



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DANUBE RESEARCH

Scientific Report 2016

There is increasing recognition within both policy and academic communities that many nature/environment-related policies cannot be addressed without scientific evidence and an integrative perspective from natural, social and economic sciences. The challenges are even more obvious when it comes to the aquatic environment, where the limited availability of freshwater resources and the requirements of multiple users need to be harmonized with the ecological needs of the aquatic communities.

This is how IAD has contributed in the recent years by fostering an active dialogue between its experts and the wide public, policy makers and local stakeholders, as well as by developing scientific projects in cooperation with international partners, aiming to answer to the current knowledge gaps and contribute to environmental conservation.

Science – Policy interactions

The dialogue with policy makers and the wide public was fostered mainly in the frame of the cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube Region (ICPDR) and the contribution to the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

The IAD scientists contribute to several ICPDR Technical Expert Groups and key topics, such as River Basin Management, Hydromorphology, Navigation, Hydropower, Feasibility Study for fish migration passage at the Iron Gates, Joint Danube Survey. Besides the technical input, IAD contributed also to the ICPDR Standing working group in June 2016 Modra, Cz, and the Ordinary Meeting in December 2016, Vienna, AT.

The meeting of ICPDR Water Directors with Biodiversity/CITES representatives and National Agencies for Fishery and Aquaculture of the Lower Danube in Dec. 2015 resulted in the extension of the sturgeon fishery ban in the Lower Danube countries between 2016 – 2021.

In the frame of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, IAD is active mainly in 3 groups: the Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF), the Danube network for Invasive Alien Species (DIAS) and the Learning Regions.

DSTF organized several activities in 2016: a meeting with Hungarian sturgeon stakeholders to disseminate the program Sturgeon 2020, kindly hosted by the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, Budapest (April 2016), the 6th DSTF meeting to discuss further sturgeon proposals, Budapest, HU, (April 2016), co-organized with IAD 2 environmental education events (below), and acquired a Technical Assistance grant from the European Investment Bank to develop the implementation of Sturgeon 2020 program.

DIAS organized two important meetings in Budapest, HU (June 2016) and Sofia, BG (November 2016), together with the East and South European Network for Invasive Alien Species (ESENIAS), aiming to define the strategy to prevent and manage the IAS in the Danube Region.

In the frame of the **Learning Regions** group, the IAD attended the EUSDR Dialogue Forum in September 2016 and the annual meetings of the ELSA and ARGE Donaulanders.

To celebrate 60 years of IAD existence, a special session was organized at the Austrian Parliament in November 2015.

Environmental education activities

Several environmental education events were organized by IAD in 2016:

- "A different kind of school", April 2016, Bucharest, Romania
- World Fish Migration Day, May 2016, Bucharest and Tulcea, Romania
- Celebration of Danube Day - "Children's university", July and August 2016, Wihering, Austria
- IAD summer camp - Ecological training for Bulgarian and Austrian students (field methodologies), August 2016, Dyje Valley

IAD participated to the 10th Congress for Environmental Education in Baden-Wurttemberg June 2016, Stuttgart, DE (oral presentation)

Projects with IAD participation

In 2016, the IAD Expert Groups contributed actively to the implementation of several joint projects and development of new proposals.

The project STURGENE, funded by the EUSDR START program, was coordinated by IAD and implemented with the support of the IAD Fish EG and Secretariat between 2015-2016.

The preparation of a transnational follow-up project was initiated in June 2016, and during 2 workshops, main ideas were agreed with the other project partners. The proposal was submitted in the frame of the Danube Transnational Program in June 2017 (MEASURES).

IAD members are active in several flagship projects of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and international projects – Sturgeon 2020, DREAM, Danube: Future, Danubius RI, DanubeParks connected, AQUACROSS, MARS, River Ecosystem Service Index (RESI), MONDAU, Development of Biodiversity on Floodplains, MARSPLAN Black Sea, ResponSEABle, etc.

A project to establish a transnational education network linking Danube universities with research partners (CEEPUS) is ready to start.

New transnational proposals with IAD participation (under development and submitted): MEASURES, Danube Floodplain, General Plan for Bavarian Danube, CERES, SCENT, FLOOD Serv, etc.

Other activities

The 41th IAD conference was organized with the kind support of the University Lucian Blaga, Sibiu, Romania, in September 2016.

The Bulletin of the International Association for Danube Research, Danube News is used to disseminate the main scientific results and topics of high interest for the IAD members. Two new numbers were issued in 2016 (DN 33, DN 34) and are available for download on the IAD homepage.