

DONAUKOMMISSION
COMMISSION DU DANUBE
ДУНАЙСКАЯ КОМИССИЯ

Press Release of the Danube Commission: Working group on technical matters (10-12 November 2026)

The Danube Commission's Working Group on Technical Matters (WG TECH) met in Budapest from 10 to 12 November 2026 and was chaired by Mr Ivelin Zanev (Bulgaria). It brought together the delegations of the Danube states, Observer states (Belgium, Netherlands), representatives of international organisations, riparian water management authorities and the shipping industry.

Building on an enhanced meeting format, the agenda was structured around focused thematic blocks, enabling rich contributions from external speakers and representatives of the inland navigation sector, including security in IWT and in ports, automation in inland navigation, fleet modernisation initiatives and climate change impact on Danube navigation.

A dedicated dialogue on automation in inland navigation and its prospects for the Danube brought a fresh perspective to the meeting. Representatives of the Flemish Department of Mobility and Public Works, the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, and the CCNR shared operational experience and updates on regulatory framework in remote and automated navigation, complemented by insights from innovative barge operators. Delegations then evaluated the requirements and conditions for potential pilot projects on the Danube.

Alongside automation, the WG TECH addressed the technical and regulatory aspects of Danube navigation, including updating the DFND 2023, entry into force of ES-TRIN 2027 and recognition of Serbian certificates under Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on professional qualifications in inland navigation, as well as vessel inspection, radio communication, and the new ADN 2027 requirements for fumigated cargo.

The Secretariat reported on progress in fleet modernisation initiatives, notably PLATINA4Action and the "Action Plan towards a Zero-Emission Danube Fleet", and briefed participants on the Statistical Yearbook for 2024 and the market observation results for 2025 and the first half of 2026. Delegations also received an update on ongoing developments in Danube infrastructure and port facilities.

Particular attention was given to navigation conditions in 2026, the challenges posed by increasingly frequent low-water periods, including the situation around the Paks nuclear power plant (focus on its implications for technical aspects of water management), as well as the urgent need for climate adaptation measures.

Following a series of Extraordinary Expert Meetings on Hydrotechnical Matters, organised by the Secretariat with the participation of representatives of national water management authorities, the Secretariat was mandated to develop a joint **Action Plan for adapting Danube Navigation to the Climate Change impact**, to be implemented through a joint project application under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF3, 2028–2034).

The outcomes of WG TECH will feed into the upcoming 106th Session of the Danube Commission. The next WG TECH meeting is planned for May 2027.