

2. Announcement

of the conference organized under Slovak Presidency of EU Strategy for the Danube Region developed by Water Policy Directorate of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic and EUSDR Priority Area 4 “Water Quality” Coordination Team

Climate Change Adaptation: Challenges and Opportunities in Water Management

held on 27 September 2021 in hotel Bôrik, Bratislava, Slovakia

Rationale

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission in December 2010 and endorsed by the European Council in 2011 for the purpose of sustainable development of the Danube region. It is comprised of 12 Priority Areas covering the needs of the whole Danube Region, e.g. mobility, energy, tourism, water, environment, knowledge, building capacities, security, etc.

In 2020, a revised Action Plan of the EUSDR Action Plan was adopted to boost a more committed involvement of all stakeholders for the implementation of the Danube Region Strategy. The activities and objectives of the Strategy have been updated to make a better interlinkage among them. The activities aim at a better link with the Cohesion policy and a more efficient use of European Union funds.

The climate change and protection of biodiversity are the thematic priorities of the Slovak Presidency in EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). These topics follow the European Green Deal policy focused on making Europe climate neutral by 2050.

Climate change affects all aspects of life in the Danube region; therefore, the adaptation to climate change should be mirrored in all priority areas. This topic is highly cross-sectoral and creates a significant space for cooperation within the Danube Strategy.

According to the revised EUSDR Action Plan adopted by the European Commission in 2020, Priority Area 4 “Water Quality” (PA4) keeps strong emphasis on adaptation to climate change impacts. Specifically, the Action 6 of the PA4 Action Plan promotes the measures to adapt to climate change impacts in relation to water quality and quantity. This involves the implementation of measures to control water abstraction and groundwater overexploitation; support to and promotion of green infrastructure and natural water retention measures; incentives to coordinated basin and urban planning; involvement of stakeholders in agriculture and public awareness about the importance of soil moisture and water retention capacity in soil under changing climate conditions.

Adaptation strategies in the water sector will need to address several emerging trends driven by climate change. These include increased uncertainty, variability and extreme weather events. In the water sector, planned interventions include both supply and demand side. While supply side



adaptation options involve increases in storage capacity in the country or increased abstraction from watercourses, demand side options, like increasing the allocative efficiency of water to ensure that economic and social benefit is maximized.

Organizer

EUSDR SK Presidency in cooperation with Priority Area 4 Coordination team

Target Group

Policy and decision makers at government bodies of Danube Region countries, international water related bodies, think tanks entities, NGOs, academic and research sector, land users, water service providers, and practitioners in urban planning.

Purpose and Objectives of the Conference

The conference is focused on sharing experience and best practices in climate change adaptation emphasizing (green) water retention measures and contributing to better water quality in the Danube Region. Many initiatives labelled as “climate change adaptation” are now emerging in the Danube region countries. This indicates a growing awareness over the last decade on how important the adaptation component has become in numerous sectors of the economy. There are already good stories and first lessons learnt from introduction of novel approaches in water and landscape management. However, there are still a lot of challenges that need to be addressed.

The objective of the conference is to contribute to series of discussions among policy and decision makers on what works and what methods are applicable, affordable and feasible in individual situations. Thematically, the conference is also linked with the development of the new Water Policy in Slovakia, which underlines water retention in landscape.

Logistics

27.9.2021 (Monday)

The event will be organised in hybrid form - online and personal participation. During registration, the participant can choose the form of participation (online/personal).

Registration link: <https://danube-region.eu/danube-events/thematic-event-by-slovak-eusdr-presidency-climate-change-water/>

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Agenda

9:30 – 10:00 Opening session

Welcome of participants, introductory speech of the organizers

- Michal Blaško, EUSDR SK presidency
- Juraj Smatana, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
- Roman Havlíček, EUSDR Priority Area 4 Coordinator for Slovakia

10:00 – 10:45 Session 1: Setting the scene

What is new in political arena of Europe in climate change adaptation? Water dimension in climate change adaptation agenda; progress in embedding climate change adaptation in water policy; is current climate change adaptation sufficient to address on-going and future scenarios?

