

Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region
PA6: Preserving biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils



**Sturgeon 2020 Strategy within Priority Area 06
of the EUSDR**

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Bayerisches Staatsministerium für
Umwelt und Gesundheit



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Background and Development

- EUSDR / PA6 target “**Secure viable populations of Danube sturgeon species and other indigenous fish species by 2020.**”
- January 2012: Establishment of international **Danube Sturgeon Task Force**, designation of a DSTF coordinator, elaboration of an **(Sub)-Strategy Sturgeon 2020**:
“By 2020, secure viable populations of wild sturgeon populations by reversing the current declining trends for all sturgeon species, increasing the protection status of their habitats and restoring the migratory movements.”

Reinforcement of “Sturgeon Action Plan” under Bern Convention.



Picture from www.dstf.eu

- June 2012: ICPDR Heads of Delegations – resolution at the 10th ICPDR Standing Working Group Meeting (Innsbruck):
“*The Standing Working Group welcomes the establishment of the Danube Sturgeon Task Force and supports related activities towards coordinated action on the conservation and improvement of native sturgeon species in the Danube basin.*”
- August 2012: Second DSTF meeting in Tulcea (RO). Defining Sturgeon 2020 program and work plan. PA6 TA budget to be used for preparatory meetings in 2012 and 2013.
- November 2012: presentation of Sturgeon 2020 at EUSDR 1st annual forum in Regensburg.

Why Sturgeon conservation?

- Excellent indicators of water/sediment quality
- Indicator species for river permeability and habitat connection
- Unique value for EU biodiversity
- High scientific value - “living fossils”, over 200 million years old
- High economic value - for fishermen communities/ hatchery owners

Why Sturgeon conservation in the Danube River basin?

- The only EU river basin still sheltering 5 sturgeon species
- Sturgeons – flagship species – ecological, economic and social heritage of DRB
- Sturgeon Conservation explicitly mentioned as target in PA6 of the EUSDR!

Key habitats for Danube Sturgeon

- Spawning areas
- Nursery areas
- Wintering areas
- Feeding areas

Danube Sturgeon situation and threats

- Decline of sturgeon population due to
 - Overfishing
 - Loss and fragmentation of habitats
 - Continuity interruption – migration disruption
 - Water pollution

Integration or Competition?

Challenge: Sustainable use of Waterways by balancing the needs of Navigation and Environment

NAVIGATION Needs	ENVIRONMENT Needs
Depth Sediment dredging	Habitat/substrate for invertebrates and fish (life cycles)
Width Bank enforcement, canalization	Populations (nesting, spawning, feeding, rearing youngsters, migration), riparian zones & floodplains as dynamic ecosystems
Discharge Water abstraction, canalization Dams, ship locks	Habitats and longitudinal connectivity , fish long-distance migration; isolation of populations (genetic diversity)

Reference: Cristina Sandu, Harald Kutzenberger, Jürg Bloesch – International Association for Danube Research (2009)



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EU Strategy for Danube Region - COM(2010) 715 final

Connecting the Danube Region:

The physical capacity of the Danube and its tributaries should be improved, and existing bottlenecks removed, to ensure the proper level of navigability, implementing the NAIADES programme and respecting environmental legislation, and based on the "Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin".

Protecting the Environment in the Danube Region:

Loss of natural habitats puts pressure on fauna and flora, and affects the overall quality of environmental health. Fragmentation of ecosystems, land use intensification and urban sprawl are major pressures. The 2020 EU target for biodiversity must be met, by halting biodiversity and ecosystems loss, and by restoring ecosystem services and reconnecting habitats.

DSTF and Sturgeon 2020 program



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DSTF – “Sturgeon 2020” program

