

Expert group leader: **Dr. Gabriela Costea**



## **IAD: Danube River education**

The Danube River and its tributaries face significant ecological challenges, well-known within the scientific and water management communities. However, there remains a gap in **effectively communicating this knowledge to the broader public**. The International Association for Danube Research (IAD), a key player in promoting sustainable management of the Danube River Basin, can expand its impact by enhancing public environmental education efforts.

To bridge this gap, an Environmental **Danube River Education Expert Group** within IAD is created. This expert group would focus on raising public awareness, fostering emotional connections with the Danube, and empowering local communities to participate in the protection and restoration of the river and its ecosystems. The European Commission's initiative to reconnect citizens with freshwater ecosystems aligns closely with this objective, positioning IAD to contribute to wider EU goals.

While IAD has traditionally focused on research and policy, the value of these insights is limited without public understanding and involvement. An Environmental Education Task Force could **transform complex scientific data into engaging, accessible content for a wider audience**. The aim is to support a broad range of educational initiatives, including programs for schools, community outreach, exhibitions, workshops, and multimedia campaigns. By collaborating with local stakeholders such as schools, NGOs, nature parks, and governments, this effort would have far-reaching effects across the entire Danube region.

The environmental Danube River education expert group would serve as a catalyst for coordinated educational efforts, ensuring that isolated activities are linked and scaled throughout the basin. By initiating and developing timely educational projects, this group would enable the creation of a continuous series of initiatives that foster community-driven conservation efforts. This would include a variety of educational formats, such as school programs, interactive exhibitions, and public events, aimed at diverse audiences across different regions.

To say it with few words: By establishing this active expert group, IAD will significantly increase its visibility and strengthen its role in promoting sustainable practices. The **Environmental Danube River Education Expert Group would bridge the gap between scientific research and public engagement**, creating a lasting, community-focused movement for the conservation and protection of the Danube River Basin. This initiative would ensure that the association's efforts reach beyond the scientific community and foster a deeper, more meaningful connection between people and the river.