



Danube Commission 70



Edited by Iván Gyurcsík



DANUBE
COMMISSION
70

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Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade

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AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

LÁSZLÓ BALATONYI

Head of Flood Protection Department, General Directorate of Water Management
Hungary

BÉLA CSÁNYI

Hydrobiologist, Team Member of Joint Danube Survey

H.E. BRUNO GEORGES

Secretary General, Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine

H.E. IVÁN GYURCSÍK

Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission, National
Coordinator of BSEC, Ambassador

PETAR MARGIĆ

Director-General, Secretariat of the Danube Commission

HÉLÈNE MASLIAH-GILKAROV

Technical Expert, Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR

TIBOR MÁTYÁS

CEO, DDSG MAHART Kft.

H.E. ISTVÁN MIKOLA

Minister of State for Security Policy and International Affairs

H.E. GERT-JAN MUILERMAN

Priority Area Coordinator of Austria, Danube Region Strategy

H.E. KARLA PEIJS

Coordinator of the Rhine-Danube Corridor, DG MOVE, European Commission

H.E. GORDAN RADMAN-GRLIĆ

President of the Danube Commission, Ambassador of Croatia to Germany

RÓBERT RAFAEL

Senior Project Manager, Pro Danube International

GÁBOR SÁGI

COO, MAHART PassNave Kft.

BÉLA SZALMA

President, Hungarian Federation of Danube Ports

BOTOND SZALMA

Managing Director, Fluvius Kft.

DIÁNA SZŐKE

Senior Analyst, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade

H.E. PÉTER SZTÁRAY

State Secretary for Security Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary

H.E. OLEG ȚULEA

Vice-President of the Danube Commission and Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Hungary

H.E. PÁL VÖLNER

Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and President of the Hungarian Shipping Federation

DANUBE COMMISSION AND ITS SECRETARIAT

INSTITUTE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF HUNGARY

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF HUNGARY

FOREWORDS

Péter Sztáray

*State Secretary for Security Policy of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary*

Dear Readers,

Last year we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Danube Commission. In the publication that you hold in your hands, we would like to give an overview of the year's commemorative events. I am thanking Ambassador Iván Gyurcsík, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission, for having taken the initiative and for having coordinated this very important anniversary.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary organised and financed the commemorative events in close cooperation with the Danube Commission, the Institute of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary and the Hungarian Shipping Federation (MAHOSZ).

We should always remember that the Danube is a common treasure and heritage of the people living in the region. The river with its 2860 kilometres length connects not only 10 riparian states, but also altogether 19 states in its basin. With the opening of the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal in 1992, the Danube has become one of the most important trans-European transport corridors, which allows us to reach Rotterdam or Constanța from Budapest by ship.

In 1815, the Vienna Congress already settled the principle of the freedom of navigation on international waterways. The very first organisations to serve the purposes of inland navigation on the Danube were the Danube Commissions founded in 1856. This institutional framework has changed several times during more than 160 years. It had to face many difficulties and challenges during its history. It functions well when it reflects the interests of the riparian states and guarantees the right to free navigation. After WWII, in 1948 the great powers agreed to convene a special conference focusing on the elaboration of a new convention on the Danube navigation. The result of the conference was the Belgrade Convention, signed on 18th August 1948.

Since 1954, the headquarters of the Danube Commission and its Secretariat have been located in Budapest, where today 11 member states work together within this framework.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary jointly with the above-mentioned partners organised several events to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Danube Commission, to show the past, the present and discuss the plans and visions. We launched the commemoration on 7th March together with the Secretariat of the Danube Commission by opening the commemorative exhibition „Danube Commission 70” in the main building of our Ministry. Through remarkable pictures and documents, we could get an insight into the great history of the Danube Commission. On 2nd October, the members of the Hungarian Shipping Federation (MAHOSZ) gathered together with the representatives of the member states to celebrate the great achievements of the Danube Commission fittingly with a beautiful boat trip on the river Danube. The closing event of the anniversary was an international conference organised together with the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. The conference contributed to the discussion about inland navigation and about the future role of the Danube Commission.

On behalf of the host country of the Danube Commission, I wish you a pleasant reading. It is my sincere hope, that with this publication we may have drawn attention to the importance of navigation on the Danube and, at the same time, of maintaining a sustainable environment in the Danube Basin.

Budapest, 3rd June 2019

Gordan Radman-Grlić
*President of the Danube Commission,
Ambassador of Croatia to Germany*

Dear Friends,

I have a special pleasure and privilege to welcome the publishing of the book on the occasion of the events celebrating the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube, Belgrade, 1948 ratified by the Member States in 1949.

On 29th June 2018, the Danube Commission held the 90th anniversary session in Belgrade being preceded and followed by the organisation of other three important events. On 7th March 2018, the commemorative exhibition „Danube Commission 70” was opened in the main building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. On 2nd October 2018, the members of the Hungarian Shipping Federation (MAHOSZ) gathered together with the representatives of the Member States to celebrate the achievements of the Danube Commission accompanied by a beautiful boat trip on the Danube. On 13th November 2018, an international conference “Danube Commission 70 years – Inland Navigation: Diagnosis, Institutions and Visions in Europe” was organised together with the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. The conference focused on the inland navigation and the future role of the Danube Commission in this field.

The year 2018 represents a commemorative year and a perfect occasion to emphasise the importance of the Danube Commission established as a result of the signed Convention. The importance of the Danube Commission is nowadays determined by its capacity to be the Pan–European Transport Corridor VII and one of the continent’s most important transport routes. This is why the Danube navigation has to be continuously an efficient sector with well–equipped ports as a key factor for multimodal transport, as major driver for regional economic development and cross–border activities.

The Danube Commission has a serious background – history, traditions, huge experience, knowledge and uniqueness. But the current situation of the

Danube navigation includes different types of challenges as well: the critical sections, the unsatisfactory infrastructure, the enhance of traffic volume and density of the river, the ports development, the environmental conditions of Danube navigation, the vessels in operation, the climate change and disasters, etc.

In this context, the role of the Danube Commission is crucial: to supervise the application of the principle of the freedom of navigation on the Danube, to serve as a coordinating platform among its Member States, to develop the international cooperation by establishing a constructive dialogue with the most important stakeholders in different fields and at various levels of inland navigation. In order to execute this important role, the Danube Commission bases on its experience, documents, and experts engaged in the different sectors of Danube navigation, interests of the States and previous experience in solving problems arising on the Danube.

In my capacity as the President of the Danube Commission, I congratulate Ambassador Iván Gyurcsík, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission for this excellent initiative and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary for all the support provided, and do hope the collaborative spirit between the Danube Commission and the MFAT of Hungary will continue in the same fruitful manner for the development of the Danube Commission.

Budapest, 5th June 2019

I. EXHIBITION OF DANUBE
COMMISSION 70
- 7th March 2018

Introduction

The exhibition of Danube Commission 70 opened its gates to its visitors in the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Budapest, Hungary on 7th March 2019. Iván Gyurcsík, the Hungarian Permanent Representative to the Danube Commission and the main organiser of the event, revealed the concept of the exhibition:

“The materials presented here are mainly from the Archives of the Bánffy Miklós Library of our Ministry and from the archives and Library of the Secretariat of the Danube Commission, while the stamps came from the Stamp Museum of Magyar Posta.

Imagine that you are on a boat cruising from the Black Forest towards the Black Sea, and you stop at the 1648th Danube kilometre, a couple of metres from Margaret Island, at Bem Square to go on a time travel into the history of the Danube Commission with the help of this exhibition.

On the Buda side, marked by the picture of the Danube bank between Margaret Bridge and Chain Bridge, you can follow the story beginning with the Vienna Congress of 1815, through the establishment of the Commissions of the Danube River (the European Danube Commission in 1856 and the International Danube Commission). The pictures, documents and maps will lead us to the 1948 Belgrade Conference on navigation on the Danube.

On the Pest side, you can see the materials about the role, structure and work of the Danube Commission, examples of publications, maps, and finally you can read the message of the President, as well as documents about the international cooperation of the Danube Commission.

The CD presentation will lead you through the organisation's history in nutshell, including the present and the future outlook of the 70 years old Danube Commission. You can watch parts from a documentary film on the Belgrade Conference and the signing ceremony in 1948.

Please, let me express our gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the preparation of this exhibition and this celebration.

Please, allow me to thank Mr. Petar Margić, General Director of the Secretariat for his openness and his substantial support; we thank Ms. Olga Rotaru, Counsellor for Publications and Public Relations of the Secretariat and her collaborators, Valeria Bobutac, Veronica Grigorasenko, and Zoltán Lengyel for the preparation of the materials; and we also thank the Bánffy Miklós Library of the Ministry, Ms. Krisztina Biczó, Chief of Library and Olga Cholnoky, her predecessor, as well as all members of the staff. We are grateful to the Stamp Museum for the beautiful stamps.”

The exhibition was organised in six sections: (I) the historical background of the Danube Commission (1856-1948); (II) the Belgrade Convention on Navigation on the Danube in 1948; (III) the Danube Commission as an international organisation; (IV-V) the publications of the Danube Commission; (VI) the perspectives and future initiatives. These are summarised below, and followed by the opening speeches of István Mikola, Minister of State for Security Policy and International Affairs, and Gordan Radman-Grlić, President of the Danube Commission and Ambassador of Croatia to Germany. Finally, a collection of illustrations from the event and the press release of the Danube Commission are presented.

The Six Sections of the Exhibition

Section I

The Historical Background of the Danube Commission (1856-1948)

Over millennia, the navigation on the Danube was local. Long-distance transportation has faced difficulties of both political and technical character. Only in the 17th-18th centuries, with the development of the world seaborne trade, major maritime powers expressed their interest in big rivers flowing through several countries or separating them, at the same time connecting them to the sea. Therefore, we may state that by the moment of the Vienna Congress of 1815, significant prerequisites for the freedom of navigation had already been created and found their reflection in the Final Act which declared the principle of freedom of commercial navigation on international waterways.

Freedom of navigation, uniform legislation were the important provisions concerning river navigation (Art.117 – 118 – the Danube and its arms) of the Vienna Treaty. Notwithstanding the general nature of the provisions, they have not been applied to the Danube. The provisions of the European public law were not extended to Turkey, the Lower Danube and its arms. A selective legislation, the law of the riparian countries, was applied to the Danube.

Austria made a written proposal (Peace Treaty) to establish the principle of freedom of navigation on the Lower Danube. Navigation on the rest of the Danube was regulated by the principles of the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna of 1815 and by the 1851 Austrian Treaty (Bavaria and Württemberg).

The main driver for the necessity of cooperation of the countries along the Danube was at first economy. On 18th March 1856, seven countries (Russia, Austria, France, Great Britain, Prussia, Sardinia and Turkey) signed the Treaty of Paris, regulating the principles of navigation on the Danube and its estuaries. By the Treaty ending the Crimean Wars, the Danube and the Danube-Black Sea Delta was declared free and open to commerce vessels of all nations, and also it formally started the history of the Danube Commission – one of the oldest international organisations in Europe. To this end, Articles 16-17 of the Paris Treaty of 1856 established two commissions: the *River*

Commission (RC) and the *European Danube Commission (EDC)*. The first task of the EDC was to remove shipwrecks and debris from the Danube's delta, as well as the neighbouring parts of the sea in order to put that part of the river and the relevant parts of the sea in the best possible state for navigation and to open up again the navigational waterway towards the Black Sea.

The RC, initially set up as a permanent commission to assume responsibilities related to the navigation on the fluvial Danube, was composed of the delegates of Austria, Bavaria, the Sublime Porte and Wurtemberg (one for each of those powers), to whom were added Commissioners from three Danubian Principalities (Moldavia, Wallachia, Serbia), whose nomination had to be approved by the Porte. The Commission's responsibilities covered preparation of the Regulations of Navigation and River Police, removing the impediments, preventing the application to the Danube of the Arrangements of the Treaty of Vienna and execution of the necessary works throughout the whole course of the river, and, after the dissolution of the European Commission, ensuring the maintenance of the mouths of the Danube and the neighbouring parts of the sea in a navigable state. Due to a number of reasons, the River Commission – a Commission of representatives of the riparian states - was unable to fulfil its functions assigned thereto, and in 1858 had to suspend its work.

The London Conference of 1871 prolonged the European Danube Commission's term for another twelve years.

In 1878, Romania was admitted to an extended EDC as a free country, while Russia, being the winner of the Russian-Turkish War, took over an old strip of Bessarabia detached in 1856. The jurisdiction of the EDC was extended from Isatcha to Galatz.

In 1883, the London Conference extended the jurisdiction of the EDC from Galatz to Braila, prolonged the term of the EDC for twenty-one years with three-year renewal periods. It also authorised the establishment of the reorganised "mixed" commission (i.e. IDC, see below).

From the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of World War I, shipping on the Danube expanded considerably. In 1921, the Paris Conference, through the Convention instituting the Definitive Status of the Danube signed on 23rd July 1921, re-established the navigation on the Danube as unrestricted and open to all flags on a footing of complete equality over the whole navigable course of the river from Ulm (Germany) to the Black Sea. In addition to the EDC, responsible for the maritime Danube from Braila to the Black Sea, the Convention established the *International Danube Commission (IDC)* for the fluvial Danube and the internationalised river system.

In 1940, the Vienna Conference, with the participation of representatives from Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Italy, decided to revoke the Paris Convention of 1921, to dissolve the International Danube Commission, and to replace it with an administration headed by a “river council”, an advisory body that held its sessions in Bratislava.

Section II

The Belgrade Convention on Navigation on the Danube in 1948

The work of the Danube Commission (DC) was interrupted two times during World War I and II, but was directly restarted as a suitable means of cooperation for the riparian countries along the Danube River.

The Second World War had a devastating effect on the Danube navigation. After the war, the need for great efforts to re-establish navigation on the Danube was apparent. By 1946, navigation had been partially restored and its volume had increased. In this situation, it was imperative to regulate navigation on the Danube and to create the necessary structures. These issues had been preliminarily discussed at the end of World War II at the Potsdam Conference in 1945. The representatives of the USSR, China, the USA, Great Britain and France coordinated the draft peace agreements, which contained an article related to the navigation on the Danube. In this context, a special international conference for the elaboration of a new convention on the Danube navigation was to be convened.

The international diplomatic conference to develop a new international regime for the Danube River and Danube navigation was opened on 30th July 1948. After extensive discussions and negotiations, the representatives of the USSR, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia signed *the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube* on 18th August 1948 in Belgrade.

In 1957, Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany were admitted as observers to the fifteenth session of the Danube Commission. On 7th January 1960, Austria acceded to the Belgrade Convention, thus becoming a full member of the Commission. Amid major political and economic events, including the break-up of countries which were original signatories of the Belgrade Convention and the emergence of newly independent states with justified interests in the Danube region, led to the adoption, on 26th March 1998, of an Additional Protocol that introduced a number of changes in the 1948 Convention. In particular, Germany was incorporated among the signatory countries to the Convention.

