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Dear Readers,

After four years of successfully editing the Danube News, Georg Janauer expressed his wish to withdraw from this duty in November 2016. We were very pleased to be appointed as a new team of editors and we are highly motivated to continue with similar commitment. Georg Janauer has prepared us excellently for the new task. He handed over the editorship with thorough instructions and recommendations from his many years of practical experience. We wish him all the best and ample time for his other commitments which he often had to neglect in the last four years in favour of the Danube News.

We look forward to our cooperation with the new presidency and general secretary of the IAD and strive for continuing the Danube News as a journal informing the IAD members and the interested readership outside this organisation about remarkable research and pressing questions related to the ecology of the Danube and the societal and connectional role of this large European river. The joint editorship and our different disciplinary backgrounds enable us to adequately address and consider a wide range of topics which are also reflected by the expert groups of the IAD. The envisaged mix of contributions from the natural and social sciences but also from the humanities will hopefully be appreciated by both authors and readers.

Our first Danube News issue, the 35th since September 1999, consists of three major research articles.

Uli Schwarz from FLUVIUS Floodplain Ecology and River Basin Management shares his experiences on the Save River, its threats and restoration potential with us. The structure of the riparian area is mapped within 40 classes, showing the huge extent of softwood and hardwood forests along this riparian corridor. The hydro-morphological assessment de-

scribes how human influence on floodplains, habitats and nature conservation.

We hope that the new coordinating team will play a major role in mobilizing more IAD activities at Danube Basin level and increasing its role in transposing the scientific results into future policy tools of the Danube decision makers.



*Bernd Cyffka,
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scribes how human activities have altered the natural shape and flow of the river. Further focus is on protected areas and biodiversity, floodplain loss and natural flood mitigation. Main threats come from hydropower, dredging and sediment exploitation. With the goal to achieve good ecological status as defined in the WFD there is also river restoration planned along the Sava River. Its aim is to prevent further deterioration and to improve the hydro-morphological conditions.

Severin Hohensinner from the Institute of Hydrobiology and Aquatic Ecosystem Management, BOKU Vienna, and a team of co-authors from Austrian and German research institutes modelled productivity of the floodplain forests of the Viennese Danube around 1825, thereby illustrating the dominance of softwood communities as a consequence of fluvial dynamics. They compared historical and present timber yields and emphasized the high productivity of natural forest stands and concluded that re-established fluvial dynamics would significantly contribute to renewable energy production and support the legal requirements of European water and nature protection legislation.

Georg Frank describes a new project, which was selected for funding by the Danube Transnational Programme. DANUBE parks Connected aims at conserving the Danube as bio-corridor and to better promoting this function. In his contribution, he describes the envisaged pilot actions. WILD island, Danube Riparian Forest Corridor, Danube Dry Habitat Corridor and Danube Free Sky target major aquatic and floodplain habitats and their specific plant communities as well the migration of birds.