



---

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Participation of the Permanent Representative of Hungary in Danube Commission, Dr. Ivan Gyurcsík at the**

**7th ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue,**

*(11-12 September 2018, Budapest, Hungary)*

On 11-12 September 2018, in Budapest was held the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue on “Sustainable and Integrated Water Management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – addressing imminent challenges” as a result of the invitation of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On this occasion, Dr. Iván Gyurcsík, the Representative of Hungary to Danube Commission, on behalf of the President of Danube Commission, offered a speech *«The past 70 years and the future of the Danube Commission in Budapest»*. In his speech, the Representative of Hungary in DC approached the activity of Danube Commission in the fields of multimodal transport corridors, perspective lines of the organization and the working plan which currently focuses on operational and environmental issues, safety and security of navigation, and international cooperation.

At the above-mentioned event more than 150 representatives from ASEM countries, European External Action Service, the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat gathered to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and target related to water and sanitation, in addition to achieve progress on the implementation of the Danube-Mekong Cooperation Initiative launched by Hungary in 2012.

In accordance with the topic related to the water quality management - hazardous substances, plastic waste and micro – pollutants of waters and their effects on nature, Mr. Dejan Trifunović, Counsellor for Exploitation and Environmental Issues held a speech where he presented the work of the Danube Commission in the field of ship waste management.

During the Session 3, the Secretariat of Danube Commission was represented by Mr. Dejan Trifunović, counselor for exploitation and environmental issues. Mr. D. Trifunovic presented the activities of Danube Commission related the ship waste management and emphasized that DC is currently revising the rules regarding the river pollution by ships. These rules were elaborated in order to protect the environment and make the harmonization of ship’s waste handling, taking into consideration other models like CDNI.

---

*Address: Hungary, H-1068 Budapest, Benczúr utca 25.*

*Phone: +36-1-461-80-10, Fax: +36-1-352-18-39, E-mail: [secretariat@danubecom-intern.org](mailto:secretariat@danubecom-intern.org)*

*Website: [www.danubecommission.org](http://www.danubecommission.org)*

---



Mr. D. Trifunovic also pointed out the existing cooperation with Mekong River Commission in the framework of the development of Mekong River Commission navigation Program 2003-2004. This cooperation continued at the Hungarian initiative as well. Danube Commission, together with the Mekong River Commission and the ICPDR, has delivered to the Thai authorities presentations on sustainable river management. Representatives of the MRC are welcome to initiate a further cooperation.

On the occasion of this meeting, ASEM also held in Budapest it's 3<sup>rd</sup> Seminar on Urban Water Management, urban solutions, global challenges.

### **Speech of the Representative of Hungary in Danube Commission, Ambassador, Dr. Iván Gyurcsík**

Mr. Chairman, State Secretary, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the Danube Commission, and to convey the message of our President, Ambassador Dr. Gordan Grlic-Radman, at the opening of these important events.

I would like to thank our hosts for their gracious invitation and to congratulate them on the timely organization of these events.

The Danube Commission is an international intergovernmental organisation established by the Convention regarding the regime of navigation on the Danube, signed in 1948 in Belgrade. On 29 June this year, ministers of transports and representatives of Member and Observer States and Organizations celebrated the Convention's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Belgrade, where we also held the Commission's 90<sup>th</sup> ordinary session.

Representing 11 States, our Commission continues the substantial work of the previous 1856 European Danube Commission and 1921 International Danube Commission, *aimed at improving navigation on the Danube River*. This river flowing through the middle of Budapest, is currently the TEN/T Rhine Danube Corridor and one of the continent's most important transport routes. Together with the Rhine, the Danube connects the North Sea with the Black Sea over a length of 3,500 km via the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal, linking the wider Black Sea region with the European industrial heartland.

The Danube Commission's main role is to provide for, promote and ensure freedom of navigation on the Danube in accordance with the Belgrade Convention, as well to maintain and improve navigation conditions on the river. The preparation and update of the general plan of

---

*Address: Hungary, H-1068 Budapest, Benczúr utca 25.*

*Phone: +36-1-461-80-10, Fax: +36-1-352-18-39, E-mail: [secretariat@danubecom-intern.org](mailto:secretariat@danubecom-intern.org)*

*Website: [www.danubecommission.org](http://www.danubecommission.org)*

---



main works to be undertaken on the Danube River is one of the main tasks listed in article 8 of the Convention. Other topics, relevant for today's discussions, are also reflected, such as the coordination of the hydrometeorological services on the Danube.

The Danube Commission remains an important instrument for fostering good economic and cultural ties among its Member States and with other countries, and we are an integral part of European efforts aiming towards the finalization of a unified navigation system on inland waterways in Europe.