Based on Sturgeon Action Plan, adopted under Bern Convention in 2006

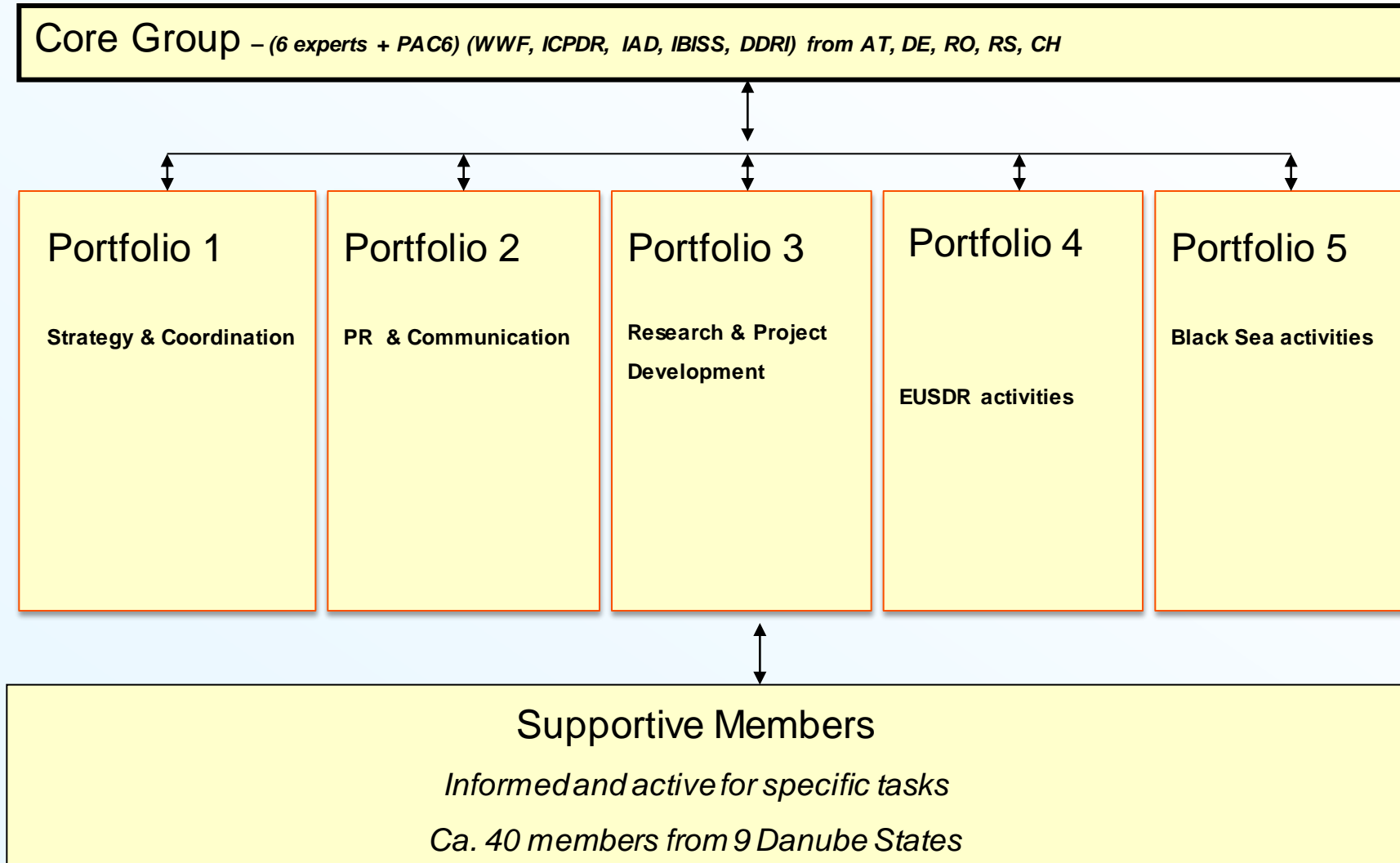


Interrelation of Sturgeon Strategy 2020 with EUSDR.