Keynote presentations

- Bettina Doeser, European Commission, DG Enviro: *“Water dimension in climate change adaptation”* **ONLINE**
- Edith Hödl, ICPDR: *“Adaptation addressed in Danube Basin Plan”* **ONLINE**
- Jozef Pecho, Slovak Hydro-meteorological Institute, Slovakia: *“Europe warms up at the faster rate as expected; implications for water management sector”*

Discussion, Q&A

10:45 – 10:55 Break

10:55 – 12:00 Session 2: Adaptation and maladaptation

Adaptation to climate change is no easy matter: decisions may fail to meet their objectives, and they may even increase vulnerability. Scholars alert that adaptation strategies may increase the vulnerability of other systems. This is a case of water management sector as well. The need to shift energy generation from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources (such as hydropower plants) might reduce the total air emissions but bring significant negative impacts to ecosystem depending on water. Another example is to develop irrigation system to address water shortages resulting from climate change and take more water out of the river and leaving less water for other uses. While designing adaptation projects, there is a need to assess the negative externalities associated with infrastructure projects on both ecosystems and humans.

Keynote presentations

- Katarína Holubová, Water Research Institute, Slovakia: *“Integrated approach to land and water management to avoid conflicts between flood and nature protection”*
- Barbara Čenčur Curk, Chair of Global Water Partnership Slovenia and Ljubljana University: *“Vulnerability of water resources to climate change in South-East Europe; ONLINE*
- András Kis, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary: *“Climate adaptation through the multipurpose utilization of emergency flood reservoirs”*

Moderated panel discussion

12:00 – 12:45 Session 3: Adaptation in water planning

Interactive session with public pool to vote and later discuss the examples of adaptation measures currently addressed in water planning documents.

12:45 – 13.45 Lunch Break

13:45 – 14:45 Session 4: Who helps whom: adaptation and water policies perspectives

Examples of national and regional policies addressing how to combine adaptation strategies in different sectors with water policies.

Keynote presentations

- Roman Havlíček, Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Slovakia: *“From grey to green in water policy”*
- Raimund Mair, Danube Water Programme of the World Bank Group: *“World Bank approach to climate change and adaptation in the water infrastructure sector”* **ONLINE**
- Lukáš Záruba, Marta Havlíčková, Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic: *“Adaptation measures applied in the Czech Republic”*

Case study

Sharelle Verheij, European Center for River Restoration: *“River restoration from European perspectives”*

Discussion, Q&A

14:45 – 15:45 Session 5: Crossing sectors: good practice

The projects that have a synergic effect, examples from sectors, inspirations for sectors

- Monika Supeková, Slovak Water Management Enterprise, Slovakia: *“Adaptation to climate change and activities of the SWME”*
- Andrea Vranovská, Water Research Institute, Slovakia: *“Solutions of Deepwater CE Project focused on Managed Aquifer Recharge”*
- Katarína Mikulová, Slovak Hydro-meteorological Institute, Slovakia: *“Drought Management according to DriDanube project”*
- Balázs Horváth, Directorate General of Water Management, Hungary: *“Water and biodiversity cooperation in climate change adaptation”* **ONLINE**

Discussion, Q&A

15:45 – 16:00 Break

16:00 – 16:50 Session 6: Crossing levels: novel approaches at local scale

The examples of adaptation and water management at regional, municipal scales

- Beáta Novotná, Ľuboš Jurík, Slovak Agricultural University in Nitra, Slovakia: *“Increasing of water retention in the landscape to mitigate the possible effects of the global climate change”*
- Zuzana Hudeková, Municipality Bratislava – Karlova Ves, Slovakia *“Adaptation in v Karlova Ves”*
- Matyas Farkas, WWF Hungary: *“Novel Approaches at local scale in Hungary”* (LIFE MICACC project)
- Miroslav Čibik, Slovakia: *“Trenčianske Biskupice: Setting wetland community”*

16:50 – 17:00 Closure of conference

- Michal Blaško, EUSDR SK Presidency