With due consideration of this goal, the priority areas of the Commission's work are focused on harmonising and providing mutual recognition of the basic regulatory documents required for navigation on the Danube and other sections of the unified navigation system, as well as on contributing to the improvement of navigation conditions and the safety and security of navigation, and on creating requirements for the Danube's integration into the European system as a significant transport corridor.

Challenges related to the better integration of European river transport into the global economy by implementing the inter-modality of transport modes, mean that decision-making regarding Danube navigation has an inherently European and international dimension. For this purpose, the Danube Commission is committed to strengthening cooperation capacities along the Danube River as well as to the sustainable Danube water management activities, of which navigation uses are an integral part.

With the aim of enhancing the Danube Commission's contribution to international cooperation in inland navigation, the Member States of the Belgrade Convention are engaged in a process to modernise the Commission by updating its structures and giving it new functions and capabilities.

The general challenges of Danube navigation, such as the need for its effective integration into multimodal transport corridors which I have just mentioned, the need for financial and economic support measures, the necessity of reducing the impact of administrative barriers, the harmonisation of technical requirements and requirements for the safety and security of navigation, as well as the resilience to climate change, are given proper consideration throughout the dialogue of our Member States. Additionally, delegations of our Member States exchange opinions and best practices.

Even if the Danube Commission's founding document, the 1948 Belgrade Convention, deals with navigation matters, our Member States have always taken into consideration the sustainability side of river transport. As you may know, river transport is the most ecologically-friendly mode of transport, and transport by river going ships can remove a large number of trucks from our roads. Moreover, the Commission has included among the tasks of its Secretariat the improvement of rules regarding the prevention of pollution from ships.

---

*Address: Hungary, H-1068 Budapest, Benczúr utca 25.*

*Phone: +36-1-461-80-10, Fax: +36-1-352-18-39, E-mail: [secretariat@danubecom-intern.org](mailto:secretariat@danubecom-intern.org)*

*Website: [www.danubecommission.org](http://www.danubecommission.org)*

---



To achieve its objectives, the Danube Commission maintains close contact not only with its Member and Observer States, but also with almost all the European river commissions, including the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, and the Sava River Basin commissions, as well as with the other similar international organizations. Last summer, together with the Mekong River Commission and the ICPDR, we delivered presentations on sustainable river management to the representatives of Thai authorities.

The various topics that will be discussed during the seminars will be of relevance to the Danube Commission as well. Works undertaken for navigation purposes, for example, play an important role in the protection against water-related disasters. Moreover, we are currently revising our rules regarding river pollution by ships in order to better address the need to protect the environment and to seek the harmonization of ship's waste handling taking into account other structures, such as the Rhine Convention on the matter.

In our view, navigation is and should remain an integral part of sustainable water management, and navigation needs should be given proper consideration during the preparation and development of water management plans.

The role of safe, environmentally friendly and economically efficient water transport cannot be ignored in today's world. The participants to the Ministerial Conference organized in Belgrade in June on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signature of the Belgrade Convention specifically referred to this role in their recent Communiqué. They also underlined that “all stakeholders should support investments required for the development of river infrastructure (*except in any built infrastructural facilities, the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or later partial or complete demolition of which would cause unjustifiable negative environmental impact*), including in waterways, ports, fleet modernization, digitalization and education improvement of administrative procedures, the development and application of Intelligent Transport Systems, which should ensure the environmental benefits of Inland Waterway Transport as well as resilience to climate change, thus preserving the Danube River as a cornerstone of the common European house”.

Finally, I would like to refer to our working plan, which currently focuses on operational and environmental issues, safety and security of navigation, and international cooperation. From an environmental perspective, the Danube Commission is fully committed towards sustainable navigation on the Danube. To this end, our Member States continue their efforts to encourage reducing emissions stemming from vessels by replacing old and outdated propulsion systems as well as to improve the European management of ship-generated waste.

Moreover, the Danube Commission welcomes the promotion of technology-driven initiatives that are capable of achieving environmentally friendly operation in inland navigation.

At the policy level, the Danube Commission continues to attach great importance to the development of cooperation processes with the commissions I mentioned earlier, and try to share the experience of the good practices developed during such processes to other river basins

---

*Address: Hungary, H-1068 Budapest, Benczúr utca 25.*

*Phone: +36-1-461-80-10, Fax: +36-1-352-18-39, E-mail: [secretariat@danubecom-intern.org](mailto:secretariat@danubecom-intern.org)*

