



# THE HANDBOOK FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF STAKEHOLDERS AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE BASINS OF RIVERS, LAKES AND AQUIFERS

March 2018



### Box 24: The Voice of the Danube, consultation organized by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

At the beginning of July, more than 80 stakeholders from the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) attended a workshop where they were able to express their opinion on the draft Danube River Basin Management Plan and Danube Flood Risk Management Plan. The event was the culmination of an intense public consultation campaign aimed at involving the basin's population in the development of ICPDR policies.



With an intense program, the "Voice of the Danube" workshop lasted a day and a half and provided ICPDR policymakers with an opportunity to learn about the needs of the basin populations that are affected by these policies.

The two draft management plans, the Danube Basin Management Plan and the Flood Risk Management Plan were discussed in detail to provide inputs before finalization in autumn 2017. Both plans would be the most important work programs of the ICPDR until 2021.

The workshop organizers, ICPDR in cooperation with the Global Water Partnership, limited the presentations to allow sufficient time for discussion. This resulted in active contributions from more than 80 participants.

To extract knowledge from the participants, the "Danube-Café" format was chosen. The participants, divided into five groups guided by a facilitator and observed by a rapporteur, spent 30 minutes in discussion, before rotating to change the subject. This approach ensured that everyone participated on all topics in small groups, regardless of their specialization: hydropower specialists discussed the reconnection of wetlands, biodiversity experts talked about climate change, others reflected on the need to increase floodplains. The delegates' potpourri and original format ensured maximum creativity in the discussion.

The five topics at the core of the discussion reflected the main themes of the two management plans: hazardous substances and pollution, hydromorphological alterations and integration issues, public participation and communication, flood risk management and funding of the measures proposed by the plans.

In addition, observer organizations and other stakeholders were given the opportunity to make presentations, participate in plenary discussions or ask questions in writing. The ICPDR President reiterated the importance of both management plans for the coming years and their huge impact on people's lives, especially in the light of the devastating floods experienced in the Sava sub-basin last year.

The "Art Nouveau" building of the Croatian National Archives provided an appropriate frame for the workshop.

Modern media allowed direct interaction with the audience, with all presentations being broadcast live and through social media such as Twitter and Facebook. 39 tweets on the event generated nearly 7,000 printings and many interactions.

Now that the Voice of the Danube has spoken, it is up to ICPDR to take the messages into account. The gathered comments were structured and fed into a report provided to the ICPDR expert groups reviewing the two management plans.

A final report on all public consultation work must be published. Each comment will be recorded in this report with a note explaining how it was considered or why it was rejected. In both cases, the opinions expressed by the stakeholders will be treated with the utmost respect

### Box 24: cont'd



The Voice of the Danube workshop is part of a series of public consultations on the draft Danube Basin Management Plan and the first Flood Risk Management Plan. Other measures include a campaign on social media, online questionnaires and the collection of the comments submitted in writing. The four consultation channels will contribute to the final report.

Public consultation is required by the Water Framework Directive. However, ICPDR goes well beyond these legal requirements in its commitment to involve stakeholders. Indeed, the commission is convinced that active public participation facilitates wider support for policies and leads to greater efficiency in the implementation of measures. Public participation is an ongoing process that involves the participation of 23 observer organizations in ICPDR expert groups, public information activities, awareness raising and consultation activities.

**Website:** <https://www.icpdr.org/main/>

### 4.3 Developing tools that facilitate the participation of stakeholders

Guidance documents, knowledge dissemination tools adapted to economic stakeholders and to the general public are useful to facilitate the understanding of water management and of the characteristics of different water resources and to better understand the complexity of their functioning. All this is likely to promote the participation of stakeholders in management and increase their motivation to act in the direction of the policies defined in the basin

### Box 25: Guides and knowledge transfer to better understand the exchange of flows between groundwater and surface water, France

The groundwater/surface water interface is an important challenging sector in the Rhone River Basin. The issues related to this interface and the interactions that occur are significant: instrumentation and monitoring, understanding and description of the functioning (e.g. biogeochemical, ecological, hydrological functions), calculation of flows and balance sheets (e.g. hydrological balance), implementation of indicators (e.g. low-flow support, self-purification), and quantification of ecosystem services.

In the WFD context (European Water Framework Directive), for example, expectations are high to facilitate the assessment of the good status of water bodies, the sizing and monitoring of restoration operations or dependence of wetlands with regard to groundwater (e.g. identification/typology, risk/degradation, monitoring, multidisciplinary indicators). There is usually a strong need for methodological development and transfer of knowledge from the research world to that of water stakeholders.

With this in mind, the Mining School of St Etienne is carrying out interdisciplinary projects at the manager/researcher interface. The operational valuation of these projects led to the publication of a methodological guide "Nappes-Rhône – Rhone aquifers" (Paran et al., 2015a) following a