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## THE DANUBE REGIONAL PROJECT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

“Anyone who is a stakeholder in the Danube is also a stakeholder in the Danube project.”  
Ivan Zavadsky, Project Manager, DRP

The Danube Regional Project works closely with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, with the Governments and representatives of the 13 Danube nations (plus the EU), with organisations and institutions in the region and beyond, and with the people of the Danube Basin.



Working for the Danube and its people, the Danube Regional Project supports Danube NGOs, local projects, communications, public participation and access to environmental information.



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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## SUPPORT FOR DANUBE NGOS

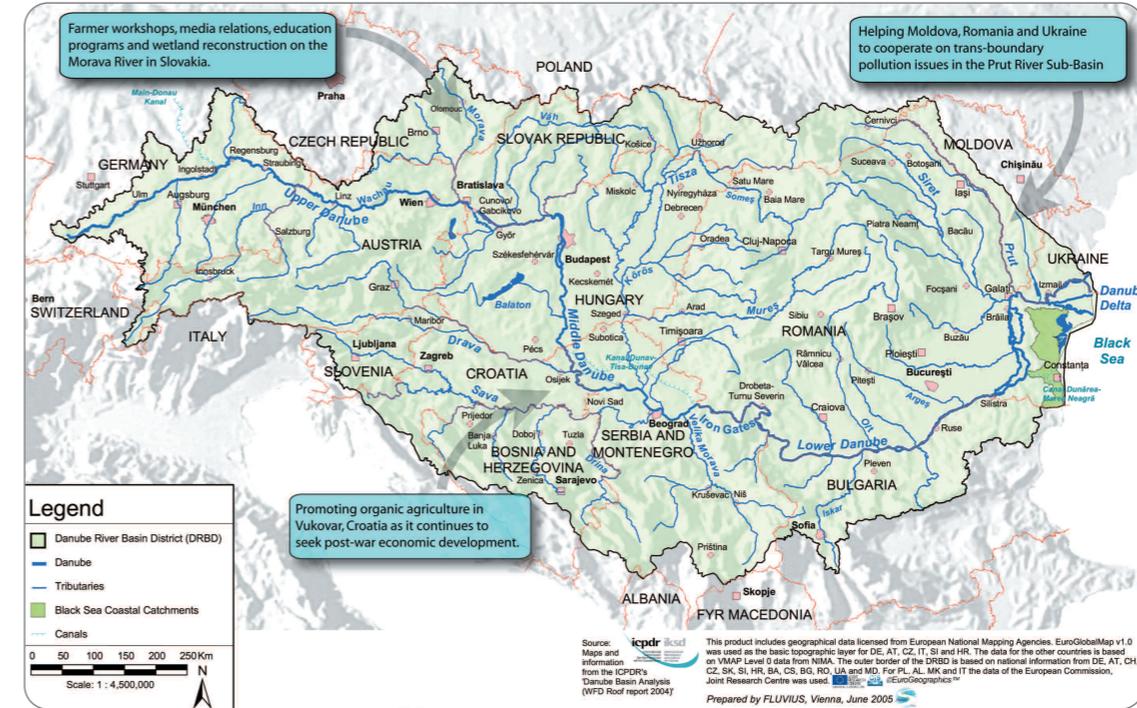
Improving the health of the Danube basin would not be possible without the efforts of the 175-member Danube NGO network, to which DRP has committed support.

Created in 1999, the Danube Environment Forum (DEF) is a Danube River Basin-wide platform of non-governmental, non-profit, politically independent environmental organisations. For the past six years, some 175 DEF member organisations from 13 different countries have been working together, following the network's mission:

"The DEF protects the Danube River and its tributaries, their biodiversity and resources, through enhancing co-operation among governments, non-governmental organisations, local people and all kinds of stakeholders geared toward the sustainable use of natural ecosystems."

The DRP has helped to strengthen the DEF's capacity and effectiveness in the following areas:

- > Building and extending the NGO network itself.
- > Communication support for products such as publications, website, posters, bulletins and media relations, and internal communications tools to improve the flow of information within the DEF community.
- > Training programmes (e.g. on Water Framework Directive, communications).
- > Support for DEF public awareness raising activities.
- > Funding for in-house resources such as staff and equipment.



EXAMPLE OF DRP GRANTS IN THE DANUBE RIVER BASIN.

## GRANTS FOR DANUBE NGOS

NGOs are supported through the DRP's 2 million USD Small Grants programme, helping to reduce local nutrient and toxic pollution reduction.

DRP financial support so far has been earmarked for five trans-boundary 'regional' projects, involving NGOs from more than one country, and 60 'national' projects. The grants program is made available to the 11 countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

Many of the projects are geared to solving nutrient and toxic pollution problems originating from agriculture (e.g. pesticides), municipalities and households (e.g. wastewater) and industry (e.g. mining waste). Solutions include direct contributions to the reduction of point and non-point sources

of pollution, improving monitoring systems, increasing public awareness, facilitating information flows and preventing accidental pollution.

Other projects aim at improving the function of wetlands and/or limiting erosion by, for example, revitalising river-banks, reforestation and the creation of artificially constructed wetlands that function as wastewater treatment areas.

The second round of grants will be launched in mid-2005. Both rounds of the Small Grants Programme are managed by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC).



## COORDINATING COMMUNICATIONS

DRP communications go beyond simply printing posters and launching a website. The Project's sophisticated strategies and approaches will ensure that Danube stakeholders are aware of relevant issues and can put their concerns into action.

To guide communications activities, the DRP developed the 'Danube River Basin Communications Strategy'. Its overall desired outcome is "to create strong public awareness of the problem of aquatic pollution, especially of nutrients and toxics, in the Danube River Basin; and, within the context of implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, to create strong public support for, and participation in, actions that lead to significant and measurable reductions in this pollution."

Communications activities under the strategy are aimed at key target audiences such as environmental NGOs, farmers, Danube communities and local authorities. Implementation is led by the DRP in partnership with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River Basin (ICPDR) and other partner organisations such as NGOs and municipalities.

In building these partnerships, an effort is made to integrate communications objectives into partner strategies. To date, the DRP has helped enhance the ICPDR magazine 'Danube Watch' with research-based recommendations for targeting audiences, content and re-design. The communications capacities of the ICPDR and Danube NGOs have been enhanced. And numerous products such as brochures, leaflets, maps, posters and websites with valuable environmental information have been produced and widely disseminated publicly.

In 2004, significant financial support was given to the ICPDR to launch the first annual 'Danube Day', the basin's largest celebration and occasion for people to symbolically communicate the importance of their river.



## ENHANCING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The DRP is making sure that everyone in the basin has the opportunity to get information about their environment, and that the door is open for their involvement in decision-making processes affecting their environment.

Information is critical for governments in the Danube River Basin striving to make the best decisions for cleaning up and managing their shared water resources. It's essential for the public as a precondition for awareness and responsible behaviour toward their environment, and for the public's role as government watchdog. And European Union (EU) law requires public participation supported by quality, accessible information as key parts of a process geared to meeting the EU's water quality objectives.

In 2004, the DRP initiated a project to enhance access to water-related information and public participation in the Danube basin. The project will build the capacities of the responsible authorities in five Danube countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro) to provide water-related information to the public.

Demonstration projects at selected local pollution hot spots will 'road test' reinforced community involvement in solving water pollution issues.

On the international level, the project will strengthen the capacities of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) to provide for stakeholder information and participation in water management.

The project is being implemented by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) with U.S. partners Resources for the Future and the New York University School of Law.

More details about the project can be found on the REC web site [www.rec.org](http://www.rec.org).