*Website: [www.danubecommission.org](http://www.danubecommission.org)*

---

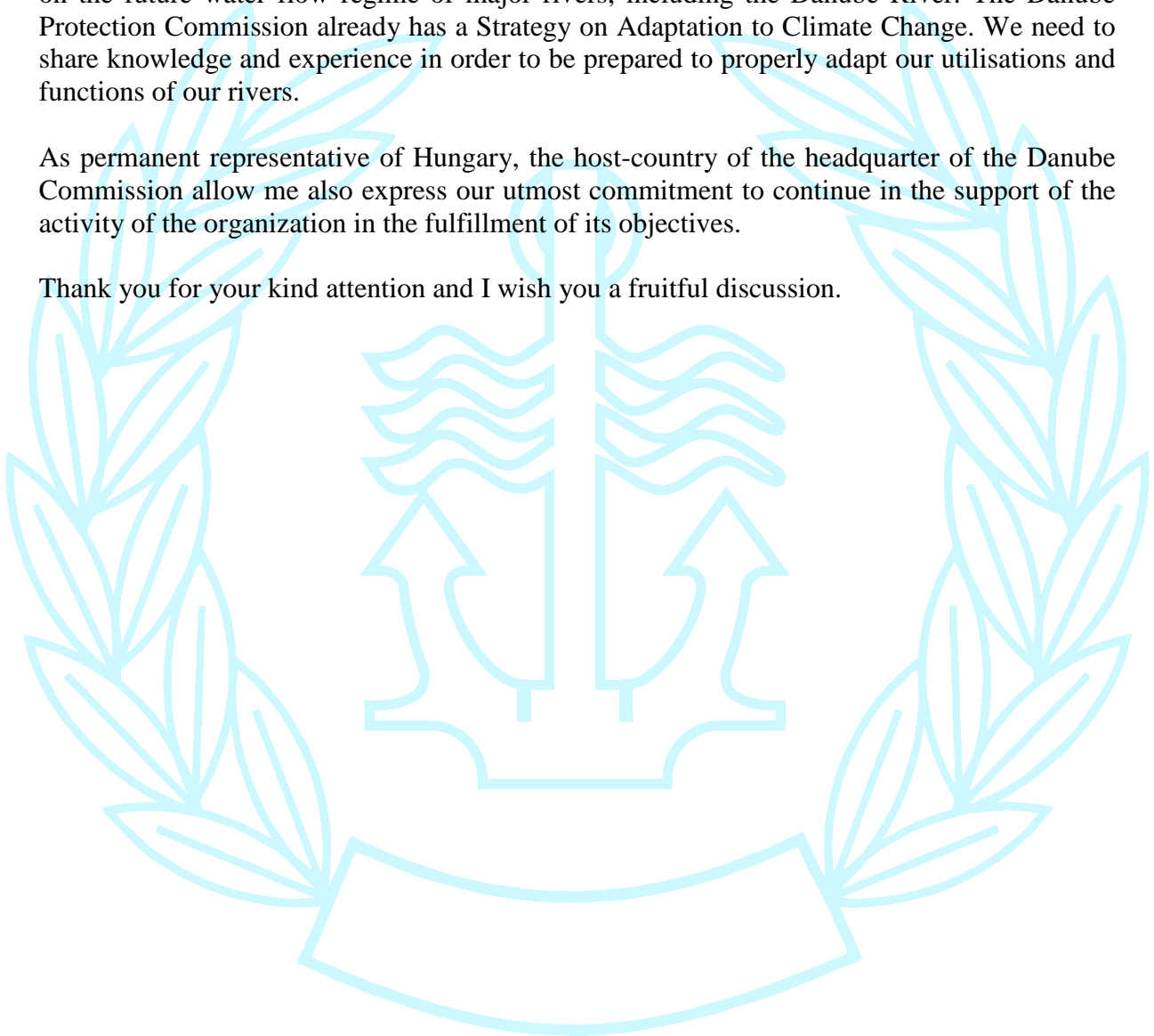


around the world. In the field of ship waste management, we strive to improve capabilities and coordination, and encourage development of alternative fuels and alternative forms of propulsion.

On the Danube River, we are currently experiencing very low water levels that have negatively impacted not only transport, but also the functioning of critical energy infrastructure. Climate change and natural disasters triggered by such change are thus likely to have a significant impact on the future water flow regime of major rivers, including the Danube River. The Danube Protection Commission already has a Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. We need to share knowledge and experience in order to be prepared to properly adapt our utilisations and functions of our rivers.

As permanent representative of Hungary, the host-country of the headquarter of the Danube Commission allow me also express our utmost commitment to continue in the support of the activity of the organization in the fulfillment of its objectives.

Thank you for your kind attention and I wish you a fruitful discussion.



---

*Address: Hungary, H-1068 Budapest, Benczúr utca 25.*

*Phone: +36-1-461-80-10, Fax: +36-1-352-18-39, E-mail: [secretariat@danubecom-intern.org](mailto:secretariat@danubecom-intern.org)*

*Website: [www.danubecommission.org](http://www.danubecommission.org)*

---