT, SI and HR. The data for the other countries is based on VMAP Level 0 data from NIMA. The outer border of the DRBD is based on national information from DE, AT, CH, CZ, SK, SI, HR, BA, CS, BG, RO, UA and MD. For PL, AL, MK and IT the data of the European Commission (Joint Research Centre) was used.

Prepared by FLUVIUS, Vienna, June 2009; The production of this map was financially supported by Danube River Program



The Danube River Basin

- The Danube is 2,780 km long, and up to 1.5 km wide, with depths of 8 meters in places.
- The Danube is the second largest river in Europe - after the Volga.
- More information about the Danube River Basin and the Management and Public involvement activities is available on the web site:

<http://www.icpdr.org>

The Danube River Protection Convention

- The Danube River Protection Convention forms the **overall legal instrument** for co-operation on transboundary water management in the Danube River Basin. The Convention was signed on June 29 1994 in Sofia (Bulgaria) and came into force in 1998.
- It aims to ensure that surface waters and groundwater within the Danube River Basin are **managed and used sustainably and equitably**.
- The signatories to the DRPC have agreed to **co-operate on fundamental water management** issues by taking *"all appropriate legal, administrative and technical measures to at least maintain and where possible improve the current water quality and environmental conditions of the Danube river and of the waters in its catchment area, and to prevent and reduce as far as possible adverse impacts and changes occurring or likely to be caused."*

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)

- The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is a transnational body, which has been established to implement the [Danube River Protection Convention](#). The ICPDR is formally comprised by the Delegations of all [Contracting Parties](#) to the Danube River Protection Convention, but has also established a framework for other organisations to join.
- Since its creation in 1998 the ICPDR has effectively promoted policy agreements and the setting of joint priorities and strategies for improving the state of the Danube and its tributaries.
- This includes improving the tools used to manage environmental issues in the Danube basin, such as
 - the [Accident Emergency Warning System](#),
 - the [Trans-National Monitoring Network](#) for water quality, and
 - the information system for the Danube (Danubis).

The different bodies of the ICPDR

- Ordinary Meeting Group: taking the political decisions;
- Standing Working Group: providing political guidance;
- Technical Expert Groups: preparing the technical background documents:
 - Expert Group on River Basin Management;
 - Pressures and Measures Expert Group;
 - Monitoring and Assessment Expert Group;
 - Expert Group on Flood Protection;
 - Information Management and GIS Expert Group;
 - Public Participation Expert Group;
 - Strategic Expert Group;
 - Danube-Black Sea Joint Technical Working Group.
- The work of the ICPDR is supported by a Secretariat located in Vienna, Austria.

Public Participation Practice in framework of the ICPDR

- All technical work within the ICPDR is carried out by the Expert Groups. These Expert Groups are essential to the operation of the ICPDR, and rely upon the inputs and contributions of national experts from the Contracting Parties and from the Observers.
- Environmental protection is a „community responsibility“ and the active involvement of the public is a core principle in sustainable water management. This basic fact was already recognised when the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC) was signed.
- To date, 19 organisations have taken this opportunity and have become observers to the ICPDR. These organisations include NGOs, organisations representing private industry, and intergovernmental organisations.

Public Participation Practice in framework of the ICPDR



- **The dialogue with stakeholders is important for the success of integrated river basin management in the Danube River Basin. It is therefore of the ICPDR interest that all stakeholder groups proving a basin-wide interest are involved in the work of the ICPDR.**
- **The formal cooperation with the ICPDR grants observers the right to participate at ICPDR decision-making meetings and Expert Group meetings.**
- **This approach of involving the public has even been enlarged by the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). The ICPDR has also developed a “Danube River Basin Strategy for Public Participation in River Basin Management Planning 2003-2009” and has consequently developed “ICPDR Operational Plans”.**

Public Participation Practice in framework of the ICPDR



- Most important participatory events are:
 - The meetings and activities of the Public Participation Expert Group;
 - Regular Stakeholder Forums/Meetings;
 - Consultation process for the River Basin Management Plane;
 - Danube Day Celebration – 29 June –
<http://www.danubeday.org>
 - Publishing information for broad public and specific stakeholders groups – Danube Watch Magazine, leaflets, posters, reports, as well technical information publications;
 - Educational and young people information activities – Danube Box for Schools Package, Danube Art Master Competition;