Section III

The Danube Commission as an International Organisation

Today, the Danube Commission has 11 member states: the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Austria, the Slovak Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia, Romania, the Republic of Bulgaria, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation.

In addition, the following countries are observer states in the Danube Commission: the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Belgium, the French Republic, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Turkey, the Republic of Cyprus and Georgia.

The Belgrade Convention is a framework which, in Article 8, defines the tasks to be accomplished by the Danube Commission:

- to prepare a general plan of principal works on the basis of proposals presented by the Danubian States;
- to unify the regulations governing river inspection on the Danube;
- to coordinate the hydrometeorological services on the Danube;
- to harmonise inland navigation rules on the Danube;
- to establish a uniform system of standards on the whole navigable portion of the Danube (signals and pilot services);
- to collect statistical data on Danube navigation;
- to compile and publish reference works;
- to draw up and approve the Commission's budget, and to set and levy charges for special maintenance and improvement works.

In line with these tasks, the Danube Commission pursues efforts related to the harmonisation of technical requirements and standards in the different fields of the DC's expertise. At the same time, the Danube Commission seeks to address infrastructural needs and ensure due maintenance.

In order to fulfil these tasks, the Danube Commission works according to its adopted work plan, which includes the concrete activities of the organisation as well as the cooperation with partner organisations and the participation of representatives of the DC in various fora.

In accordance with the work plan, the focus of the Danube Commission's activities is put on the following aspects:

- nautical issues;
- technical issues;
- maintenance of the navigable waterway;

- operational and environmental issues;
- economic and statistical analysis;
- safety and security of navigation;
- international cooperation.

The main role of the Danube Commission is to provide for, promote and ensure freedom of navigation on the Danube in accordance with the Belgrade Convention, as well as to maintain and improve navigation conditions on the river. The Danube Commission is also an important instrument for fostering good economic and cultural relations among its Member States and with other countries.

The Danube Commission holds its ordinary sessions twice a year and may hold extraordinary sessions if necessary. The Commission also regularly convenes meetings of its expert groups on hydrotechnical issues, ship waste management, professional qualifications etc., as well as its working groups on technical issues and on legal and financial issues in order to accomplish its work plan and to address issues as they appear.

In 1954, the seat of the Danube Commission was moved from Galatz, Romania, to Budapest, Hungary.

The Presidency of the Danube Commission consists of the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary, who are elected for a period of three years on a rotating basis. At the executive level, the Secretariat of the Danube Commission is a permanent administrative body that executes the tasks it is assigned to, and is composed of eleven officers (counsellors) nominated by the Member States. The Secretariat of the Danube Commission is headed by the Director-General, who is supported by two Deputies and the Chief Engineer. The Secretariat serves as a central point of contact for the Member States (experts and delegates). The preparation work for the meetings, the translation of all documents into the official languages (German, French, Russian), and maintaining contacts with the Member States are key elements of its activity. The work of the Secretariat is essential in order to ensure a professional response to issues of navigation on the Danube.

Sections IV/V

The Publications of the Danube Commission

The tasks stipulated by the Belgrade Convention cover, *inter alia*, the edition of professional publications.

Therefore, in implementing the provisions of the Convention, the DC also releases a wide range of publications, covering a broad spectrum of the Commission's fields: including Rules for River Surveillance, Basic Rules of Navigation on the Danube, Recommendations on Technical Requirements for Inland Waterway Vessels, Recommendations on Boatmaster's Certificates, Recommendations on Vocational Education and Training of Inland Waterway Operators, Instruction for the Installation of Signs of Fairway Buoyage and Marking System on the Danube, Inland AIS and RIS Recommendations, Information on Dues and Fees, Tariffs and Taxes, Annual Market Observation for Danube Navigation, Statistical Yearbooks, Recommendations on Ensuring Security of Navigation on the Danube, Master Plan on the Achievement of Recommended Fairway Parameters, Hydro-Technical and Other Facilities on the Danube, Recommendations on Minimum Requirements for Standard Fairway Parameters, Hydro-Technical and Other Developments on the Danube, Hydrological Yearbooks of the Danube, Annual Report on the Navigable Waterway of the Danube, Album of Bridges and Longitudinal Profile on the Danube, Recommendations on Ship Waste Management. The DC has over 350 titles available in German, Russian and French.

The DC's publications are regularly updated, they reflect the latest developments, and they take into consideration the specific features of the sector and the expert knowledge accumulated by the Danube experts.

Section VI

The Perspectives and Future Initiatives

The enlargement of the great family of states currently represented to the Danube Commission is a significant indicator of growing interest bringing about convergence of river systems between the North Sea and the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea as well as parts of the Caucasian area. Developed infrastructure has become among major priorities for many states. Regulatory mechanisms have to be made more flexible in order to cater for rapid changes in the region, and more comprehensive to encompass diverse spheres of the Danube-related objectives – infrastructure development, improvement of environmental performance, skilled personnel, promotion of innovation, waterway management and technological aspects.

International cooperation and establishing a constructive dialogue with the most important stakeholders from different organisations and countries is part of the daily work of the Danube Commission. Considering the stakeholders concerned, the DC is involved in cooperation in different fields and at various levels. Cooperation with economic organisations: Cooperation between the

Danube Commission and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) is based on a Memorandum of Understanding on sectoral dialogue and partnership between the DC and the BSEC, concluded on 8th June 2010. The Memorandum establishes transport, trade and the environment as the fields of cooperation and defines, as priorities for cooperation, motorways of the sea and short sea shipping for transport from the Black Sea Basin to the Danube ports.

Cooperation with river commissions involves the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), the Moselle Commission and others. Cooperation with these commissions is comprehensive, focusing on the exchange of good practices, experience and information, but also including common activities and initiatives on specific aspects of navigation. In this context, the Danube Commission seeks to expand its cooperation with other markets of the river basins, for instance by drafting common standards and compiling European market observation reports together with the CCNR, both efforts carried out under the aegis of the European Union.

Cooperation at EU and UN level: Cooperation with the European Commission to support and develop Danube navigation is based on the Administrative Arrangement Concerning a Framework for Cooperation between the Danube Commission and the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission. In particular, both sides endeavour to strengthen their cooperation in order to increase synergies and make their actions more complementary and mutually reinforcing. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has been an important partner for the Danube Commission from the beginning, reflected by the fact that it was the first organisation to receive observer status at the DC. The Danube Commission also participates in the work of the UNECE's Working Party on Inland Water Transport (Geneva).

Developing the waterway infrastructure is one of the most important objectives of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR). The existence of bottlenecks, which cause periodic interruptions and reduced safety of navigation, is one of the main obstacles to the proper maintenance of the Danube waterway. The Danube Commission has provided the European Commission with a list of national infrastructure projects and initiatives (projects of the DC Member States), accompanied by the Plan of Major Works to achieve the recommended parameters of the fairway, hydrotechnical and other facilities on the Danube.

Based on these pillars and on the provisions of the Grant Agreement concluded with DG MOVE, the Danube Commission is actively involved in

the infrastructure development projects FAIRway, Good Navigation Status and GRENDDEL, which are projects of the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP). DANTE, another DTP project, is aimed at improving administrative procedures and processes for Danube inland waterway transport. The Danube Commission plays a coordinating role in the maintenance of the Danube fairway and the elimination of bureaucratic barriers in order to improve navigation conditions on the Danube.

Since 2014, the Danube Commission has been involved in the process of establishing the Rhine-Danube transport corridor, and since 2015, the Danube Commission has participated in the CESNI Committee's working groups on technical requirements for inland waterway vessels, competencies standards and professional qualifications in inland navigation. The Administrative Arrangement has enabled the Danube Commission to acquire additional expertise and to achieve a pioneering position as regards infrastructure maintenance, security and market observation for Danube navigation. When working on international projects and elaborating standards, the Danube Commission always strives to express the common position of the DC Member States.

Key challenges of inland navigation are the need for its effective integration into multimodal transport corridors and for financial and economic support measures, as well as the feasibility of reducing the impact of administrative barriers, the harmonisation of technical standards and requirements for ensuring the safety and security of navigation, as well as resilience to climate change.

The Danube Commission's goals for the future require a complex approach and must be considered through a strategic dialogue of the DC Member States, and an exchange of technologies, opinions and best practices. Achieving these goals is well within the reach of the Danube Commission.

The Danube Commission's outlook is connected with the active participation in European inland navigation programmes, the improvement of coordination among all stakeholders, the better dissemination of information between policymakers and customers, the raising efficiency and competitiveness of the Danube, as well as the harmonisation of technical rules and standards covering the Danube and the Rhine under the umbrella of the EC and UNECE.

The role of the Danube Commission is to provide coordination between the DC's Member States. Our basis - experience, documents and experts engaged in the different fields of Danube navigation - urge a closer cooperation with the aim to solve problems existing on the Danube.

The Secretariat of the Danube Commission,
and H.E. Iván Gyurcsík

The Opening Speeches of the Exhibition

István Mikola

Dear Distinguished Guests,

I warmly welcome you today, using the terminology of navigation, on the 1648th Danube kilometre. We gathered today to start the commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the Belgrade Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube and the foundation of the Danube Commission.

We are just a handful of metres from our common treasure, the Danube, which with its 2860 kilometres connects not only 10 riparian states, but also altogether 19 states in its basin. Since the opening of the Danube-Main-Rhine Canal in 1992, the Danube has been one of the vital European transport corridors. Just by travelling on the Danube, we can travel between Rotterdam and Sulina or we can sail from the North to the Black Sea.

Today we celebrate, by opening this exhibition about the history of the Danube Commission, one of the oldest intergovernmental organisations. From its conception in 1948, the Belgrade Convention laid the foundations of the Danube Commission, which is the most recent legal and institutional framework for on the regulation of navigation of the Danube.

In the last 200 years, wars and their subsequent peace treaties influenced the various regulations concerning the Danube to an enormous extent. From the Congress of Vienna in 1815, through the resolution of the Crimean War as well as both World Wars, each peace treaty added or changed the existing treaties on the Danube.

After the devastating effects of the Second World War, the representatives of the Great Powers – the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and France - agreed to convene a special conference on the elaboration of a new convention on the Danube navigation.

Its result was the Belgrade Convention, which was signed on 18th August 1948 by seven signatories: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Romania and the Soviet Union. The members were followed by Austria in 1959 and by Germany in 1999. The political changes of the 1990s have not left the Commission untouched, nowadays it operates with 11 members and 10 observer states.

Since 1954, the headquarters of the Danube Commission and its Secretariat is located in Budapest. As a Minister of State from the host country, I would like to take the opportunity to emphasise the importance and relevance of both the Convention and the Commission. During these past seven decades, many changes and developments occurred in the field of shipping, transport and navigation. Quite often, these changes also posed challenges that the Danube Commission had to adapt to, in order to maintain its relevance. This job is hardly over, as we seek to create a Sustainable Future for all of us, our organisations have to adapt to newer and newer challenges.

Hungary, as the president of the Preparatory Committee responsible for revising the Belgrade Convention, fully supports the work of the Danube Commission. We are committed to the modernisation of the Commission. In the Preparatory Committee, we currently lead a dialogue between the representatives of Member States on the most suitable way to discuss how the Belgrade Convention could be modernised and adapted to face these new challenges.

The Commission's significance reaches far beyond the possibilities it offers in inland waterway regulation and navigation. The fate of the river touches all of our lives, as it is a fundamental source of drinking water and irrigation water.

Both in relation to navigation and in relation to other areas, it is important to approach the river in a complex manner taking the principles of sustainability into consideration.

Hungary is active in the international arena both in water-related issues and beyond. I am proud to report that Hungary has played an essential role in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as the Open Working Group on SDGs of the UN was co-chaired by Hungary during that period. I would also like to highlight that Hungary is the current president of the Visegrad Group.

Last October, Hungary hosted the Sixth Annual Forum of the Danube Regional Strategy titled "A secure, connected and prospering Danube Region" that has put a strong emphasis on discussing the challenges and perspectives of energy security, clean connectivity and infrastructure development of the Region. As we know, in the upcoming two years, four Danube countries will

preside the Council of the European Union, offering an opportunity to give the problems of the Danube Region a stronger voice within the European Union.

The motto of our Presidency is “V4 Connects”, which highlights the joint intention of the Visegrad Group to strengthen interconnectedness in our broader region, in the political, economic and cultural sense as well. Improving physical infrastructure among our countries is also a long-standing key priority of the V4, and accordingly, the current Hungarian Presidency’s second priority is entitled “Regional Visegrad”.

In the field of transport, the main priorities of the Hungarian Presidency are the strengthening of the major North–South transport connections, the improving of the permeability of borders between the V4 countries and the deepening of cooperation between V4 transport experts.

I firmly believe that it is a great achievement of the Danube Commission that we can witness the improvement of the cooperation between the Danube Commission and other international organisations such as the EU Directorate-General (DG MOVE), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the Central European Initiative or the Sava Commission. We expect from these agreements, that in addition to the improvement in Danube navigation conditions, the Danube countries will receive a greater role when designing the inland navigation regime.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who participated in the preparation of this event. The exhibition’s aim is to quickly introduce you to the past, present and the future perspectives of the Commission and to raise awareness regarding the importance of the Danube.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What else can I wish for the Danube Commission than a fruitful future cooperation, a better navigation and a sustainable environment in the Danube Basin?

Thank you for your attention!

Gordan Radman-Grlić

Dear Distinguished Guests,

It is my great privilege and pleasure to welcome you to the exhibition on the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube, co-organised with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. This exhibition provides a good opportunity to share interesting and essential information about the Danube Commission.

Our organisation has been facing major challenges for some time now. The constant change in the globalised world also requires our adaptation to the ever-growing technology of the modern world, which requires transformations and the introduction of new communication models and modes of action. In the first place, I think of the need for the adoption of a new Convention, which must form the formal legal framework of our contemporary work. The new Convention namely will affirm the Danube Commission as a modern and serious organisation, adapted to the new international relations and the demands of modern times. In that sense, let me express my gratitude to the Hungarian side for all efforts they did and are still doing in ensuring a new Convention that would be acceptable to all Member States of the Danube Commission.

Besides adapting to the new circumstances and challenges it might face in near future, the Danube Commission has to strengthen its relations and cooperation with other international river organisation such as the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, the International Sava River Basin Commission or the Moselle Commission.

It is important to stress the direct involvement of the DC in the projects on inland waterways of the pan-European importance, where the DC has much to offer from its own experience and expertise. One of the most important projects is for instance the direct involvement of the DC in the DANTE project under the Danube Transnational. The project aims to eliminate administrative barriers and to reduce special control procedures for vessel traffic. Considering

these issues together with the private sector and the competent authorities is particularly relevant for Danube navigation.

