

contribute to better understanding and tackling present and future challenges. Such knowledge will illustrate the impact of past events and decisions on ecology, economy and society. The EU-Strategy for the Danube Region and the objectives of the European research agenda have been accounted for the recommendations. They encompass sub-regionally defined sustainability training and education, the bridging of diverse and often conflicting cultures and inter- and transdisciplinary investigation of biodiversity, protected areas and ecosystem services.

Horizon 2020 challenges can and should be tackled in a form adapted to the specific challenges of the macro region. All H2020 challenges exhibit emergent properties, which results in a fundamental unpredictability. Risk management involving stakeholders becomes key. Decision making under conditions of uncertainty has always been and remains a major challenge for all societies. Research has to tackle the non-linearity of complex coupled-human-ecological systems. Long-term socio-ecological research is necessary to successfully deal with the legacies and valorise heritage for sustainable development. Due to the diversity of potentials and challenges characterizing the DRB, the macro-region

can become a laboratory for forward-looking, international research and education.

The White Paper is an activity of Danube:Future. This initiative aims to support the member universities of the Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC) and the Alps-Adriatic-Rectors' Conference (AARC) in their efforts to promote a sustainable knowledge society. It also seeks to connect scientific networks such as IAD with these two university networks. Danube:Future is a flagship project of EUSDR-priority area 7, Knowledge Society.

The White Paper is available for download at:
http://www.danubefuture.eu/sites/default/files/Danube_Future_WhitePaper.pdf

References

Winiwarter V & Haidvogel G (2015): Danube:Future White Paper on Integrated Sustainable Development of the Danube River Basin. A research community-based White Paper on research and capacity building needs, challenges and opportunities for the development of the sustainability-oriented knowledge society of the Danube River Basin. Vienna.

Webpage Danube:Future project: www.danubefuture.eu

Reflect the history, create the future! Enquete „Donau-Leben – Impulse für Regionen“ held in the Austrian Parliament

Harald Kutzenberger: Secretary General of IAD, Wilhering, Austria, h.kutzenberger@tb-kutzenberger.com

The President of the Austrian Federal Council, Gottfried Kneifel, invited diplomatic representatives, Members of the Parliament, experts, stake holders and decision makers of the Danube countries on November 10th to attend the Enquete „Danube Life – Impulses for Regions“, convened in the Austrian House of Parliament. The Federal Council is one of the two chambers of the Austrian Parliament and represents the nine Federal countries. The event appreciated the anniversaries of 25 years of the Working Community of the Danube Countries (WCDC) and the upcoming sixty years anniversary of the International Association for Danube Research (IAD) and was organised by IAD secretariat. On behalf of IAD I would like to express our gratitude to President Kneifel for this opportunity and the recognition of the efforts for creating a common understanding within the Danube Region.

President Kneifel appreciated the long-term cooperation in the Danube Region targeted on political and scientific levels and he especially high-lighted the need for local implementation of the river basin management. WCDC representative Simon Ortner and IAD President Thomas Hein gave introducing words and provided insight to both organisations for the delegates.

The Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), Ivan Zavadsky,



Figure 1: President of the Austrian Federal Council, Gottfried Kneifel (Photo: H. Kutzenberger)

informed about mile-stones of transboundary cooperation in the Danube Region: the Danube River Basin Management Plan and the new Danube Flood Risk Management Plan. These two instruments were created by all Danube states with inputs from scientists, environmental organisations and stake holders, following EU regulations. To explain this development from the perspective of a member state, Franz Wagner from the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, explained the Austrian National Water Management Plan as a tool for integrated development of catchments.

The second part of the event brought a vivid discussion in the „Danube Café“, which involved experts as well as the audience. DI Christian Steiner, Government of Lower Austria, Board Member of the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA), Elisabeth Wrbka, AVL Consultant for Landscape Planning and Urban Development, Kurt Weinberger, CEO of the Austrian Hail Insurance, Wilfried Hartl, Bioforschung Austria, Gottlieb Soriat, DV-Donau – Citizens´ Initiative for Sustainable Flood Protection, and IAD President Thomas Hein discussed about the practice of implementation of the goals for water management on local level. How can we reach water retention in the whole area of the catchment? Major topics had been: reduction of land sealing, optimising the retention in soils by supporting organic farming, and actively using the experience of green roofing for agricultural and commercial buildings.

Renowned and celebrated Bulgarian musicians, Alexander & Konstantin Wladigeroff and Magdalena & Dimitar Karamitev, and a Danubian buffet created by the agricultural school Ot-tenschlag, Lower Austria, and fine Hungarian specialities from Samos Bakery, Budapest brought the richness of the Danubian spirit into the event. IAD Secretary General Harald Kutzenberger lead through the program of the afternoon.



Figure 2: ‘Green Roof’: insulation against extreme temperature, retention of precipitation (Photo: H. Kutzenberger)

Finally a mobile exhibition and brochure on local measures for a sustainable development in the catchments of the Danube Basin were presented. This ‘travelling’ exhibition will be shown first in municipalities and schools all-around Austria, but there are concrete contacts already to extend the range of this ‘travelling’ exhibition to major cities in the Danube countries, in cooperation with the governmental and regional administration concerned.

JDS 3 from an environmental history and social science perspective – Part I: Danube research across disciplines and the selection of environmental problems

Martin Schmid: Institute of Social Ecology (SEC) and Institute of Science Communication and Higher Education Research (WIHO), Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt-Wien-Graz, Austria, e-mail: martin.schmid@aau.at

Gertrud Haidvogel: Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna, Austria, e-mail: gertrud.haidvogel@boku.ac.at

Introduction

After the first and second Joint Danube Surveys (JDS) in 2001 and 2007, respectively, in August and September 2013 the third Joint Danube Survey (JDS 3) was the next, major step to document and to assess the biological, chemical and hydromorphological state of the Danube in a standardized way (e.g. recently in this journal Stanković et al. 2015; Frank and Schmidt 2015; Schwarz and Holubova 2015). Not only for natural sciences, these river expeditions and their results must be regarded as milestones in recent Danube research. The importance of JDS goes far beyond the sphere of natural sciences, and even beyond that of academia.

Both authors of this contribution have an academic background in history, have worked now for years on different topics of the environmental history of the Danube, often in close cooperation with natural scientists. In our contribution we reflect on the objectives and approaches of JDS in general, and we discuss selected results of JDS 3 in

particular from a social sciences’ and humanities’ perspective – a perspective probably unusual for most readers of ‘Danube News’.

We use JDS 3 to demonstrate and to discuss the potentials and limitations of closer cooperation between natural sciences, social sciences and humanities in future Danube research. To initiate and to support such broad interdisciplinary research is the explicit aim of the recently established IAD expert group “Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research (LTSER) and Environmental History” (Schmid and Haidvogel 2015).

Our contribution comes in two parts. This first part aims at a general characterization of JDS from a social science perspective. We ask what is specific about the JDS approach, which environmental problems are addressed and which methods are applied and further developed in JDS? Additionally, we are concerned with the benefit of research à la JDS for scholars from social sciences and humanities and vice versa.

The second part to be published in the next issue of ‘Danube News’ goes more into details and reflects selected results of JDS 3 from an environmental history perspective, namely hydromorphological alterations, fish diversity, and pollution. We argue that pertinent results from JDS can and should be interpreted as a body of information not only on the