The Danube Environmental Forum (DEF)



- DEF was established in 1999 in the Slovak Republic and now is legally based on the Memorandum of Foundation under the legislation of Hungary, since 2006.
- River Danube basin-wide platform of non-governmental, non-profit, politically independent organisations.
- One of the biggest environmental NGO networks in Europe with 85 member NGOs from 14 Danube countries.
- ***Mission Statement of DEF:***
To protect the Danube River and its tributaries, their biodiversity and resources, through enhancing co-operation among governments, non-governmental organisations, local people and all kind of stakeholders towards sustainable use of natural ecosystems.

The Danube Environmental Forum



- **DEF Members (85)** represent 14 countries from the upper, middle and lower regions of the river Danube basin. Their expertise ranges from the fields of science and research, lobbying and policy work to environmental education and capacity building.
- **DEF National Focal Points (NFPs)** are NGO representatives from each country within the Danube region and are the main contacts whose mandate is to represent DEF at the national level of their particular country. NFPs are responsible for communication and cooperation with DEF members within each country. DEF Board and DEF Secretariat coordinate their work.
- **DEF Board** is comprised of representatives of National Focal Points (one Board member per NFP). The Board is responsible for preparing strategies, programs and plans for future DEF activities and meets once a year.

The Danube Environmental Forum



- **DEF Speakers** are elected by DEF Board members. DEF has three speakers who represent the upper, central and lower regions of the Danube River. Their task is to represent DEF at international platforms.
- The **DEF Secretariat** is currently located in Baja (Hungary), hosted by BITE-Baja Youth Nature Protection Society. DEF Secretariat maintains information flow among NFPs, promoting cooperation and communication with other networks. The Secretariat is responsible for the organization of DEF meetings and training, the publication of DEF information, and the management of DEF projects. The Secretariat also participates in fundraising and provides assistance to DEF members if needed.