We also expect positive results for Danube navigation from our cooperation with the European Commission, based on the Administrative Arrangement concerning a framework for cooperation between the Secretariat of the DC and the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission signed in 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The threats that we are experiencing today are of a global nature; the survival of mankind is unpredictable and changeable, while political instability is increasing. These growing threats have become more complex, and they manifest themselves in the radicalisation and destabilisation of states and entire regions. Given the significant international character of the DC, the current national and global challenges of security policy open up new prospects for positioning the DC in a globalised world.

There are many glorious chapters in the history of the DC. You could learn about some of them at our exhibition. The year of 2018 marks the 70 years of the Convention. At the invitation of the Convention's depository, the Republic of Serbia, we will celebrate this proud anniversary in Belgrade, on 29th June 2018 concurrently with the 90th session of the DC.

The figures – 70 and 90 – in themselves underscore the long tradition of our organisation. We are proud of its history, and we face the future with confidence, reaffirming the importance of the Danube River as a transport corridor, and the DC as the most international River Commission. For this reason, I welcome the commitment of our organisation to cooperate actively with other international organisations, which will enable the DC to develop Danube navigation more vigorously and successfully.

Thank you for your attention!

Photos from the Exhibition



1. From right to left: H.E. Gordan Radman-Grić, H.E. István Mikola, H.E. Elisabeth Ellison-Kramer, and H.E. Iván Gyurcsík



2. From left to right: H.E. István Mikola, and H.E. Gordan Radman-Grić



3. Audience listening to the opening speeches of the exhibition “Danube Commission 70” - Main hall of the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary



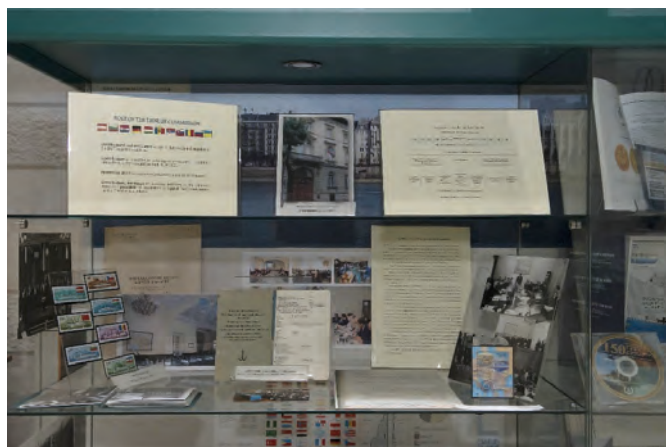
4. Observing the documents of the Belgrade Convention from 1948 – H.E. István Mikola, and H.E. Iván Gyurcsík



5. The historical background of the Danube Commission



6. Flags of the Danube Commission and its Member States



7. Documents, pictures, stamps about the Danube Commission



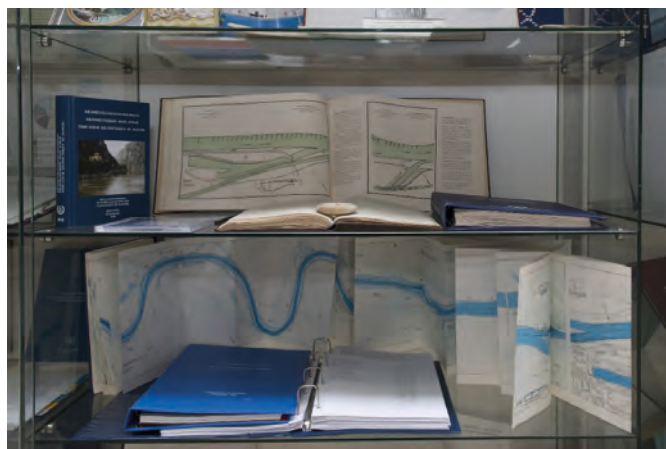
8. Publications, photos and signs related to the Danube Commission



9. Publications of the Danube Commission



10. Maps, publications and an indicator of river kilometres of the Danube



11. Maps for inland navigation



12. Message of the President, list of former Presidents and Director-Generals of the Danube Commission



13. Documents on the international cooperation of the Danube Commission



14. European Danube Commission - the beginning

Press Release of the Danube Commission on the Exhibition¹

On the 7th of March 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary in collaboration with the Danube Commission opened the exhibition dedicated to the 70th Anniversary of the signing of the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube, done in Belgrade in 1948.

This event was organised under the patronage of the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission, Mr. Ambassador Iván Gyurcsík in order to emphasise the importance of Danube navigation, the high contribution of the Member States in the development of Danube navigation and the importance of the Danube Commission and the Danube Basin region.

Seventy years ago, in Belgrade, the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube was signed to ensure the free and open navigation for the nationals, vessels of commerce and goods of all Member States on the footing of equality. Article 5 of the Convention set up the Danube Commission, an international intergovernmental organisation, in order to execute the works established by the Danube States and to provide all necessary assistance. Article 8 of the Convention regulates the general tasks of the Danube Commission in the field of the Danube navigation.

The opening of the exhibition was a comprehensive event that included the exposition of documents, books, maps, pictures since 1856, when through the Paris Treaty the European Danube Commission and River Commission were established. The exhibition “Danube Commission 70” reflected the periods of time before and after the I and II World Wars, the period of the signing of the Belgrade Convention (1948) till nowadays.

¹ The Danube Commission's press release on the exhibition can be read online in English on the following link: http://www.danubecommission.org/uploads/doc/press/2018/DC_MFA_exhibition.pdf. The MTI's press release on the occasion can be read online in Hungarian on the following link: <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/kulgazdasagi-es-kulugyminiszterium/biztonsagpolitikai-es-nemzetkozi-egyuttmukodesert-felelos-allamtitkar/hirek/kiallitassal-emlekeztek-meg-a-duna-bizottsag-alapitasarol>.

The exhibition “Danube Commission 70” was opened by the Minister of State for Security Policy and International Affairs, Mr. Istvan Mikola and by the President of the Danube Commission, Mr. Gordan Radman-Grlić, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia to Germany. The audience, composed of diplomats accredited in Budapest, experts from the Danube countries appreciated the exhibition as an interesting and cognitive event.

The exhibition - Danube Commission 70 will be open at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary until 18th of April 2018.

II. CELEBRATORY
RECEPTION ON
THE OCCASION OF
ESTABLISHMENT OF
DANUBE COMMISSION
AND 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE SIGNATURE OF THE
BELGRADE CONVENTION
- 2nd October 2018

Introduction

The Celebratory Reception on the Occasion of Establishment of Danube Commission and 70th Anniversary of the Signature of the Belgrade Convention was held on the “Budapest” Ship on 2nd October 2018. Iván Gyurcsík, the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission and the main organiser of the event, first welcomed the hosts of the reception: State Secretary for Security Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Péter Sztáray; Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and President of the Hungarian Shipping Federation, Pál Völner; and the Vice-President of the Danube Commission, Oleg Țulea, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Hungary.

Among the distinguished guests were the Secretary of the Danube Commission, H.E. Elisabeth Ellison Kramer, Ambassador of Austria; the Permanent Representatives of the Member States; the Director-General of the Secretariat of the Danube Commission, Petar Margić; and the Officers of the Secretariat of the Danube Commission; as well as former officers of the Commission and the experts. From the Hungarian side: the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Innovation and Technology, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Justice, as well as the Director General of the General Directorate of Water Management and his colleagues, representatives of the Tisza Office participated at the event. The presence of the representatives of the Hungarian Shipping Companies, associations, experts on navigation, foreign guests from partner River Commissions (like the Rhine) and other international organisations, was particularly valuable.

After the valuable thoughts of the speakers, Iván Gyurcsík referred to the complexity of the river by highlighting that the Danube was an important part of the TEN-T corridor network, its development and the navigability was considered by the EU to be important. The regulatory requirements had come close to each other on the part of the EU and the Danube Commission. It was a clear priority for the environmentally friendly, economically sustainable development to ensure a safe navigability on the Danube.

In accordance with the programme of the celebratory reception, the speeches of the hosts can be read below in order: (1) Oleg Țulea, Vice-President of the Danube Commission and Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Hungary; (2) Péter Sztáray, State Secretary for Security Policy of the MFAT; (3) Pál Völner, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and President of the Hungarian Shipping Federation. Finally, a collection of illustrations from the event and the press release of the Danube Commission are presented.

The Opening Speeches of the Celebratory Reception

Oleg Țulea

Dear Distinguished Guests,

It is my task today to say some words at the opening of this nice event on behalf of the Danube Commission, so let me just start by saying that it is a great pleasure for us all to be here today. I wish to thank our hosts for giving AGAIN the opportunity to commemorate an important event for the Danube Commission - 70 years ago, the Belgrade Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube was signed and our Commission was created. It is also an opportunity to thank the Government of Hungary for hosting the headquarters of Danube Commission and for all its valuable contribution to the development of the Danube navigation and the Danube Commission as organisation.

The Ministerial Conference that was held on 29th June 2018 in the Palace of Serbia, in Belgrade, the 90th Jubilee Session of the DC, the exhibitions dedicated to the “70 Years of the Belgrade Convention”, organised by authorities of Hungary, Romania, Serbia, proves the strong belief of Member States in the value and the future of our organisation.

We are today, 11 member countries: the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine.

We praise our close cooperation with the 10 observer countries. From 2001, this status has been granted to the Republic of Turkey, the Republic of France, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia, Georgia, the Republic of Cyprus and Montenegro. In addition, the DC meetings were attended by the representatives of other important international organisations: the European Commission (EC), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube (ICPDR), the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), the Moselle Commission and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC).

Now we – the Member States of the organisation – can look back to a long and traditionally well-going cooperation. The Danube is important to every country in Central Europe, but the opportunities the river has for pulling people closer to each other, should be used in a more efficient way.

We never forget to mention that the Danube is the longest river in the European Union and the second longest one on the continent after the Volga. Nineteen countries share its catchment area and more than 81 million people are connected to the river, so the Danube is “the most international river of the world”.

No need to recall here our long discussions on navigability over the Danube River. Our ships, our industry, our economies need a free-flowing river. We just need that the world’s most international river, which is the Danube, becomes a friendly companion for our ships.

The Danube navigation has great possibilities to strengthen its potential and can become a key factor for the raising of the well-being of the people from those regions in the Member States of the Danube Commission (DC), where economic activity is connected to the Danube.

The general challenges of Danube navigation, such as the need for an effective integration into multimodal transport corridors, 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 being given proper consideration throughout the dialogue of our Member States. Additionally, they exchange technologies, opinions and best practices.

Our Member States have always taken into consideration the sustainability side of river transport. The river transport is the most ecologically friendly mode of transport, and a transport by river going ships removes a large number of trucks from our roads. Under the conditions of congestion of other modes of transport, even the existing potential of the Danube navigation is used insufficiently, particularly in international trade.

The reasons of the current situation are first seen in insufficiently developed transport market, weak links with the markets in other basins and certain lack of confidence in the Danube transport, primarily, due to the non-competitive infrastructure in comparison to the other modes of transport. We know that the present market of the Danube transport is considerably inferior to the Rhine navigation in volume and traffic density. The main reason is a traditionally weak economic base of the Danube region and the weak navigational infrastructure. In addition, the role of a safe, environmentally friendly and economically efficient water transport cannot be ignored in today's world.

This all brings us to the conclusion that there is a strong necessity to raise our cooperation and the activity of Danube Commission to a new level in order to effectively address the challenges.

Allow me to conclude by saying that a strong, consolidated Danube Commission is in the best interests of each member country, thus ensuring regional development dynamism in economy, trade, tourism and cultural field. It is our sincere hope that a modernised Danube Commission will also mean an enhanced platform, which will create synergies between the various national and cross-border policies, which will strengthen the inter-sectoral coordination and the political and economic relations among the partner states, as well as the contribution to the enlargement policy of the great European family.

Thank you for your attention.

Péter Sztáray

Dear Distinguished Guests,

I am pleased to welcome you to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Danube Commission, it is especially my honour to greet the Representatives of its Member States and the Secretariat.

The Danube Commission is like a phoenix, we could see its rebirth from ashes in different forms since 1856 several times. The principle of the freedom of navigation on international waterways was already settled at the 1815 Vienna Congress. When it functioned well, it reflected the interests of the Danube states and guaranteed the right to free navigation. After World War II, in 1948 the great powers agreed to convene a special conference on the elaboration of a new convention on the Danube navigation. The result of the conference was the Belgrade Convention, which was signed on 18th August 1948 by seven signatories: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Romania and the Soviet Union. Since 1954, the headquarter of the Danube Commission and its Secretariat is located in Budapest, where today 11 member states work together in this framework.

The Danube with its 2860 kilometres connects not only 10 Danube states, but also altogether 19 states in its basin. Since the opening of the Danube-Main-Rhine Canal in 1992, the Danube has been one of the vital European transport corridors. Just by travelling on the Danube, we can travel between Rotterdam and Sulina or we can sail from the North to the Black Sea.

We have to mention the great sister river Commission, partner Commission of the Danube Commission, the Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine with its headquarter in Strasbourg, which celebrates this month its 150th anniversary. The Mannheim Convention, its legal foundation was signed on 17th October 1868. Congratulations!

The Danube is our common treasure, an ecologically friendly means of transport, but also our source of water, energy. It is important for our agriculture. We have to strengthen conditions for international cooperation, to

underline the Danube's economic integrative function and on the other hand to guarantee the sustainable development, the protection of environment. Our task is to find the way how to accommodate the conflicting interests through deepening and fostering the international cooperation.

We welcome the improvement of the cooperation between the Danube Commission and other international organisations, such as the EU Directorate-General (DG MOVE), the ICPDR, the Central European Initiative, the Sava Commission. We expect from these agreements, that in addition to the improvement in Danube navigation conditions, the Danube countries will receive a greater role when designing the inland navigation regime.

The regional cooperation between the Danube and the Black Sea region is also important for us. Since 1st July 2018, Hungary became an observing member of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC), with the headquarter in Istanbul.

Last year in October, Hungary hosted the 6th Annual Forum of the Danube Regional Strategy under the title "A secure, connected and prospering Danube Region" that has put a strong emphasis on discussing the challenges and perspectives of energy security, clean connectivity and infrastructure development of the Region. Furthermore, the Hungarian Presidency also aimed to find ways to better integrate the non-EU countries participating in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region – with a specific emphasis on the Western-Balkans – so that they have greater access to the opportunities provided by such macro-regional cooperation and benefit further from its implementation.