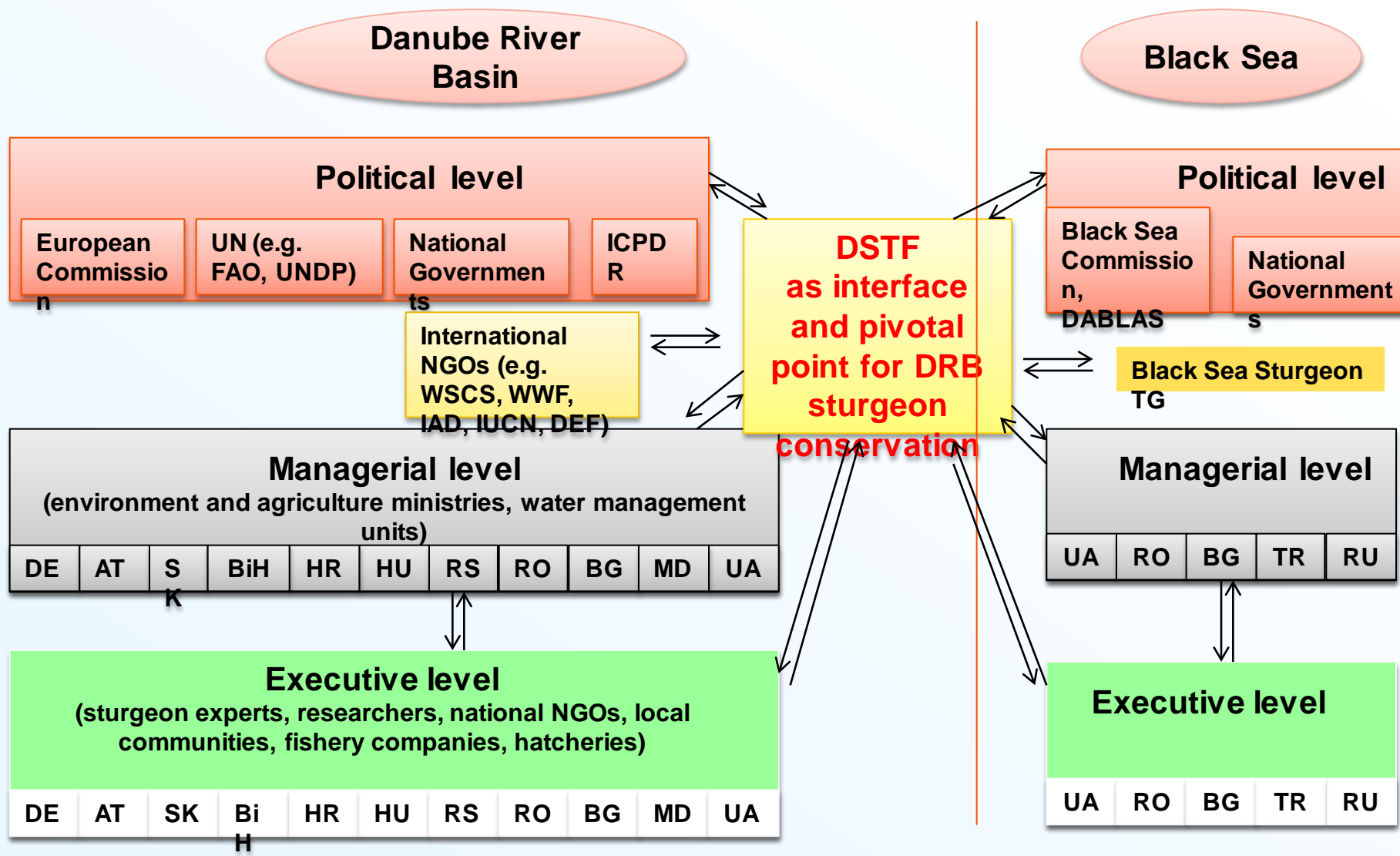


Reference: DSTF (Dr. Cristina Sandu, Romania)

Danube Sturgeon Task Force – Core Group organisation (Sept. 2012, tbc)



Danube Sturgeon Task Force – Overall organization (IAD proposal)



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- About us
- Species
- Activities
- Events
- Documents
- Links



Launching the DSTF
webpage

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Press release at the
RAMSAR Conference,
Bucharest, 6-13 July 2012

DSTF contribution at the 39
IAD Conference,
Szentendre, Hungary 21-24

The second DSTF meeting,
Tulcea, Romania, 26-29
August 2012

Our mission

The **Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF)**, founded in January 2012 in the frame of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 6 (Biodiversity), aims to coordinate and foster the conservation of highly endangered native sturgeon species in the Danube River Basin and the Black Sea by promoting the implementation of the **Program "STURGEON 2020"**.

Considered a flagship species for the Danube River Basin and valuable indicators of water quality and ecosystem health, sturgeons are today on the brink of extinction due to the overexploitation, disruption of spawning migration and loss of habitats. Hence, urgent measures are needed to stop their dramatic decline and prevent their disappearance.

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Next steps

- Finalization of Sturgeon 2020 program, indicating concrete immediate, mid-term and long term actions (reduce over-exploitation, protection/restoration of habitats, ensuring migration, rearing of sturgeons in hatcheries)
- Enforcing cooperation between governmental bodies, scientists and environmental organizations for a sustainable management approach of waterways, e.g. within ISPA1 & ISPA2
- Secure proper SEA, EIA and monitoring
- Joint lobby at EU level for equal weight of the environment and the infrastructure development projects
- Seek for integrative solutions within EUSDR / Priority Area Coordinators
- Reinforce dialogue and communication
- Promote and communicate Sturgeon 2020 on all levels, including PR

Conclusions...

- Sturgeon 2020 program and DSTF work provides sound expertise to combine Inland navigation needs with Environmental needs (based on indicator species).
- Cooperation should be enforced on level of concrete planned measures and based on mutual respect and understanding.
- EUSDR provides political framework and PACs are the “messengers” in between.
- EUSDR can only be successful by using the given opportunity to finally join forces for a sustainable development of the Danube River basin!

Thank you for your attention!

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