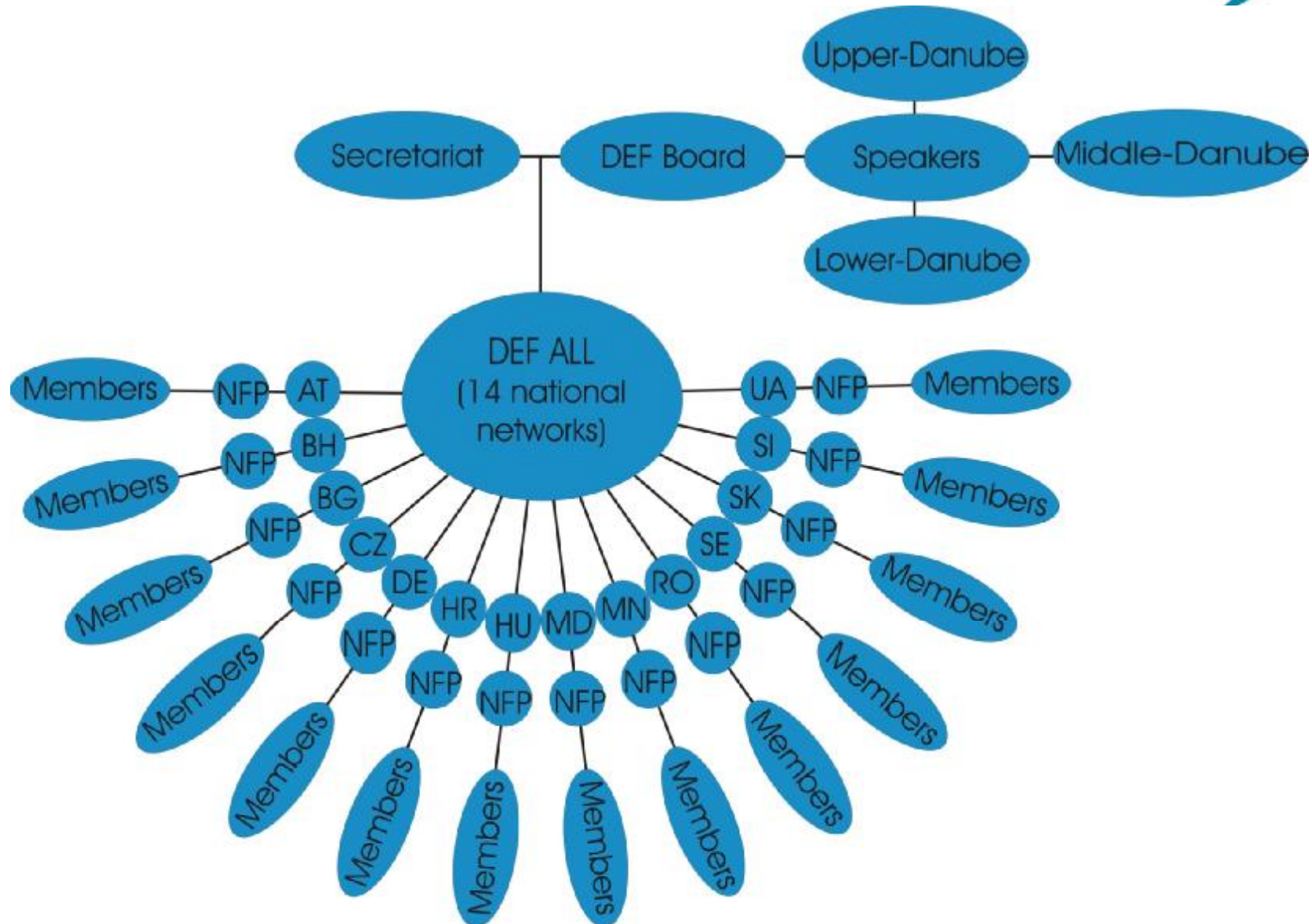
Danube Environmental Forum, DEF

H-6500 Baja, Déry stny. 13. III/4.

Tel: 0036 79 525 163

Email: def@baja.hu

The Danube Environmental Forum



Experience of DEF about Public Participation



DEF - Working Group on Public Participation

- Established with the aim of providing active support to the processes of consultation in the elaboration of the Danube River Basin Management Plan
- Some priority activities:
 - Calls on the member organizations of the network for contributions to, and support for forthcoming activities.
 - Establishing co-operation with international and national delegations of the ICPDR.
 - Planning activities related to public participation on national and river-basin levels.
 - Offering training on PP and communication for persons from DEF network.
 - Collecting information and lessons learned on PP activities from other projects in the Danube Basin and wider Europe.

Experience of DEF about Public Participation



DEF Objectives and Activities on Public Participation

- **Facilitating public participation** in the realization of the goals of the **Water Framework Directive** of the European Union (60/2000/EC) within the Danube River Basin
- **Regular contact and co-operation** with the governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental bodies active in the Danube River Basin, particularly with the environmental, nature protection and water management institutions in the countries of the area of interest, furthermore the competent Ministries and ICPDR
- **Long-term protection of the natural values** of the Danube River Basin, the ecologically sound maintenance and development of environmental status
- **Co-ordination and control of tourism** targeting the Danube River Basin, supporting real eco-tourism

Experience of DEF about Public Participation



DEF Objectives and Activities on Public Participation

- Monitoring economical development and investments targeting the Danube River Basin, their social control
- Monitoring environmental pressures on the Danube river with regard to pollution sources
- Providing expertise and support for people living and working in the Danube River Basin
- Protection of the waters of the Danube River and its tributaries, facilitating quality improvement
- Awareness-raising and education of the young
- Public awareness-raising in terms of natural values
- Saving and revitalization of folk traditions, support, introduction and revitalization of ecologically sound management forms and methods
- Protection of the landscape

Experience of DEF about Public Participation



DEF - Tools for Achievement of the Objectives

- On the field of public awareness and environmental education:
 - Publications in 14 different languages
 - Danube Day celebration and DAM organisation in all countries
 - National and local nature and water events
 - International and national public awareness campaigns
- Conservation and management of water ecosystems:
 - Seminars and workshops, Lectures
 - Scientific research
 - Small scale restoration projects
- Policy:
 - DEF International Water Policy Team
 - Working Groups (Hydromorphology, Wetland, Public Participation) and Policy meetings
 - Conferences, seminars and workshops
 - Capacity building
 - Consultation on national and local level