Hungary, as the president of the Preparatory Committee revising the Belgrade Convention, fully supports the work of the Danube Commission. We are committed to the modernisation of the Commission and the revision of the Belgrade Convention. We need the active participation of each member state for further steps to have an organisation able to respond to the new challenges.

We started this year with a commemoration on the 7th of March jointly with the Secretariat of the Danube Commission by opening an exhibition „Danube Commission 70” in the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. Today we gathered to celebrate together with the head of diplomatic missions concerned, the representatives of the Hungarian sailor society, expert on navigation, flood protection, environmental protection, representatives of different ministries, this important anniversary of our common Danube Commission. Furthermore, this year we plan to organise a conference with the cooperation of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade on the issues of the Danube Commission and inland navigation.

So, by showing the past, reflecting on the present tasks, we would like to speak also about our future, our visions, our strategical goals.

The Danube played sometimes strange roles: after World War II, the bridge between Esztergom and Štúrovo (Párkány) was destroyed. Families, relatives, friends were divided, separated for a long time, there was no possibility to travel to the other bank of the river. So the people went to the bank of the Danube in the early morning or late evening, to escape from the attention of the soldiers, and whispered their messages toward the other bank. We call it now as “aquaphone”. And the waves of the Danube helped to deliver the messages, these were the signs of hope across the river. I wish for us along the Danube, and for everyone who is responsible for the work in different aspects of our beautiful river, to send and receive good messages about our joint treasure: the Danube.

I wish for us, for the Danube Commission: a fruitful cooperation, a better navigation on the Danube and a sustainable environment in the Danube Basin. Finally, I would like to assure you that you can count on our support and cooperation as a host country.

Thank you for your kind attention!

Pál Völner

Dear Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the Hungarian National Navigation Alliance, I would like to also greet our distinguished guests and thank you for accepting the invitation to our reception combined with a boat trip, on the occasion of celebrating the 70th anniversary of the formation of the Danube Commission established by the signature of the Belgrade Convention. It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here, in Budapest, at the seat of the Commission.

First of all, allow me to say a few words about the activities of the Hungarian National Navigation Alliance. In 2004, fourteen years ago it was established with the purpose of providing professional information for organisations active on water, helping them in enforcing their interests, and if necessary, providing organisational and co-ordination tasks. Recently those who are actively involved in navigation constitute a significant proportion of our membership, as the Alliance represents hundreds of members through its member organisations. Our membership includes organisations representing professional freight, passenger and ferry shipping, organisations providing background services for shipping and water sport organisations. These include the Alliance of Passenger Shipping (Személyhajósok Szövetsége), the Association of Hungarian Inland Water Freighters (Magyar Belvízi Fuvarozók Szövetsége), the National Alliance of Ferry Shipping (Révhajósok Országos Szövetsége) and the Hungarian Yachting Association (Magyar Vitorlás Szövetség) as well.

Since its formation, the representatives of the Alliance have always been striving for their activities not to be confrontational, but rather to find solutions. With our persistent work, this has led to a good relationship with organisations interested in navigation, water transport, water sports or with bodies regulating or controlling their security from the side of the government, state administration and local-governments. Due to the special importance of the organisation, its Secretary General regularly participates in the meetings

of the General Assembly of Budapest related to navigation issues. The Alliance also seeks to be in a continuous contact with the Water Police.

Our Alliance is a public-benefit organisation, which was deserved – among others – by preparing numerous proposals and giving opinions on draft laws in cooperation with organisations acting in legislation. As an example, I would like to mention that currently we are working on the preparation of exams for professional crew members by taking into account the market needs and the changing international standards. In addition, in the recent days, we also made proposals for navigation safety regulations in the area of the capital, whereby an official provision has already been issued. Cooperation is also improving in the field of the realisation of local government investments related to our ports, or I could also mention the organisations that maintain our waterways, with which we have an excellent relationship as well.

Our Alliance considers as its important task to provide members with a new nautical generation by facilitating its membership – and besides them organisations and persons dealing with navigation – primarily through providing professional training and education, giving qualification materials and professional opinions.

We are permanent participants of water events organised by governmental offices, where numerous disadvantaged people had the opportunity to enjoy shipping and being on water. Regarding our own events, I would like to highlight the Annual Spring Outbound Shipping as the opening event of the navigation season, with which the Alliance wishes to draw attention to shipping as a travel and tourism opportunity. This year, at the third occasion, about 30 vessels made a formation at the downtown area of the Danube, and numerous passengers – including hundreds of disadvantaged children – were taken to sightseeing cruises. Furthermore, I consider it to be equally important to mention the fundraising action held in cooperation with the “Save a life!” Foundation. Each year crew members collect and donate money in order to fulfil a wish of a child who is sick or recovering but still under strict medical prescription.

As the chair of the Hungarian National Navigation Alliance, I consider it important to emphasise that the relation between the Danube Commission and the Alliance has been excellent according to the experiences of the past years. Alongside of the European Union, the Danube Commission is the only platform whereby the Hungarian navigation can enforce its interests, so it is indispensable to cultivate and strengthen this cooperation, since in the field of Danube navigation there is undoubtedly a prominent role of the Commission in the promotion of cooperation within the Member States and the non-members of the European Union as well.

Thank you for your kind attention!

Photos from the Celebratory Reception



1. From left to right: H.E. Oleg Țulea, H.E. Pál Völner, and H.E. Péter Sztáray



2. From left to right: H.E. Péter Sztáray, and H.E. Iván Gyurcsík



3. H.E. Pál Völner delivering his speech



4. Audience listening to the speeches



5. Audience listening to the speeches



6. Guests – H.E. Rade Drobac, Ambassador of Serbia to Hungary and former President of the Danube Commission; Zsuzsanna Holop Gyurcsík from the Foreign Affairs Directorate of the Hungarian National Assembly

Press Release of the Danube Commission on the Celebratory Reception²

On the 2nd of October 2018, under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary and the Ministry of Justice was organised the celebration of the establishment of Danube Commission and 70th anniversary of the signature of the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube, done in Belgrade 1948 (Belgrade Convention).

The celebration was opened by the State Secretary for Security Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, Dr. Péter Sztáray; by the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission, Mr. Ambassador Iván Gyurcsík; by the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and President of the Hungarian Shipping Federation, Dr. Pál Völner; and of course by the Vice-President of Danube Commission, Mr. Ambassador Oleg Țulea, all of them emphasising in details the importance of Danube navigation, the high contribution of the Member States in the development of Danube navigation and the importance of the Danube Commission and the Danube Basin region.

Seventy years ago, in Belgrade was signed the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube, set up to regulate the free and open navigation for the nationals, vessels of commerce and goods of all Member States on the footing of equality. This Convention by the Article 5 created the Danube Commission, an international intergovernmental organisation, in order to execute the works established by the Danubian States and all necessary assistance. Article 8 of the Convention is regulating the general task of the Danube Commission in the field of the Danubian navigation.

The audience was composed from diplomats accredited in Budapest, experts from the Danubian countries and many guests.

² The Danube Commission's press release on the celebratory reception can be read online in English on the following link: http://www.danubecommission.org/uploads/doc/press/2018/reception_70_years_DC_02_10_2018_boat.pdf. The Hungarian Government's press release on the occasion can be read online in Hungarian on the following link: <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/kulgazdasagi-es-kulugyminiszterium/biztonsagpolitikai-es-nemzetkozi-egyutt-mukodesert-felelos-allamtitkar/hirek/unnepi-fogadas-a-duna-bizottsag-alapitasanak-70-evforduloja-alkalmabol>.

III. CONFERENCE ON
DANUBE COMMISSION
70 YEARS
- INLAND NAVIGATION.
DIAGNOSIS, INSTITUTIONS
AND VISIONS IN EUROPE
- 13th November 2018

Introduction

The Conference on Danube Commission 70 years – Inland Navigation: Diagnosis, Institutions and Visions in Europe was held in the building of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), in Budapest, Hungary on 13th November 2018. While marking the 70th anniversary of the Belgrade Convention, the purpose of this conference was to provide a platform for a candid exchange of views on the future of the inland navigation in Europe, particularly on the Danube River, and mainly through the lenses of the institutional structures created for the joint management of the Danube and its tributaries.

The programme of the conference offered one closed and two open panel discussions. The closed panel discussion aimed to bring together the representatives of the institutional structures, hence those of the Danube Commission Member States could explore the role of international institutionalised cooperation in the field of inland navigation, and more broadly, in the field of river management in Europe in the 21st century. It also aimed to identify convergence, divergence and meeting points in order to clarify the issues and possibly to set a vantage point, and in order to identify, in the following panels, the possible future avenues for cooperation.

The first open panel discussion was held between the representatives of the shipping industry and those of public authorities on the major challenges and opportunities of inland transportation, and particularly inland navigation. The members of the panel were: Botond Szalma, Managing Director, Fluvius Kft.; Béla Csányi, Hydrobiologist, Team Member of Joint Danube Survey; Tibor Mátyás, CEO, DDSG MAHART Kft.; Petar Margić, Director-General, Secretariat of the Danube Commission; Béla Szalma, President, Hungarian Federation of Danube Ports; and Gábor Sági, COO, MAHART PassNave Kft.; the moderator was Róbert Rafael, Senior Project Manager, Pro Danube International. The panel dealt with the infrastructure needs, regulatory barriers, and labour issues, while it further assisted the participants in the closed panel in refining their ideas on the prospective avenues for cooperation.

The second open panel discussion presented some visions regarding the sustainable use of the Danube River, and allowed for the representatives of different institutions to share and discuss their respective visions and ideas about the future of inland navigation. The members of the panel were Petar Margić, Director-General, Secretariat of the Danube Commission; Bruno Georges, Secretary General Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine; Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov, Technical Expert, Public Participation and Communication, ICPDR; Gert-Jan Muilerman, Priority Area Coordinator of Austria, Danube Region Strategy; and László Balatonyi, Head of Flood Protection Department, General Directorate of Water Management Hungary; the moderator was Diána Szőke, Senior Analyst, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

In accordance with the programme of the conference, the keynote speeches are cited first below: (1) Péter Sztáray, State Secretary for Security Policy of the MFAT; (2) Oleg Țulea, Vice-President of the Danube Commission and Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to Hungary; (3) Karla Peijs, Coordinator of the Rhine-Danube Corridor, DG MOVE, European Commission. These are followed by the summaries of the first and second panels, the “Challenges and Opportunities of Inland Transportation” and the “Visions for the Future of the Danube and Inland Navigation”. Then Iván Gyurcsík, the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission makes his concluding remarks. Finally, a collection of illustrations from the event and the press release of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade are presented.

The Keynote Speeches of the Conference

Péter Sztáray

Dear Distinguished Guests,

I am pleased to welcome you at the international conference organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Danube Commission on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Danube Commission.

It is my honour to greet the Representatives of the Danube Commission's Member States and the Secretariat. It is a special occasion when we can also greet the representatives of the EU and the other important European river commissions (Rhine and Sava), European and Hungarian experts dealing with the environmental dimension of the Danube, and the representatives of Hungarian shipping companies, the National Water Management Directorate. We are pleased to see the great interest of you on the issues of inland navigation and about the situation of the oldest international organisation with its headquarter in Budapest.

As the host country of the Danube Commission, throughout this commemorative year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade organised together with our partners several events to commemorate, to show the past and to discuss the future plans and visions.

We started this year of commemoration on the 7th of March jointly with the Secretariat of the Danube Commission by opening a commemorative exhibition „Danube Commission 70”. On the 2nd of October, we gathered to celebrate on board together with the representatives of the Hungarian Shipping Federation (MAHOSZ) and the representatives of our sailor society. Today, by the organisation of this international conference, we would like to contribute to the discussion on inland navigation and the future role of the Danube Commission.

When we speak about important anniversaries and inland navigation, I have to mention the great sister river commission, the partner commission of the Danube Commission, the Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine with its headquarter in Strasbourg, which celebrated last month its 150th anniversary. On 17th October 1868 the Mannheim Convention, its legal foundation was signed. We can greet its Secretary General, Mr. Bruno Georges among us. Congratulations!

Since the foundation of the Danube Commission in 1856, we could see several ups and downs, interruptions in its history. The principle of the freedom of navigation on international waterways was already settled at the 1815 Vienna Congress. When it functioned well, it reflected the interests of riparian states and guaranteed the right to free navigation. After World War II, in 1948 the great powers agreed to convene a special conference on the elaboration of a new convention on the Danube navigation. The result of the conference was the Belgrade Convention, which was signed on 18th August 1948 by seven signatories: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Romania and the Soviet Union. Since 1954, the headquarters of the Danube Commission and its Secretariat is located in Budapest, where today 11 member states work together in this framework.

Hungary, as the president of the Preparatory Committee revising the Belgrade Convention, fully supports the work of the Danube Commission. We are committed to the modernisation of the Commission and the revision of the Belgrade Convention. We need the active participation of each member state for further steps to have an organisation able to respond to the new challenges.

The Danube with its 2860 kilometres connects not only 10 riparian states, but also altogether 19 states in its basin. Since the opening of the Danube-Main-Rhine canal in 1992, the Danube has been one of the vital European transport corridors. On the Danube, we can travel between Rotterdam and Sulina or we can sail from the North to the Black Sea.

The Danube is our common treasure, an ecologically friendly means of transport, but also our source of water, energy. It is important for our agriculture. We have to strengthen the conditions for international cooperation, to underline the Danube's economic integrative function, and on the other hand, to guarantee the sustainable development, the protection of environment. Our task is to find the way how to accommodate the conflicting interests through deepening and fostering the international cooperation.

The Danube is an important part of the TEN-T corridor network, its development and the navigability is considered to be important by the EU. The regulatory requirements have come close to each other on the part of the EU and Hungary. It is a clear priority for the environmentally friendly,

economically sustainable development to ensure a safe navigability on the Danube.

We welcome the improvement of the cooperation between the Danube Commission and other international organisations, such as the EU Directorate-General (DG MOVE), the Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine, the Sava Commission, the Mosel Commission, the International Commission for the Protection of Danube River Basin (ICPDR) or the Central European Initiative. We expect from these agreements, that in addition to the improvement in Danube navigation conditions, the Danube countries will receive a greater role when designing the inland navigation regime.

The regional cooperation between the Danube and the Black Sea region is also important for us. Since 1st July 2018, Hungary has become an observer member of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC).

Building on the success of the events held in 2013 and 2016, Hungary will host the third Budapest Water Summit in 2019. Under the patronage of H.E. János Áder, President of Hungary, the conference will take place between the 15th and 17th October 2019.

The Budapest Water Summit 2019, under the motto “Preventing Water Crisis” aims to promote solutions that tackle the problems of the emerging water crisis we have to face, building around the issues of abundant, scarce and polluted water.

The Summit will provide a platform for political decision makers, representatives of the economic and finance sectors, as well as the members of the scientific society to discuss the challenges and find solutions on how to achieve a water-secure world.

