

**Figure 1.** Overview map of the Danube catchment (top), indicating the Bavarian reach (rectangle); Detail map of the Bavarian Danube (bottom, © M. Rihtaršič, 2018).

The authors, the editors and ACADEMIA Publishing House look forward to a friendly reception of this book,



**Figure 2.** Dense and species-rich aquatic plant growth in a long and narrow channel of the Danube Delta (© G. A. Janauer, 2012)

which should contribute not only to an increase in scientific knowledge, but may also be a source of information for governmental agencies or stakeholders responsible for the Danube River, as well as for individual readers with interest in aquatic plant life in one of the large rivers in Europe.

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*The Editors*

## Joint ESENIAS and DIAS Scientific Conference

The Joint ESENIAS and DIAS Scientific Conference entitled «Management and sharing of IAS data to support knowledge-based decision making at regional level» was held on 26–28 September 2018, in Bucharest, Romania. It was organised by the Research Institute of the University of Bucharest (UB), Faculty of Biology, and the Botanic Garden «Dimitrie Brandza» of the UB, ESENIAS, and DIAS, in collaboration with the IBER-BAS. The conference covered the following topics:

- 1) Invasive alien species traits and trends;
- 2) Vectors and pathways for IAS introductions;

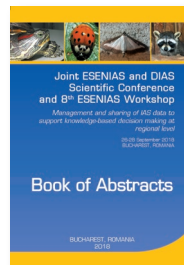
- 3) The Danube River as invasive alien species corridor;
- 4) Invasive alien species impact;
- 5) Invasive alien species prevention and management;
- 6) Management sharing IAS data.

The Danube Region Invasive Alien Species Network (DIAS) was presented in the conference introductory key-note lecture with its mission, recent activities and achievements. This lecture focused also on the DIAS data sources, including recent projects, types of data collected and future



**Figure 1.** Group photo of the participants of the Joint ESENIAS and DIAS Scientific Conference

challenges in the IAS data flow and management within the Danube countries. Furthermore, an update on the DIAS strategy development was made. Another keynote lecture given by Prof. Dr. Marius Skolka provided a review of the newly recorded invasive alien species in Dobroudja region and the Danube Delta area. Several contributions presented under the Topic 3 discussed IAS new records, pathways of introduction and spread, biological traits, as well as results from the testing of a smartphone application for recording new sightings of invasive alien species of EU concern in the



Danube Region.

More than 100 participants from 12 countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, France, FYR Macedonia, Georgia, Greece, Italy, R. Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Turkey, and Ukraine) attended the conference. A total of 83 contributions were presented and published in a Book of Abstracts.

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## Obituary for Prof. Dr. Hellmut Fleckseder M.S.

Prof. Dr. Hellmut Fleckseder, M.S. has unexpectedly passed away on February 20, 2018. His whole professional career was closely linked to the development of water quality management in the Danube region. The Austrian and the International Water Quality Management has lost one of its most visionary and innovative experts.

Born in 1943 in Vienna/Austria, Hellmut Fleckseder acquired his master degree in Civil Engineering at Vienna University of Technology in 1967, after having finished his secondary education in Basel/Switzerland. After his master degree he was immediately invited by famous Professor Wilhelm von der Emde, chair of the Institute for Water Quality Management at his university, to start a scientific career as researcher. The first great research area was to find solutions for the protection of Austrian rivers from heavy pollution by pulp and paper mill waste water discharges. This topic became the essence of his doctoral thesis, which was already closely linking pollution reduction technologies with river quality management with a focal point on Danube River Basin.

In 1969/70, Helmut Fleckseder acquired a post graduate master degree in Environmental Health Engineering at the University of Austin/Texas. In 1978, he was chairing a research team on Lake Neusiedl shared between Austria and Hungary with the goal to limit phosphorus discharge to this shallow lake in a semi-arid catchment. In 1985, Fleckseder was promoted to associate professor for water quality management. Beyond his outstanding scientific achievements and his teaching activity, this promotion was based on his habilitation "Water Protection Through the Ages".

Prof. Fleckseder was one of the main initiators of a successful interdisciplinary post graduate, master course called 'Environmental Protection Technology'. He implemented material management methodologies into river basin management starting with the first nitrogen balance for Austria. This methodology was later very successfully applied for research on nutrient balances for the Danube River and Black Sea Basins and has become a major research tool at the institute until today still with emphasis on Danube River Basin.

From the beginning of ICPDR Fleckseder was involved into the activities of the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environ-

ment and Water. He played an important role in establishing the ICPDR program and to bring the headquarter to Vienna. In 1984, he was invited to continue his career at the international water department and as a strategy consultant for the Austrian water management section of the Ministry. In 1995, he was appointed as permanent representative of the Ministry at the ICPDR. From 2001 until his retirement in 2008, Fleckseder represented the Austrian interests regarding the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Fleckseder was one of the first scientists having recognised and analysed the role of agriculture and human nutrition habits on diffused sources of pollution affecting eutrophication control, area and water requirements for food production in the context of River Basin management. He was one of the first scientists analysing the air transport of nitrogen and phosphorus even beyond river catchments. He was a pioneer in quantifying the natural and anthropogenic nutrient flows as basis for decision making on the most cost effective way to reduce point and diffused sources of pollution for improved water quality in surface and ground water. He clearly showed that for some problems changes in human behaviour are as important as technology.

More than 80 scientific publications and a great number of studies and expert reports have markedly contributed to the advancement of scientific knowledge and the progress in improving the quality of national and international rivers and lakes. He also investigated the great variety of geographical, historical, political and religious background of the 19 Danube countries joining this most international river basin in order overcome the barriers for a long-term fruitful co-operation in ICPDR and beyond.

His strength was to communicate with a large but limited number of national and international experts and friends who realised the high scientific and personal level of commitment of Hellmut and his visionary talent. He has inspired many researchers and friends to follow his footsteps and continue his ambition to create a sustainable coexistence of human and natural development even beyond water management.

We have lost a great personality but have inherited his achievements and inspiring ideas. *Helmut Kroiss*