

Priority Area 1a - To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways

Newsletter December 2023

Dear Colleagues and Friends of the Danube Region Strategy,
Dear Madam or Sir,

Priority Area 1a can look back on a productive year 2023 and is planning to launch various initiatives next year - stay tuned!

We want to take this opportunity to thank you all for the excellent cooperation and your strong involvement in our activities during this past year. We look forward to continuing our joint work and seeing you again in 2024!

We wish you all Merry Christmas, a restful holiday period and all the best for the New Year!

With kind regards and stay safe,

Your PA1a team

News, facts and events

23rd PA1a Steering Group Meeting on 09 October 2023

The 23rd Steering Group meeting of Priority Area 1a was held on 9th October 2023 in a hybrid setting in Bucharest (Romania). The main topics discussed were the recently started review process of the Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin (JS 2.0 process), the forthcoming Danube Ministerial Conclusions 2024, challenges of future sustainable set-up of the waterway administrations and greening the Danube fleet.

New developments in EU legislation (e.g. TEN-T, Green Deal), climate change, limitation of resources (both HR and budget), nature-based solutions and more were a trigger to start the revision process of the Joint Statement. The revision process will be coordinated by ICPDR, the Danube Commission and the ISRBC. It will include

cooperation with a large variety of stakeholders and close cooperation with Austrian EUSDR Presidency 2023/2024. This Steering Group meeting was a kick-off discussion towards JS 2.0.

Greening the Danube fleet in line with the Green Deal, aiming for zero emissions by 2050, is a pressing issue. The Fleet Modernisation Strategy initiated in 2019 addressed obstacles hindering fleet modernisation, notably financing. The focus in the near future is on translating this strategy into concrete actions, developing recommendations with and for Member States and industry to achieve greening objectives. PA1a plans to develop specific technology pathways for the Danube region within the working group 3 (fleet modernisation), analysing existing fleet modernisation measures, priority topics and recommendations for implementation.

The next Steering Group meeting is planned on 16 May 2024 in Vienna.

Austrian Presidency of the EUSDR



Pursuing a rotation principle, the EUSDR Presidency is taken over by an EUSDR participating state for a one-year period.

On 01 November 2023 the Austrian EUSDR Presidency started under the slogan "Shaping Transformation, Creating Opportunities: A Prosperous, Resilient and Secure Danube Region". Austria holds the Presidency until end of 2024.

For more in-depth information on the Presidency, including a full list of planned meetings and events please click [here](#).

Seed Money Facility (SMF) – 1st Call open now

EUSDR Seed money facility (SMF) is a new funding opportunity within the Danube Region Programme. SMF shall serve as a tool for kick-starting development of projects in line with the 12 priority areas of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Proposals submitted under the SMF call shall be aligned to at least one EUSDR Priority Area and shall clearly address the EUSDR action plan and targets.

The first call was opened on 27 November 2023., applications can be submitted **until 29 March 2024**.

PA 1a can offer support to potential applicants on the topics covered by the EUSDR Action Plan – inland waterways.

Please contact the PA1a technical secretariat.

All information on SMF can be found [here](#).

The programme management authority recently launched a new [matchmaking platform](#) designed to help potential applicants find partners and share ideas for transnational projects in the Danube region.



27th International Danube Navigation and tourism conference

Under the motto “New times. Sustainability transforms Danube cruises”, the [27th International Danube Navigation & Tourism Conference](#) was organized from 26 - 29 November 2023 in Linz, Austria. The conference featured presentations, key note speeches and panel discussions on e.g. cruise routes and services, ships, infrastructure, legal issues and challenges. Brand-new impulses from around 290 industry representatives and various networking moments shaped the event.

The next Conference will be organized on 24 – 27 November 2024 in Budapest.

News from the Working Groups

Danube Ministerial Conclusions 2024 – keeping IWT on the political agenda

PA1a has long been advocating for proper funding for waterway administrations in the Danube Region, regularly putting waterway maintenance on the political agenda. Renewed Danube Ministerial Conclusions to underline the importance of proper waterway maintenance are currently under preparation.

The operational budgets and the importance of building up institutional capacity and expertise will be the main topics which will be raised at political level. A study on economic effects of low water on Danube navigation is planned to be developed and to contribute to discussions on operational budgets and building institutional capacity of the waterway administrations.

By signing the Danube Ministerial Conclusions, the Transport Ministers of the Danube countries will reconfirm their commitment to implement the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan.

FAIRway Danube II - Kick-off and 1st Advisory Committee meeting



©viadonau/Johannes Zinner

[FAIRway Danube II](#) continues the implementation of the Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan for the Danube and its navigable tributaries. With a total budget of around 70 million Euro, the new EU (CEF) co-financed project FAIRway Danube II is setting sail.