Hungary is committed to the successful implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), the second macro-regional strategy of the EU adopted during the Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011.

The EUSDR presidency of Hungary in 2017 was dedicated to „A secure, connected and prospering Danube Region” highlighting the challenges of green connectivity.

Hungary hosts the Interreg Danube Transnational Program for the general satisfaction of all Danube countries as one of the most important financial tools for the cohesion of the Danube region, supporting not only project development, but the operation of the Strategy as well.

Hungary also has a leading role in project development and implementation with the aim to improve inland waterway transport. Our commitment is proven by the fact that the DanubeSediment and DAREFFORT projects are

coordinated by Hungarian organisations as well as by the active participation of relevant Hungarian bodies in the DANTE and DAPhNE projects.

The Conference of Danube Parliamentarians has already been organised twice in our country – first in 2014 and last time in October 2018 – reflecting our intention to promote the Strategy at the level of political decision makers as well.

I wish for us, for the Danube Commission: a fruitful cooperation, a better navigation on the Danube and a sustainable environment in the Danube Basin. Finally, I would like to assure you that you can count on our support and cooperation as a host country.

I wish you a fruitful discussion!

Oleg Țulea

Dear Distinguished Guests,

It is a pleasure and honour for me to welcome and to thank You for following the invitation of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade which in cooperation with Danube Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary organised the today Conference.

As you know, the 2018 year is an important one for the Danube Commission - 70 years ago, the Belgrade Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube was signed by which our Commission was created. To commemorate this historical moment, the Danube Commission, but also the Member States organised several anniversary events, which of course reminded us for the past, and more importantly, it gave us the opportunity to reflect on the future of the navigation on the Danube and on the challenges needed to be addressed through a joint effort. I have to admit that Hungary, as the country that hosts the Danube Commission, was the most active member. several important events were organised by the Hungarian authorities, so I wish to thank on behalf of the Presidency to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Secretariat of the Danube Commission for the initiative to organise the today's discussion which is so important for the future of Danube navigation.

Since the dawn of known history, Danube has connected nations and civilizations and played a vital role in the settlement and evolution of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Today, the importance of this transnational river has not diminished - it has, in fact, become an artery that closely links riparian countries, with particular significance for the economies of these states by offering extraordinary opportunities for transport, trade, communication among people, but also for security and environment responsibilities.

Given the complexity of circumstances in which the Danube Navigation Convention was signed 70 years ago, the fact that this document is still in force demonstrates once more the need to regulate and make efficient the navigation on the Danube. The Belgrade Convention had confirmed free

navigation on the Danube for citizens, ships and goods of all countries “on the basis of equality in respect of port and sailing taxes, as well as in terms of commercial shipping”. The Danube Commission, created on the basis of the Convention, over the years has become an organisation with the primary task of developing and strengthening navigation on the Danube, in accordance with the interests and sovereign rights of the Member States, as well as of developing economic and cultural relations.

As Danube Commission celebrates its 70th anniversary, the building of community of the Danube states is stepping, and I believe so, to a new level, has gained a new impetus, and now we are engaged in discussing how to reform and modernise our organisation. Over the last few years, despite the sluggish economic growth, even if the political and economic uncertainties were on the rise, our cooperation has continued to enjoy a progressive development and the Danube Commission is an example in this respect.

And I can confirm, that now, we, at the Danube Commission, are very much focused on the future of our organisation.

At the moment, the Preparatory Committee of the Conference for the Revision of Belgrade Convention is working on the already once revised text, trying to make steps toward the modernisation of the Danube Commission, having as basis the existing new reality and challenges.

In 2010, the Danube Commission with the help of the Member States and foreign experts drafted and adopted the strategic document – “The main directions of inland navigation policy on the Danube”. Just recently an initiative to define the New Strategic Directions of the activity of Danube Commission was launched. Important issues are addressed within the framework of the Danube Commission’s cooperation with the EC and within other EU projects. We concentrate on enhancing our cooperation with the sister river organisation.

We all know about the specialty of Danube river, we all know about its strong sides and its weaknesses at the same time. The Danube navigation has great possibilities to strengthen its potential and can become a key factor for the raising of the well-being of the people from those regions in the Member States of the Danube Commission (DC), where economic activity is connected to the Danube. Danube Commission through its activity continuously regulates the directions of the inland navigation on the Danube but there are still existing challenges and without the involvement of the Member States, without the cooperation with other international river organisations, without the cooperation with European Commission, we will not be able to address efficiently these issues.

Challenges are still ahead. We have to make changes, if we want to allow navigation to stay an important mode of transport using its advantages when it comes to its impact on the environment. Maintenance works and improvements of the waterway's infrastructure, fleet modernisation and reduction of emissions, developments of ports and connections to the hinterland, crew and education are topics with highest priority for the DC. Not to forget the management of the Danube River navigation from the perspective of the Danube Commission.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, today, we have the opportunity to approach the current situation of inland navigation on the Danube River and not only. We have a good platform to speak regarding difficulties, challenges existing in, to discuss the future developments of the Danube navigation, connected with other rivers and basins (Rhine River and Sava River Basin); to identify more fields of cooperation and co-work. I do hope that today's discussions will have a strong contribution to define the strategic directions of the Danube Commission activity, to identify the right direction of the modernisation of Danube navigation.

Allow me to conclude by saying that a strong, consolidated Danube Commission is in the best interests of each member country, thus ensuring regional development dynamism in economy, trade, tourism and cultural field. It is our sincere hope that a modernised Danube Commission will also mean an enhanced platform, which will create synergies between various national and cross-border policies, which will strengthen the intersectoral coordination and the political and economic relations among the partner states, as well as the contribution to the enlargement policy of the great European family.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish you a fruitful discussion and a successful Conference.

Karla Peijs

Dear Distinguished Guests,

It is a great pleasure to attend this conference in Budapest. I was here not long ago, in the beginning of September to participate to the first Hungarian National User Forum to discuss the implementation of our CEF funded projects with representatives of the ministries, civil society and industry. Two months have passed since then, and here I am again.

Why? Because it is important to underline, once again, and I will never be tired of repeating it, that the Danube's good navigation status is one of my priorities as Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor Coordinator.

The Danube is the largest European river with enormous transport potentials. There are 20 ports with an annual goods' traffic of more than 1 million tonnes per year.

This is a significant contribution to transportation needs, but inland waterways even have a greater potential for further development.

Strategic industries for the EU economy - like automotive, chemicals, petro-chemicals, agro-industries and energy production - rely heavily on inland waterways.

Let me say why this river, which goes across Hungary, is so important for Europe and I will do so recalling the main priorities of Commissioner Bulc transport policy.

Decarbonisation - As you know, transport is responsible for about a quarter of emissions within the EU and it is the second biggest emitter just behind energy. We need an energy-efficient, decarbonised transport sector. The Commission's Low-Emission Mobility Strategy launched last year is very ambitious and will be implemented this year through various new measures designed to give confidence to industry, investors and consumers to invest and roll out new technology. You, the stakeholders around the table today can and have to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

Digitalisation - Full connectivity and automation will eventually lead to a safer, more integrated and efficient transport network. Here, IWW and especially the Danube need to play a big role and this is why we are encouraging the use of river information systems. We should all work together to deliver an EU framework, so that all transport services are included in a journey planner to enable the consumer to make an informed choice, no matter what modes or how many borders are involved in a journey.

Investment - Much can be said on this point, but let me focus on the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) as one of the key instruments of the European Commission to address the infrastructure gap in the EU Member States, even though CEF is only one of the many funding instruments. CEF Transport has so far funded 641 Actions worth €22.3 billion of EU contribution. The current portfolio of Actions in the Rhine Danube Corridor comprises 94 grant agreements allocating €3.8 billion of actual CEF Transport funding. CEF-supported investments cover 8.2 percent of the total investment needs outlined in the Third Work Plan (€7.2 billion out of the estimated €87.7 billion). We need the Member States of the EU to address the issues at national level and when needed to join forces at the international one, as for instance, here in this framework of the Danube Commission. Cooperation at every level is key to reach our important goals.

When we talk about IWW, we cannot NOT mention multimodality, and 2018 has been the year of multimodality. This year has been the opportunity to have a fresh look at how we move and how we commute. An opportunity to rethink transport from a system approach, using resources efficiently and addressing customers' needs. EU provides significant financing for multimodality and for sustainable urban mobility in general: For example, €43 million of the last CEF call will be spent on multimodal projects, leveraging an impressive total investment of €352 million. Multimodality and passenger mobility are also among the priorities of the new CEF call which was closed few weeks ago. That means another €450 million of fresh money for projects such as passenger transport terminals, and easier access to data related to urban vehicle access regulations and multimodal travel information!

Last but not least, let me underline two aspects which I consider essential for the future:

We have seen in the past years that centralised management of EU funds triggers institutional reform and unlocks potential for development and growth. CEF Actions have a clear scope and quantifiable goals. However, their impact often reaches beyond those. The centralised management approach adopted in CEF enhances ownership by the beneficiaries and is contributing decisively to the development of their in-house technical and administrative capacity. As a response to a number of challenges, which are in many instances

recurrent, CEF-supported Actions in the Rhine-Danube CNC are acting as true catalysers of a well-established and more fluid collaboration between actors, beyond their individual prerogatives. These enhanced communication and horizontality result not only in efficiency gains, but also in long-term, broader institutional reforms that will extend their impact long after the end of the Programme.

Therefore, I would like to conclude by saying that we cannot do everything I have mentioned without YOU, and when I say You, I mean everybody involved: ministries and staff at all level, river basin commissions, industry stakeholders.

On this matter we have recently been informed about the decision of the central government to reorganise the Ministry and hence to reduce the staff, working on CEF Actions. The European Commission takes note of this decision. At the same time, however, I would like to reiterate our expectation that this re-organisation will not have an impact on the efficiency and outstanding high level of performance in the execution of EU-funded projects. The European Commission would like to see Hungary continuing to use the EU-funded projects as tools to comply with the requirements of the TEN-T Regulation 2013/1315/EU and the EU RIS Directive 2005/44/EU and to finalise the Rhine-Danube Core Network.

As a final point, I would like to mention the Ministerial meeting of Transport Ministers in Brussels that aims to adopt Danube Ministerial conclusions. It is a shared vision of the riparian EU and non-EU countries towards the Danube: good navigation status, harmonised control forms, digitalisation, rehabilitation of strategically important lock facilities, reduction of administrative barriers and greening of the inland fleet, etc. is welcomed. I warmly invite Hungary to sign the conclusions that are so important for all Danube stakeholders, including the Hungarian ones as well.

I thank you for your attention.

Summary of the First Open Panel Discussion

- Challenges and Opportunities of Inland Transportation

Róbert Rafael:

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen, Your Excellencies! And good afternoon for the members of the panel: Botond Szalma, Managing Director of the Fluvius Kft.; Béla Csányi, Hydrobiologist and Team Member of Joint Danube Survey; Tibor Mátyás, CEO of the DDSG MAHART Kft.; Petar Margić, Director-General in the Secretariat of the Danube Commission; Béla Szalma, President of the Hungarian Federation of Danube Ports; and Gábor Sági, COO of the MAHART, PassNave Kft.

My name is Róbert Rafael as I was formerly introduced, I work for the Pro Danube International. Very briefly, it is a business association located in Vienna with approximately 200 members now. And more importantly, it is the Lead Partner for the DANTE and DAPhNE projects which were already mentioned by H.E. State Secretary, and which partnership is a great honour, an opportunity and a challenge as well.

It is going to be my duty in the next, little bit more than an hour to moderate this panel where we should be learning about the current status and the big opportunities and challenges behind the inland waterway transport nowadays and the Danube River. We have heard many keywords and statements from the keynote speakers, hence, I think it is very important to talk about the cooperation as the Danube is the most international river among all. And so it comes with opportunities and challenges, of which I expect to hear from all aspects. And let us see, what this cooperation can add to the future. I have the mandate from the organisers, and once again thank you very much for selecting me for moderating this session, and that I can stop the microphone of all speakers after 10 minutes sharp, so as I learnt when driving 130 kilometres per hour is rather 129 than 131, I will stop at 9 minutes and 59 seconds.

My last impression on the Danube was when I was down at the southern edge of the Margaret Island at Sunday lunchtime, took some pictures, and then, in the afternoon, my 11 years old daughter said that this just could not happen! She meant how could we be in the middle of the Danube?

So first of all, it is my pleasure to ask Director-General, Mr. Petar Margić to hold his speech.

Petar Margić:

I do not want to repeat all these facts that we have heard today before lunch, we have also had a closed session with the stakeholders of inland waterways transporting in Europe, furthermore, we have heard the State Secretary, our Vice-President and Mrs. Peijs, the Head Coordinator for the TEN-T Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor, on these issues. You should all know that Karla Peijs is a very important person in the European Union, supporting us all around in these projects which are significant in terms of inland waterway.

About the challenges: we have heard today a lot of challenges on the Danube, which are actually the same on the Rhine, just the Rhine member states are, let's say, rich countries, while the ones along the Danube are not really. We can compare that the yearly transport on the Danube is between 30-40 millions of tonnes, while on the Rhine, maybe Bruno George can correct me, it is between 120-150 millions of tonnes, which is approximately four times greater than the transport on the Danube. At the same time, the Danube is almost three times longer than the Rhine. Then why do these countries have this issue? Well, it is because we have problems.

The first problem on the Danube, and not only on the Danube, is the climate change, the global warming, by which we have a problem with navigability on our river. This means the same problem each year, and it does not only concern navigability, but when we have low water or when we have flood, which means that a few years ago Budapest was in the middle of the water, the city was in the middle of the water, and tram lines could not work. We also have problems in Germany, with the city of Passau and Deggendorf, so all around the Danube we have navigability problems. However, the main concern is stopping the shipping which means "no go periods". At almost each year, we have a problem on the Lower Danube, at the common Bulgarian-Romanian stretch. This year, fortunately we did not have this problem, but we had other ones on the Middle and Upper Danube, so all around the Danube we have problems. A few weeks ago, we had a business talk in Vienna, some of you were there, and we were told the kind of problems stakeholders had. Some of them said that they would give it up and could not work anymore under these conditions, it was impossible for them. So what kind of problems exactly do we have?

Navigability, low water period, high water period, we also have a problem with the big loss, how the stakeholders are losing money, how we are losing money to customs control, to border police, etc. Now I am talking about bad

things, but with the support of our Member States and the support of the European Union, we are trying to solve these issues and we are on the best way. Okay, someone can say that this is very slow, but at least we have started, *Eppur si muove!* - at least, it moves. To solve the problem with the customs control, the cross-border operation, we started to cooperate with Róbert's company within the DANTE project, which is an excellent project, and our chief engineer has just said in the closed session before lunch that maybe the Danube Commission would try to implement the final result of this problem. We have now ten member states, which are on the Danube and the eleventh is the Russian Federation, but we have in each of these countries a different water system, a different check system, and by the customs control and border police, the companies are losing time. The DANTE project will create a unique system for the cross-border operations and will be of help for our stakeholders, the shipping companies.

