

## Editorial

*Cristina Sandu: IAD-President, Department of Ecology, Taxonomy and Nature Conservation, Institute of Biology Bucharest, Romanian Academy, Romania, email: cristina.sandu@dstf.eu*

*Bernd Cyffka: Co-Editor DanubeNews, Applied Physical Geography, Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and Aueninstitut Neuburg/Donau, Germany, e-mail: bernd.cyffka@ku.de*

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

Dear Readers,

An eventful Danube-year will end soon. On June 29th, the annual celebration of the Danube Day took place under the coordination of ICPDR, having as theme a “Cleaner Danube”. The Danube Transnational Program, the first large European funding programme explicitly dedicated to the Danube River Basin, has provided funds to 54 projects, six of them being directly relevant for water management, flood risk prevention, environmental risk management and restoration and management of ecological corridors. In October the 6th Annual Forum of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region was organized in Budapest, highlighting the need for developing connectivity and sustainable energy.

IAD is keeping up with the major challenges of the Danube Region by launching new projects and adjusting its organisational structure. The expert group on Chemistry/Physics was reframed towards Water Quality thereby better reflecting the actual focus of the last years. Prof. Carmen Postolache from the University of Bucharest was elected as the new leader of this expert group, while for the Microbiology EG the new leader will be Prof. Alexander Kirschner, Medical University of Vienna. A new expert group on invasive alien species was established, led by Dr. Teodora Trichkova, the founder of the ESENIAS and DIAS networks. During its meeting in May, the IAD Board agreed also on establishing in the near future ad-hoc expert groups on climate change, hydromorphology and environmental education.

A plethora of national, bilateral and transnational projects is ongoing in the region or has been recently completed. Three of such projects are presented in this issue of DanubeNews. Paul Meulenbroek, Silke Drexler and Herwig Waidbacher describe a study of fish larvae dispersal and the availability of spawning grounds in different man-made habitat types of the Austrian Danube in Vienna and adjacent



Danube-sidearm in the Austrian nationalpark, ©Christian Baumgartner

sections. The authors show that riprap sections, gravel bars and habitats in a sidearm and in the fish-by-pass system of the Viennese Danube hydropower plant Freudenau are used as spawning grounds and/or as habitats for juveniles, albeit the species composition differs. Among 31 species, 16 have been found which are considered endangered in the Austrian Danube. Larvae of invasive species dominated especially the riprap sections but also the by-pass system. Martin Burkhart and his colleagues from the State Office for Water in Ingolstadt, Bavaria present river restoration measures, which were implemented in the Bavarian Danube between Vohburg and Neustadt. Ecological improvement of bank structures to enhance the connectivity between the river, the riparian zone and the floodplains started 10 years ago. The different measures aimed also at a better accessibility of the riverbanks for the public and are in accordance with the management plan as defined against the background of the EU Water Framework Directive. Georgeta Stoica addresses an important topic, which links fish ecological targets, nature conservation and local fisheries management. During her PhD in anthropology, she studied knowledge and practices of local fishermen communities and their perception of nature conservation policies in the Danube Delta. Her article calls for interdisciplinary cooperation of natural, economic and social sciences and for learning from the experience of local communities, to bring forward fisheries management and policies, which are broadly accepted and agreed. A brief announcement of a new film of Oana Ivan about fishermen and their life in the Danube Delta in the News and Notes section further emphasizes the importance of the topic. Brief notes on a EU-LIFE project in the German Danube, on a new network for students' and university teachers' mobility as well as a new Interdisciplinary Doctoral program on Human River-Systems complete the issue.

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## Hydrological catchment of the River Danube

### General Secretary:

International Association for Danube Research (IAD)  
 (Internationale Arbeitsgemeinschaft Donauforschung)  
 Dr. Doru Bănăduc  
 (ad.banaduc@yahoo.com; +40 0722604338)  
 Faculty of Sciences, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu  
 5-7, Ion Rațiu Street, Sibiu, 550012, Romania

### Editors:

Prof. Dr. Bernd Cyffka  
 Catholic University of Eichstätt  
 bernd.cyffka@ku.de  
 Dr. Gertrud Haidvogel  
 BOKU Vienna  
 gertrud.haidvogel@boku.ac.at

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