The most important objectives for the coming years on the Danube: modern marking of the waterway, upgrading of gauging stations, upgrading of the survey fleets and the expansion of the transnational waterway monitoring system WAMOS. In addition, the so-called "flexible infrastructure elements", the innovative, reversible and climate-resilient way of improving low water fairway conditions will be tested. This is a modern translation of an old method from the 1890s. The tests with a barge prepared for this purpose on the Danube east of Vienna (Austria) will provide important preliminary findings for implementation of pilots in the countries of the middle and lower Danube (Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria) in autumn 2024.

The official project launch took place on [29 November 2023 in Vienna's TechGate](#) – organised by viadonau – with high-ranking representatives from the EU Commission, the Austrian Ministry for Climate Action, international organisations, industry and the

WWF.

COMEX2 Kick-off event

The RIS-COMEX follow-up project [COMEX2](#) got off the starting blocks this autumn, the start was celebrated in [Amsterdam on 21 and 22 November 2023](#), jointly organised with the final event of EU co-financed project DIWA (Masterplan Digitalisation of Inland Waterways).

COMEX² builds on the tremendous success of the project RIS COMEX having realised the joint European RIS Platform EuRIS which provides fairway-, infrastructure-, traffic- and transport related data from 13 European countries as single point of access for all kinds of inland waterway users. Next to EuRIS, the common electronic reporting system CEERIS was realised among eight European countries in the former project in order to facilitate the reduction of administrative burden. COMEX² will tackle the optimisation of CEERIS and, where applicable, of other electronic reporting systems and applications and put a focus on their interconnection in order to foster the reporting only once principle within European inland waterway transport.

Danube Ports Days 2023 - Navigating Towards Sustainable Waterborne Transport

The [Danube Ports Days 2023](#), a collaborative effort by Pro Danube in partnership with the EU-funded Green Inland Ports Study, MultiRELOAD and SYNERGETICS projects, and with support from the Danube Ports Network, was held on 23 and 24 November 2023 in Vienna.

The two-day event provided a platform for participants to explore innovative tools and solutions geared towards achieving green objectives, sharing experiences, addressing common challenges, and staying updated on latest industry developments. With a specific focus on the European Green Deal, the Danube Ports Days aimed to facilitate collaboration between public and private entities, fostering know-how sharing and feedback collection in pursuit of the ambitious climate targets enshrined in the European Green Deal.

Working Group 6 (Administrative Processes) Meeting

The meeting of the joint Working Group of Priority Area 1a and Priority Area 11, on administrative and digital processes, was organized on the 9th November 2023 in an online setting.

After the successful adoption of DAVID forms, the digitalised DAVID forms have been implemented in CEERIS (Central Eastern European River Information Services). The Danube countries started to use the CEERIS system for reporting, whereby the Romanian Naval Authority holds a pioneering role by using CEERIS as the only

platform for reporting from 1st January 2023 on. Within the framework of the COMEX2 project, the systems EURIS/CEERIS will be further developed and the planned TERM tool - Electronic Registration & Time Management Tool for border controls will be implemented. Other measures on digitalisation discussed in the Working Group Meeting are the transnational control database (IBISweb), the platform for exchange of control bodies as well as the independent single point of contact for problem management.

The "Single Point of Contact for Problem Management on Danube" is a service offered by the Danube Commission (DC) to the IWT sector to report administrative barriers in Danube navigation. The Danube Commission implemented a form for contacting on their [webpage](#) .

Planned Events

Date	Title	Venue	Organized by
02-05 April 2024	Connecting Europe Days	Brussels (BE)	CINEA
14 May 2024	FAIRway Danube II: 2nd Advisory Committee Meeting	Vienna (AT)	viadonau
15 May 2024	Danube Business Talks	Vienna (AT)	viadonau
16 May 2024	24th Steering Group Meeting PA1a	Vienna (AT)	PA1a
20-21 June 2024	EUSDR Annual Forum	Vienna (AT)	EUSDR AT Presidency
24-27 November 2024	Danube Navigation & Tourism Conference	Budapest (HU)	

Technical Secretariat for Priority Area 1a

AUSTRIA:

via donau - Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH

Gert-Jan Muilerman

phone: +43 664 80842 1604 | gert-jan.muilerman@via-donau.org

Viktoria Weissenburger

phone: +43 664 80842 1608 | viktoria.weissenburger@viadonau.org

Iris Marstaller

phone: +43 664 80842 1635 | iris.marstaller@viadonau.org

ROMANIA:

Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communications

Monica Patrichi

phone: +40 374 808 420 | monica.patrichi@mt.ro



Co-funded by
the European Union

Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Climate Action, Environment,
Energy, Mobility,
Innovation and Technology

viadonau



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT,
INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Unsubscribe