About solving these problems, I am always telling that you cannot build a house from the roof, you have to build it from the basement. Our basement is the navigability, is the fairway. That means if we want to have a progress, if we want to reach something from which today we have heard, like greening the fleet, lowering the pollution, the emission of CO₂, we need companies with profit. And you may correct me but in the last 6-7 years, there has not been a company with profit on the Danube, and we should not forget the last 23 years, in which we have built only one new cargo ship on the river. Can you imagine that? Only one?! This is completely different from what we have on the Rhine. However, this is not so pessimistic, if we do not want it to be, because we have passenger shipping on the other side which is growing between 3-6 percent per year, and that means that the Danube is the most interesting river for cruisers in Europe on the European level.

But while there is a growing passenger shipping on one side, there is a decreasing cargo shipping on the other side. How can we solve this problem? The Danube Commission is participating in almost each project, or almost in each project for inland waterway transport in Europe. I do not want to mention all of them because we have quite an amount of them today. But what is our opinion? The opinion of the experts from the Danube Commission, from the Secretariat? How can we solve the navigability problems?

Well, there are two possibilities: to do it on the short run or on the long run. What does it mean "short run"? It means that we will do dredging, let's say, once-twice-thrice a year, and this is really for the short run because we have a sediment transport and today, if you use dredgers on one bottleneck, in a few weeks or months, you will have this sediment transport, where the sediment will be moving, and in the near future, you will have the same problem occurring again. About the long run, we have already had a discussion today, and this really reflects the opinion of the experts, the captains on the river

and the stakeholders. We can solve this problem, if we build new locks on the Danube. On the connection from Mains to the Black Sea, only in Bavaria, we have 58 locks. In Austria 9, one we have in Slovakia, then on the common Romanian-Serbian stretch, we have two locks, these are the Iron Gates One and Two. Then why are we suggesting to build new locks? Because only Iron Gate One has a navigational influence on the lock, almost 300 kilometres long, and we will not have navigability problems on that stretch between Iron Gate Two and One. You all know that what we have been talking about, we have actually had in Germany in this year, we have each year as a problem on the stretch from Straubing to Vilshofen. I do not know how many times this was a problem, so it was a project masterplan made by the DC in 1984 to suggest for the German government (since Germany was a DC member at the time, the plan was made for the whole Danube) to build two locks: one in Vilshofen and another one in Deggendorf.

I was in Berlin a few days ago, and we were talking about the new masterplan of the German government. This masterplan is planning to make some dredging works on the Danube on the aforementioned Straubing – Vilshofen stretch, and the water level will be only 25 centimetres higher. It is not enough, as we said and as we all know. The answer of some German representatives from the German Ministry of Transport was that they did not want to build locks because of environmental reasons. At the same time, my colleague and me were travelling to an anniversary in Mannheim CCNR, and we saw on the road, on the highway that hundreds and hundreds of trucks and hundreds of private cars were staying there with CO₂ emission, while the Danube was completely empty.

As I said, we have two solutions for how to solve the problems: the dredging on the short run and the locks on the long run, but for the second solution, we need political support, because we are not decision makers, we are experts, we just have to focus on the problems and underline them, politicians are the decision makers. Thanks!

Botond Szalma:

Thank you very much. I am very happy to be here, especially since I am a real shipping man and once, like 10 years ago, I was invited to present a paper in Vienna, and after my presentation someone called me even as a “horrible shipping man”. Well, finally I have become proud of being a horrible shipping man because it means that I can tell you the truth.

The title of my presentation is “What Challenges and Opportunities of Inland Transportation Do We Have, and I Have?” Well, the subtitle should be “The Headaches of Inland Shipping on the Danube”. It is time for us to

decide on these and to tell the truth. We have a lot of programs, and the programs of the programs, and these are useless for the shipping companies, believe me. So in order to have a real waterway access to the Rhine-Main-Danube waterways, which is a European strategy, we badly need to maintain the waterway itself. This means that we need a pass for the waterway. If somebody needs the railway, (s)he needs railways for it, if somebody needs a tracking company, (s)he needs highways and streets, but frankly speaking, shipping companies need highways as well – we just call them as Rhine-Main-Danube waterways ending at the Black Sea, and ending in the Ara range. So we are responsible for it, and the decision makers are also responsible for it. Unfortunately, most of them have no idea about the real or practical side of these issues. I believe that in these issues we do not have an economic and political crisis, but a moral and ethical crisis.

And if we want to overcome it, we must work properly. Of course, it is not time to cry but to solve the problems. We were always crying and talking a lot instead of solving the problems. Where are the decision makers? I don't know. The WWF, the Greenpeace and the others are just well-paid anarchists for the shipping companies. Frankly speaking, they never have solutions, they are just delivering speeches on what is not proper for them, but I have never heard of a solution from a green, unfortunately.

I do not want to tell about the programs of the European Community, the more we have, the happier we are, but believe me, we do not need those, so please do not initiate any new programs. Just finish the first program of the European Community, please. I do not need more programs, because I cannot carry programs - I can carry passengers or cargos. We have a lot of money from the European Community, but how many times are we going to define TEN-T or core networks in line with the TEN-T planning methodology and to identify missing links? We have done that at a hundred times so far in the past years. But what is really missing, in my opinion, is to use our brains correctly and to let the shipping industry work properly.

The bottlenecks of the Danube cannot be identified uniquely or at all as the whole Danube itself is a big-big bottleneck. From Passau or from Kelheim to Sulina at the Black Sea. Only the last 64 miles are navigable up to your country, which is crazy. Can you imagine that we cannot utilise 3000 kilometres? And we are in a delay of 40 years. You can right see me: I started my carrier as a shipping man when I was 3 years old and now I am already old enough to have the right knowledge about it, and I am telling that we are in 40 years of delay and we do not have more time. It is time to decide and act. This is my message. By looking at the map, you can see ups and downs and free steaming sections, and where there is a broken line, we have to do something with the Danube, particularly in the whole Hungarian section and in the common Romanian-Bulgarian stretch. No more waste of time, please.

There is a message, and yet why do not we decide? Because of the European Transports Policy for 2010, do you remember it? That was the message. It is time to decide! It happened 10 years ago, not yesterday. 10 years ago. And it was a revised paper from 2000. If someone was born in 2000, (s)he would graduate soon and nothing has happened to the Danube in the meanwhile. Why do not we decide? Where is the role of the Danube Commission? What is the role of the Danube Commission? We have to find it today in order to start working for the industry. Otherwise we are going to lose this game. Do you know who is responsible for the Danube? Do we have any future? We do not have more time to decide, but we do have daily headaches as:

The crew: in 5 years, we are going to lose half of the masters. Who is going to navigate then? My grandmother? Or a child? Who? On the top of it, we do not have a ministry governing transportation in Hungary. So you are very lucky in the Netherlands, because you have one.

The fleet: we have an old fleet - this is not a fleet but a wreck. Ask the Russians, the Russian representative: 10 years ago, they had a deadweight capacity of 900.000 tonnes. Do you know how much they have today? 300.000! One-third, and nothing happened! Just wrecking, wrecking, wrecking... Because of the demolition and of the lack of maintenance. But the maintenance I need for the business, if I do not have income, I cannot maintain my fleet. Full stop. Drop your key and walk. But we cannot walk, I cannot carry 10.000 tonnes by a backpack. Or at least *I cannot*.

The cargo: sooner or later the cargo owners are going to quit the market. The cargo owners are going to quit the shipping market because they need sustainability in shipping market, while we only have headaches, navigational problems, problems of low water, high water, icy condition, no water. I do need peaceful navigational conditions for 6-8 months a year at least, not for 30 days only.

And the bottlenecks: this is a wacky fairway, we do not have bottlenecks, sorry to say it. On my slide, this is the ratio of the Belgian and German overaged people. Can you see it? In Germany, 40 percent of the crews are overaged and this is a ten years old slide. Can you imagine the today's figures? No, you cannot.

What do we need? A minimum draft of 2,5 metres at least on 300 days on average per year. This is a fact, nothing else, no more programs, nothing please. This is the aim of the game. The today's draft on the Danube is in some parts only 1,10. So if you let a 10 years old guy walk through the Danube, he would not get wet at all, nowhere. Not in Hungary, not in Austria, not in Germany. And not in the Rhine, in the Koblenz area. What I am currently showing is the Rhine navigability, it is less than 2 metres, can you see it?

Half a year without income. If there is no income, then what the hell are we doing? Do you know what? I have a vessel with the cargo capacity of 1600 tonnes. I am going to have it with a normal draft, with 2,5 metres. If I have only 2 metres, I am going to lose 264 metric tonnes cargo, just as today, I have lost already. And I am going to load around 1,5 metres, then I am only going to load 700 tonnes instead of 1600. So the loss is more than 50 percent of the income. But I cannot cut the salary of the master, and I cannot cut my mortgage or the costs of the company, etc., I can only cut the salary of the idiot who is the managing director, who actually is me. But it is nothing, it is a peanut, my salary compared to the expenses of the company. This is the fifth month in the line of having no draft of 2 metres in the Danube, and we are very close to the sixth one. So sooner or later we are going to kill the business.

Something has started, yes, but we have to develop it, because the coordination, the maintenance and the infrastructure are the backbone of Europe, the backbone of our continent. Why do not we utilise them? What are we waiting for? In Heidelberg, in 2013, after the bad news, a crisis committee was set up. And what did the crisis committee tell us? It told or talked about sailing below costs, more transparent market observation, technical requirements and a sluggish market. And this a 6 years old story, what are we waiting for?

Sooner or later we will understand that we need the Danube. Even though the shipping is constrained, that by whom and why, everyone knows. And it is already a step forward that we have this program. But we have to make it clear that the Danube works for Europe as its economic backbone. Secondly, we must have a working economic and transport concept for medium- and long-term, which does not mean 4 years because that duration is for kids, for kindergarten and for politicians in between two elections. For the real experts, we have to think about 50 years in shipping business. And we need the immediate regulation of the Danube River. No more time, gentlemen, we have to regulate the Danube now! And not because of the shipping, but because of drinking our water. Because of our fresh water, and at the very end, because of the shipping, providing this forwarding logistic service. And of course, the Danube Commission has a leading position on the Danube, like CCNR on the Rhine, for which we have to revise the Belgrade Convention. But since it obviously takes 20 years, I do not want to wait for the revision of the Belgrade Convention anymore.

Finally, I have a clear message to the industry and to the decision makers: sorry to say it, but it is time to decide and to turn on full speed, straight ahead! We cannot stop our engines because we are going to starve a lot. Thank you very much! If you have any questions, I am open to reply all. Thank you very much.

Béla Csányi:

Thank you very much, Ladies and Gentlemen! I participated in three jointed Danube surveys, and the next, the fourth one will be organised next year. And I would like to show you very briefly the kinds of biological environmental consequences that are recognisable due to navigation. I am a little bit on the side of the navigating people, because I have already navigated three times along the whole Danube, and we had a lot of navigational problems during those times. In the Romanian stretch for instance, we had a small accident as well, because we were stuck on the bottom, so the whole expedition was at a big risk of not fulfilling the job, but finally we succeeded it. So I can really feel how the people going along this beautiful large river suffer at many occasions.

On one hand, there are some general aspects that I would like to mention. Like in the Carpathian Basin, we have larger scale river training works started in the middle of the 19th century, a similar magnitude was happening in the Netherland area, and this resulted in a regulated river system in the Carpathian Basin. However, on the European scale, these large rivers are connected to each other, and it means that the different kinds of seas, like the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea, the North Sea, the Barents Sea, are connected to each other through this complicated network. It is very important to note this. The commercial and the recreational shipping or navigation is increasing in Europe, it is evident for everybody. So these big cargo ships, passengers ships are really there everyday now, we can see them.

On the other hand, biodiversity is decreasing, the aquatic life is in danger. And these things should also be considered. In the European Union, there are many different directives. One of them is forcing us to increase traffic and market, this navigational activity, while the Water Framework Directive is compulsory for the EU Member States to fulfil flood directive. All of these interests are connected to each other, and something should be done in a harmonic way. Very small-scale approach is what inland navigation cause for the aquatic life.

In my opinion, the direct emission, and I mean principally the polluting material like fuel or wastewater released directly into the river, is not a serious problem. It has never been as serious as simple people could imagine it. The much more serious problem is when available aquatic habitats are destroyed or put under pressure due to the navigational effect. It may not be clear for many people why that is so dangerous, while it is very evident that if you are standing on the bank, and you are looking at a big ship passing by, you can see how much amount of water is pushed down with the huge engine, and then how the water is sucked downstream from the lateral zone, and where the lateral zone is very shallow - lots of small fish, lots of animals are over there -, it is completely dewatered first, and then the water comes back and

grounds everything as a mess together. There have been many research studies on this effect, how it works, and in fact, how it is lethal in many cases. The fish population is decreasing, the different kinds of species are suffering a lot about this simple effect. This is fact.

River regulation has made a lot of alteration in that respect as well, and on a wide scale, we can say about all of those habitats that their situation is much simplified. Unfortunately, the longitudinal accessibility of the river for the fish is limited because of the sluices. This is also a fact. In many cases, it is managed by fish ladders or a similar kind of constructions where it is possible, but there are many possibilities to have some alternative results, like the width of the channel which when it is dredged, it can be large or small. I had some experiences about this project in Hungary. In VITUKI, I was working on the navigational improvement project in the very final period of the life of VITUKI. With this research institute, we concluded that the dredging basically was not so problematic for the Natura 2000 species, for instance, for protected species. However, the Hungarian government decided not to adapt this project, and now as far as I know, there is a new repeated action, "Let's do it again, Sam!" or so, but I think that it was very nicely taken into consideration how these environmental effects should be handled during this kind of dredging.

So, damn construction. It is a very serious question, and if there is a possibility to discuss about these professional questions among the experts, it would be the only way I think how we could overcome these kinds of problems. On the river channel alternations, I would like to show you a very simple effect: when a mussel is on the bed. If the water comes from the front, it is stable on the sediment. If the wave comes from the side direction, it is washed out. And what happens? Lots of washed out mussels are here in winter time, water is going down, and they are freezing, moreover, lots of them die. This is a very simple fact. So what can we do? I would like to emphasise this: I was always foreseeing the intelligent discussion of experts among each other and I think it is possible to solve that. I was socialised in VITUKI where we were working together with a lot of engineers and biologists and I believe that somehow we have to find the solution, because these kinds of issues like the ecological improvement of the river, the river rehabilitation, the species conservation, the Natura 2000 species conservation, and so on and so on, are also necessary to be done.

Hence, what I experienced is that if we had the financial support for research – and we had it in this last navigational project in VITUKI -, we could manage the issue very well, we developed a new, a brand new deep water sampling methodology concerning the sampling of macroinvertebrates, like the fish. The fish had never been investigated in deep water before and we worked out this new methodology on the Danube that we could use in the

3rd joint Danube survey analysis. So I think it is a key factor when money is available for the development of these navigational conditions. Money should be available for these researches too and if it goes parallel together with each other, there is no problem with the discussion as well. So thank you very much, that was all.

Tibor Mátyás:

Thank you very much, Ladies and Gentlemen! Two words just about the DDSG MAHART: this is one of the biggest shipping companies on the Danube, DDSG ex-Austrian fleet and MAHART ex-Hungarian state-owned fleet have now jointed in one hand, and together they have become an absolutely private company. Our fleet is around 230 vessels, we have transported more than 2 million tonnes of cargo per year and our cargo capacity is 330.000 tonnes.

This is not just a presentation, but I would like to report you from the real life something about the inland water transportation. I would like to show you facts and figures and questions for which we do not have any answer yet. First of all, you can see on my presentation the share of inland waterway transportation between the different kinds of transports in the EU countries. And you can see that the total transported cargo on inland waterways is between 6.6/6.8 and 6.2 percent. This is a very sad figure. Even if experts are talking about how to increase it to 20 percent in EU countries, I cannot exactly see how.

The next slide shows the dynamics of Danube fleets reduction. You can see that on the Danube, a lot of vessels are missing already, because they have disappeared due to economic problems. And according to the data of the Danube Commission, 3200 vessels with total carriage of 3 million tonnes were available on the Danube in early 2017. But in a good year, in 1999, it was more than 5000. The conclusion is that the Danube lost 45 percent of the fleet in the last 30 years. It has disappeared.

The next slide shows the age structure of the vessels. You can see that 39 percent of them are between 38 and 47 years old. This is the age of the fleet. In general, the average age of the fleet amounts to 34 years on the Danube now. On the next graph, you can see that the vessels were mostly built up in the '90s, and in the last years, from 1999 only a few new vessels have been built up. It means that in the last years, shipping companies invested into only the re-engineering of the existing fleets and into keeping them working in a workable condition and there were almost no investments in building up new vessels. 87 percent of the pushers had been built up before 1999, 88 percent of pushed barges and 96 percent of self-propelled vessels had been built up until 2008. So only 13 percent of pushers, 12 percent of pushed barges

and only 4 percent of self-propelled vessels have been built up in the last 22 years.

Why are there no investments? Because of the insufficient maintenance of waterways, the bad trade market, the unfair competition, the too much bureaucracy, the unnecessary border formalities, the high port costs, especially in seaports, and because of the less funds to shipping than to other transport modes. I make an explanation for all this. In order to keep the vessels in a workable condition, we need to spend a lot of money on them. Botond already mentioned the numerous unfavourable nautical areas, and he said that the whole Danube was actually a problematic waterway. And you know, Pfelling, Dunaföldvár, Nagymaros, Mohovo are problematic bottlenecks. The locks, the existing ones are improvable. For example in this year, the 16 days which were lost because of the different kinds of events on the Danube meant a serious problem for us. And I can tell you what we feel as an industry: a discrimination of inland waterway transport. Discriminated against other modes of transportation, like truck and railway. There is a lack of investments compared to other modes of transportation. Investments of infrastructure are more likely to go to ports, but even ports are not well-equipped, there are no port pushers, no roofs and almost no shore workers. But everybody can invest into the ports. Nevertheless, if we have no waterway, for what reason will they exist? There is still no real solution for reducing the navigational bottlenecks and barriers, no solution for providing well-educated people to shipping. In the interest of the EU's economy, this question can and must be solved as soon as possible. On the slides of my presentation, you can see the Danube on the 23rd of October, this year, of which this is the bottom in Verőce-Visegrád, which is a very-very bad sign. Thank you.

Béla Szalma:

Thank you very much, and good afternoon to everybody! Welcome on board! Mrs. Karla Peis invited us to be the family member of the inland shipping. As you can see, two "Szalmás" are around the table as our family has already been controlling some small part of the shipping and the port business for ages. I can tell you that from the end of the 18th century, our family has been involved in the shipping business, so we are the fourth generation in this business and we are still alive. Nevertheless, I am very proud – the reason might be that my lobby is much better than the shipping lobby!? You know, in a family somebody always has to be better than the other, and since I am the older brother, it is why we have more money, much more, as you can see.

Concerning the Hungarian Federation of Ports, we have twenty-six members, almost all great ports, and we are handling 8 million tonnes - just a few numbers for you, for the youngsters. On the Danube, we are handling

all together from Regensburg up to the lower stream at the Black Sea, 80 million tonnes. So the Hungarian part is only 10 percent of this. As somebody mentioned before, on the Rhine-Main, they are handling 3-4-5 times more, so we are not on the same page. The main objective of the company and the federation can be read on my presentation slides. This is the output of the Hungarian river ports, what is very interesting is that they are very much based on the grain export. 30-40 percent of the cargo is grain in bulk. You would not believe this, but during the last three years we had no corn loaded, on the contrary, we got very nice crop, corn-crop. So, all the crop, all the corn and the grain on the stock - you might know that in Hungary, we have more than 22 million tonnes of storage for this kind of cargo. We are full at this moment and also there is very slight and strain situation with the soybean meal in bulk. Fifteen years ago, we imported more than 700.000 tonnes of soybean meal in bulk from the Netherlands (Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam) to Hungary. Nowadays, it is only 30.000 mto because the majority is coming on the rail and the road. Hence, we lost quite a lot during the last fifteen years. I am very proud that we are the members and project partners of DAPhNE, for example. This is a very famous project, and we are in the middle of it, and as you can see, nine nations and more than 60 Danube ports are going to build up a workable network. So it means that at the end of the project, we do not close the door but we try to continue the cooperation in order to make some profit for the owners. And okay, one of the main goals is to eliminate the gaps. Because there are several gaps between the stakeholders, and there is also much to do on the upper and lower streams of the Danube, because we are in the same boat, as you can see it.

Several times they ask me: how about the federation? And how can we differentiate cooperation from competition? I can tell you that, of course, sometimes I want to kill my friends at the table, but sometimes we have to cooperate closely, because the shippers are trying to kill us due to the very low handling charges. All ports need support, as you know, and the ports need a horrible amount of money, and you would not believe this, but we got and spent 100 million euros. So, shipping people, please have a look at that. We got a lot of money. But what we can do with this horrible amount of money and good facilities, if there is no water in the Danube? I guess that only a few things.

So what kind of dream we have together with the shipping companies? To achieve the 10 percent as a modal split in Hungary. 10 percent up to 2030. Youngsters, have a look at that, you have to fulfil this kind of obligation. And how about today? 2 percent. Okay, in between 2 and 3. And we have to do 4-5 times more for 8 million tonnes alongside the Danube. But the Danube is not navigable. And you can see that in almost 40 percent of the year, we have much less than 2 metres draft. It means that we are losing, the shipping

companies are losing half of the capacity, half of the income and ports can load, instead of thousand tonnes, only five hundred tonnes, so this is not a win-win, but a lost-lost situation. Everybody is losing, and on the top of that is the client and the shipper. Because the client decides and says: "Oh, Mr. Szalma, you are always crying, low water, flood water, high water, then I have to go to the rail and to the road". And after that it feels very strange to ask them to come back: "Okay, gentlemen, after half a year, we have water enough". It is not the way.

And we had several talks about the bottlenecks. We identified 21 critical sections only on the Hungarian part of the Danube, and 28 bottlenecks. Have a look at the map. Imagine that if you load a truck with 24 tonnes and you have to stop to lighten the truck, and carry only the half of the capacity, for example 12 tonnes, it would be a disaster on the road. And all of the drivers and transporters would be coming to the parliament and would be saying that they were against it. But we are, as you know, quite small, representing only 2 or 3 percent and I guess that this is not strong enough, so we cross our fingers and hope for the future. So youngsters, have a good look at that, you have to fulfil this kind of obligation with the 10 percent. Thank you very much!

Gábor Sági:

Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen! As I work at a passenger shipping company, I can say only the problems and challenges of the passenger shipping.

Let me say a few words about MAHART PassNave Limited, about its activities in the present and about the possibilities of the inland navigation. MAHART PassNave is the largest, market leading passenger shipping company in Hungary. We have 34 ships for the disposal of passengers and partners, and more than 17 passenger ports. The oldest boat, the oldest ship is more than a hundred years old, and the youngest is almost 30 years old. Our service palette is composed of the transport of passengers on the Danube, the organisation of cruising events, the operation of several ports of the Danube, our travel agency, the MAHART Tours also has besides activities. We launch excursion and hydrofoil boats from Budapest into the direction of the Danube Band, our Budapest sightseeing boat service enjoys outstandingly high popularity among foreign passengers and domestic student groups, so as are our evening cruises with dinner and live music.

As you know, until the '60s, the inland passenger shipping, besides meeting the touristic needs, was also said to fill in a public transport function. It became inevitable to operate vessels on the Danube, the Tisza and the Balaton to supplement and complete the insufficient road and railroad traffic of those times. Nowadays the passenger shipping, except from the ferry traffic,

services serve exclusively touristic and leisure purposes. So, to meet the new requirements, our company has been transformed. The bigger part of its fleet are now the so-called event boats, and the rest of its vessels are also more comfortable. We have changed. We reduced the number of our former scheduled service according to customer demands and economic operation. We had to seize our Tisza shipping due to the objectionable navigational condition of the river, and the fact that maintaining a fleeter became absolutely uneconomic. By keeping our Budapest cruises and Danube Bend liners, we operate on the Danube River mainly within the Budapest area. At the moment, we cannot see any other possibilities to maintain the economical operation of our existing fleet. We are forced to close down our previously very popular and successful Budapest-Vienna speed liner due to the increased travel time caused by the two locks, the drastically increasing operation costs and the ageing fleet. The high unpredictability of the Danube's navigability contributed to the decline of hydrofoil programs. Because of the frequent low water level, the running of the big and valuable vessels became unreliable, which was difficult to be tolerated by the passengers. Essentially, the hydrofoils only take part in the Danube Bend scheduled traffic.

Looking at the international parquet, the traditional, so-called saloon passenger shipping operates profitably within the boundaries of our small field of activity. The long-distance passenger shipping is popular only at places, where there are no alternate transportation possibilities. In our operational territory, to reduce the travel time, technically simple boats with more passenger capacity, low draft and even lower maintenance cost were preferable. By buying such a vessel, we could improve our competitiveness in the tourist market. There is a growing need to increase the share of shipping in the public transportation as well, to help out the increased agglomeration traffic. However, providing a means of transportation for those who go to work or to school would require a regular fast and reliable service at reasonable costs. At the moment, the Budapest passenger shipping fleet is not able to satisfy those needs. The long travel time cannot make the existing fleet competitive, while putting new speed-liners into operation would mean not only a significant increase in costs, but (because of the restriction on navigation visibility) an unreliable maintenance of the liner.

For the above mentioned reasons, we see that the adaptation of passenger shipping to everyday public transportation is rather difficult. One of the most important condition of the reliable and safe operation of passenger shipping is making the navigational route perfect. We had to manage in the first half of this year, the passenger shipping under record low water level conditions. The situation was extremely hard on the Szentendre Danube Branch, where we could not fulfil all obligations and provide regular liners. Most of our ports had become inaccessible.

Among the present challenges of the Hungarian passenger shipping, the most significant one, besides the unpredictable condition of the navigational route, is the lack of professionals. A few decades ago, for a beginner sailor it took long years of practice and experience to become a captain or an engineer. Nowadays they receive their graduation and contract right away at these holiday cruiser companies. These hotel ships recruit most of the manpower, they provide good earning opportunities and at the same time the inland shipping companies are left without a rising generation. We are convinced that the development of sailors building of quality and of quantity is highly necessary. Regarding the future of inland passenger shipping, we have to take the following priorities into consideration.

So we have to provide an up to date and more comfortable fleet of high standard. So we have to decrease the travel time, we would need to purchase such vessels that meet not only the nautical purposes but the requirements of the economic operation as well. These tasks are the competence of our company. But the improvement of the navigational routes, the conditions and the providing of personal supply would not be realised without the participation of the professional policy and the partner companies. Thank you very much!

Q1:

I am Felix Zaharia, I am the legal counsellor of the Danube Commission Secretariat, and I have a question for the representative of the private industry. Why do you think that young people do not want to enter into this profession? Is it a problem of training, are the standards too high? Is it a problem of salaries, of income, that you can get by working in the Danube navigation? Or are there any other problems that we should be aware of? Thank you!

Botond Szalma:

The main headache of the industry is not the trainers, trainings are good enough on the different levels, but the skilled shipping personal, the masters. And because this is a hard job and nobody wants to clean a hatch or a hold, nobody wants to wake up at 2 o'clock in the morning in Rotterdam, nobody wants to have a 12 hours working day, and nobody wants to leave a family for 30 days and so on... You cannot handle a vessel today with a laptop. You can use a laptop and you can have your mobile phone, and most probably it will be the future, the unmanned vessels, but first of all, months in the open sea and 30 or 40 days on the Danube. And this gap, 40 years is a very, very long one and as I mentioned on one of my slides, the real professionals are over the age of 55 or 60 years. If you need a good marine or captain, it takes ten years to qualify, ten years. During my practice, I cleaned the toilet of a

sea vessel, when I was 18 years old, then I was an ordinary seaman, an able buddy, a helmsman, a boats man, an apprentice, a third maid, a second maid, and then the master. And then I was the sea wolf of MAHART as well, but during this period of 20 years, it was a very hard job. And nowadays the youngsters do not want to leave the nice, big room with computers to have this hard job.

And as far as salary is concerned, it was a good question. The Romanians, the Moldavians and the former Yugoslavian countries have 3 or 4 more years and then 99 percent of their skilled personnel leave for the Netherlands or for Germany. Because now they know that life is a good school, but the fees are high and they are paid very well there. And the next headache will be the engineers, they are going to be missing in 5 years. Nobody wants to be oiled, everybody needs clean hands. And as Mr. Mátyás mentioned it, in our fleet we have a vessel that was built in 1908, so it is more than a hundred and ten years old. We have to go to the engine room, and you will be oiled. And if we do not change the main engine in 10 years, we will not use this vessel, only as an idling vessel or a warehouse. This is my reply in brackets, sorry for the long reply.

Tibor Mátyás:

I just want to add to Mr. Szalma that we have had experience on how to teach or train new people, the young generation, but we only got a big headache because if they are well-trained on our vessels, in a few years, they will leave to the passenger hotel ships to become a white-uniformed captain. And we have no legal protection to keep them. Because we can pay the good salary, I think so, but this job for the cargo ships is very-very hard. Not so easy, the men must be very familiar with shipping, they must live on the ship, and not everybody can do that.

Botond Szalma:

Excuse me, I would just like to add something, because I was a captain on a cargo ship and also on a passenger ship and I also know the differences. If you are sailing with 9 barges with a big convoy, it is not the same as when you are sailing with only one cruiser with 300.000 tonnes. But the problem is if you want to keep these people, you have to give them more money. But how can you give more money, if the river is not navigable? Passenger ships, they have drafts of 1,3 metres and they can sail almost the whole year, but for cargo shipping, this is not the case. You can pay them more, but to do so, you have to make profit. And making profit in the cargo shipping is now almost impossible.

Q2:

My field is the European history, and I am involved in the Polish and Ukrainian relations, this is what my question concerns, the trade relations. Do you mean that the activity of the cooperation along the Danube can ease the cargos' way from Constance, to Poland? Because we can make a transfer in Budapest or in Vienna, and then go toward the Nordic way.

Petar Margić:

So first, we have to use the Rhine-Main-Danube connection from the Nordic Sea to the Black Sea. Have a look at the map in your mind. So we can sail across Europe from the Black Sea to the North Sea. If we are going to send the cargo to the Adriatic, to the Mediterranean, we will use the rail up to the Adriatic ports, like Rijeka, Fiume. If we are going to send something up to the north, to Poland, we will use the rail connection as well. So I do not think that it is a good idea to send it by river, and then after tranship, and then after again. So okay, I like the modality and the triviality, because in the ports, we can handle the cargo. I would be very happy to handle your Polish cargo to Turkey, and the Turkish cargo back to Poland, but in reality, I do not think that we could use this to the north, to Poland, because you know, in the parliament, although they are thinking about this, I guess they are restricted in the ability of knowing the map.

Botond Szalma:

You have to take into consideration that the vast majority of the cargos on the Danube waterways are bulky cargoes and heavy cargoes. And these are not gold, screen televisions, mobile phones or missiles. So the cargo cannot tranship two or three times. You can tranship a cargo once, otherwise you lose the business. You might have the possibility, but you badly need water for it. It should be a business in 10-15 years, but not today, because you need punctuality in container business, and for that now you need railways. Because this is an idea to use the inland waterways from Germany to Poland and to the Czech Republic. Do not count on it and do not bet too much money on that, if you like bets... But the only solution in 10 years will be the containers, nothing else. Nonetheless, in any case, we badly need water.

Tibor Mátyás:

I just want to add to Mr. Szalma's comment that we are not talking about the inland navigation itself, you must understand that we are talking about

the economies of these countries around the Danube and around the Rhine. For example, today we must reload barges in Madocsa and in Mohács to upstream. We are going with iron ore to Linz, and we must keep only 130 centimetres of draft, not to announce a force measure made by Thyssenkrupp last week. So this is an economic problem, and nobody can tell me that the 2 million tonnes of iron ore can move to the railway or to the road transport in one day. It is not believable. So this is a real economic problem, not only the headache of the inland navigation.

Róbert Rafael:

Well, thank you very much, unfortunately I have to close this very detailed and very important discussion that is always a problem, but I think we can take some notes from it since it really represents the essence of the great discussion between the public and the private sector. And we are back to the beginning of this panel and the keynotes that cooperation is of high importance, of course, cooperation between the ones providing infrastructure and legal circumstances, and the ones who are using the waterways, the ports and all the others. So I think that these are all the challenges and opportunities in one sentence, and I am very grateful for this fruitful and very contained discussion. Thank you for the panellists and also thank you for the questions and thank you for the organisers for having me as a moderator, and I wish you a further fruitful conference for the afternoon. Thank you very much!

Summary of the Second Open Panel Discussion

- Visions for the Future of the Danube and Inland Navigation

Diána Szőke:

Ladies and gentlemen, I think we will soon start with the second panel which is entitled 'Visions for the Future of the Danube and Inland Navigation'. Please allow me to introduce our distinguished speakers of today: on my right, at the very end of the table is Mr. Bruno George, Secretary General of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine. On my immediate right is Mr. Petar Margić, Director-General of the Secretariat of the Danube Commission. On my left is Mr. Gert-Jan Mulierman, Priority Area Coordinator of Austria on behalf of the EU's Danube Region Strategy. And at the end of the table, we have Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov who is the Technical Expert from the Department for Public Participation and Communication, representing the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. And for our first speaker, I would briefly introduce Mr. László Balatonyi, the Head of the Flood Protection Department from the General Directorate of Water Management in Hungary. As for myself, my name is Diána Szőke, and I am a senior analyst at our institute.

László Balatonyi:

Thank you, Ms. Chairwoman, Excellencies and Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen! On behalf of the General Directorate of Water Management, it is my great pleasure to speak a little bit about the Inland Navigation on the Danube in Hungary. I think if we would like to define the future for all of the relevant stakeholders on the river corridor, we should know where we are right now and what happened in the past decades, after which can we look forward into the far future. My company, the General Directorate of Water Management (Országos Vízügyi Főigazgatóság, OVF) is a governmental organisation, where we are dealing with different types of water-related issues, and where we are also responsible for the waterway maintenance in Hungary. I would like to join a little bit to the previous panel, and to highlight what is the main challenge day by day for us.

One of the biggest challenges is the extreme weather phenomena. In August and September 2018, in the Hungarian section of the Danube, the level of the Danube was critically low (under LLW) and caused in fact really big problems in the Hungarian fairway section. Nevertheless, if the level of water is higher than the average (especially over HHW), it can also cause problems. The biggest flood event of the Danube happened in 2013, which was also critical for the fairway system. Another example from the past is what happened in 2017 when the water temperature was extremely low, and because of that reason the Danube - not only in the Hungarian area but in the common sections with Croatia and Serbia as well (it means that from Dunafölvár to Vukovar, and also from Belgrade to the Iron Gate) - was almost frozen, so the ships had to stop during those days. The biggest icebreaker of Hungary called "Széchenyi" was also in mission to eliminate the ice jams. Another challenge is the Hungarian fairway marking system itself. Nobody would like to speak about those problems, but it is true that the average condition of our fairway marking vessels is not really good since the average age for the Danube marking vessels are approximately 40 years, so they are well-serviced, but old ones. Hence, there are many things that can be improved and there are some goals that have to be achieved.

The riparian countries of the river have long been using the potential of Danube shipping in 1948, an agreement was reached in Belgrade for the development and operation of the single voyage. On the basis of the Convention, a well-established, standardised system of parameters was developed for the waterway (Danube Commission recommendations) and accepted by all concerned countries and committed to taking the parameters given in the development of the Danube waterway. This commitment to the Hungarian section of the Danube is also covered by domestic legislation on the publication of the EU agreement on international waterways.

The essence of the Danube Commission recommendation is that the dimensions of the waterway should be provided for a small water level in relation to the Danube Commission water level. This low water level is calculated from the water yields of the ice-free period of 30 years preceding the definition and corresponds to the water level of 94 percent durability.

So, if I can say only one word about what is our common and main goal, I would like to say that eliminating the inland waterway's bottlenecks in the Hungarian section, and also improving the navigability in the Hungarian sections, but how can we improve the navigability? There are two ways, structural and non-structural measures.

Well, I can tell you that we have several big projects which are connected to the final goals. The EU-funded project, the "FAIRway Danube" implements several crucial measures of the Master Plan and thereby sets an important

step towards the further realisation of the Master Plan along the Danube and its navigable tributaries. The colleagues in the viadonau (Austria) are more responsible for that, but the Hungarian side is also working on it, as one of the lead beneficiary that is a kind of pilot project in which we would like to buy one multi-beam vessel, but it is also important to measure the actual status of the critical sections and the bottlenecks in case of low water. It is also important to upgrade the old marking vessels and one big element of the FAIRway Danube project, The Master Plan and its associated national action plans are effective tools for the coordination of waterway management along the Danube. The other connected project is called as the “Humark project” (improving fairway marking system on the Hungarian Danube section of the Rhine-Danube Corridor), in which we will build altogether six new marking vessels and we will also buy new floating buoys and riverbank marks and river kilometre marks in the Hungarian sections. The big marking vessels will have the length of about 25 metres. There will also be smaller marking vessels (patrol boat) which have the length of 9,7 metres.

We have another project which is really important because it focuses more on the structural measures.

For the future, I think what is really important for us and is a really big goal, concerning the kind of need of all stakeholders, is to have an updated an up-to date information on the current fairway system (for example bottlenecks, shallow section information). In August and September 2018, we updated most of our web portals (D4D Portal, Danube FIS Portal and our national Hydroinfo Portal). It will also be important in terms and in our point of view to have a quick reaction on the fairway changes. Those vessels that have been mentioned can help us to do that one as quick as possible. It was also mentioned formerly that the training of the next generation is also very important now, not only in the future. Our colleagues are also getting older and older, and for example for the management of icebreakers, a deep understanding of the techniques is needed. However, that is not only a challenge for Hungary but for the other countries as well. Also, for the common future we have to harmonise our regulations, for example as it was also mentioned there were different types of EU Flood Directives, Water Framework Directives, where not just only for the waterway-related directives but also for the common future, it is really important to have innovation, for example to reduce the size of the buoys.

And the last one remark: I think not all is about money because as it was also mentioned in the last panel, we are all speaking about the same problems and the same challenges. So I think it is really time for decision and for real (re)action. And for the latter one, if we would like to have a common future, the Danube Commission is of high importance, because it has such a deep background and long history of 70 years in this field. We would like to find a common solution and common goals for our future and even I think

we can also have a green future in terms of measures. But for that step, it is really important to have a common view on the challenges for all participants and stakeholders. And thank you so much.

Bruno Georges:

Thank you for organising this opportunity today to meet a large number of actors from the sector. You will all agree with me on that inland navigation is not an easy world to tackle, I think we could see that in this morning and afternoon as well. It is a sector that is highly diverse as we know that. You see the water here every day in Budapest, which is the case along the Rhine, which is the case along other rivers, however, many people do not see the water every day. I think the key is if you see a number of people involved in the sector, you will appreciate it in terms of political weight, which is actually not as strong as it could or should be. And that is the point that I feel very strongly about, so I highlighted that in this morning as well.

It is a small world though, and that world has stuck together. The promotion, the idea of doing something for inland navigation has to be shared and promoted jointly. And we all come with our views and interests that lead sometimes to highly controversial discussions, but it is probably the way to move forward. It is not for me of course, to speak about the future vision of the Danube navigation, I am too modest to do that and too realistic as well. As I said in this morning in the closed session, there are specificities, there is a uniqueness in all river commissions in the river basins. It is the case for the Rhine, it is the case for the Danube, it is the case for the institutions running those or looking after those basin regions. So my intention is not to mingle with what you do, having said that I would rather say that we in Strasbourg, while we focus on the situation of the Rhine, and we find a solution after two hundred years, we feel very comfortable in terms of knowledge and expertise. As an experience, and we want to build on that, we are also very appreciative and grateful to all actors in other basin regions that contribute to the sustainable development for this activity. Because after all, it is a common and joint interest that this activity keeps growing in all regions of Europe if not beyond.

Hence, there is an interest in what we do, that comes from the other parts of the world, for example from North America (the Great Lakes Conference in St. Laurence, Canada), from the Paraná Region in Latin America (Paraguay, Uruguay etc.), from Africa (MEICON, NIGIERE, etc.). That is not surprising. For the Danube Commission, now we mark its 70th anniversary and it achieved a number of things even in difficult times, and since its establishment, it has been working towards steady improvements.

While we focus on the Rhine, we do value activities of others towards sustainability and by that I mean again the social, environmental and economic dimensions of inland navigation. We need a sustainable development. We feel that the inland navigation still has a lot of potential, it is clear that it is still environmentally friendly today, and it is fairly to say that so. But we have realised that it is not enough to keep repeating this because the world changes, the world moves very fast. A lot of things happened besides inland navigation, as one often says “A fact is stronger than a Lord Mayor” in the U.K. It is important for the sector to keep doing its own work and progress along the way of this sustainable development.

And once it will have achieved that, we can speak of modernisation, of greening, of adjusting to the new environment, of recruiting trained and skilled staff, because the questions raised to the panel members earlier are real issues. But if we want to address those things, and if we do it properly, we will be a very strong sector indeed. And when it is the case, I think a lot of attention will be paid to the sector by the political and the public side as well, because more and more people will tend to question the projects. We spoke about infrastructure, which big issue is now being questioned by more and more people. We need to make it more acceptable, hence the element of communication will be essential for inland navigation. There are different ways to assure such a communication, one of those ways is through the sheer implementation of progress within the inland. Once you do that, people will start thinking, and they will do it well.

This morning I reminded us kindly for the celebration of CCNR that happened almost a month ago, on the 17th of October, for the 150th anniversary of our founding act, for the Congress of Vienna and the final act of 1815, even more for the revised convention for the navigation on the Rhine, and for the basic principles which I think you utilise very well yourselves in your convention: the freedom of navigation, the absence of levies, the equal treatment, the unity of legal system that we apply to all members using the Rhine and other principles. All those principles from the 19th century have remained the basis by which we can continue to work, since they proved to be pioneering in terms of single market and also efficient because we have been in the existence for 200 years. It means that despite all changes, all difficulties over the centuries, we still manage to be there.

The world that we live in is very changing, very moving, therefore it is a challenge for us as well just as it is for you. That is why we cooperate closely in several issues with the Danube Commission like in market observation, in gathering, digesting and using statistic information on the economic activity on our rivers. And we are certainly keen on improving and deepening this cooperation.

We need to raise the attention to the importance of the challenges ahead, among which, as our Minister said, the environment is a key issue. Therefore we need to bring our own contribution and efforts to tackle those changes we face every day in terms of climate. We will not solve them on our own, it is not for the CCNR alone to solve that, it is not for the sector alone to do that, but at least we should contribute to the solution. I am afraid that it will require a lot of activity from all sorts of actors, also outside the inland navigation. So let's do our work on it, let's think realistically on renewing the fleet that we have. I have heard a number of figures about the age of the vessels, it is something that we have also been facing. But in the end, we will need to adjust, adapt the fleet to the future needs, and along the way it may be difficult, painful at times, so we need to do it gradually, but we have to show that the sector evolves in the right direction and keeps innovating. After all, the image of inland navigation is still too often the image of a rather stable sector that is not moving enough fast or well. It is not the case, there is innovation. Innovation is being made in many circles, the question is also how to apply, multiply or deploy it in the fleet and in the activities. It is actually being done, but not sufficiently because there are hurdles, obstacles, so we have to work on that. When we speak of these adjustments, the digitisation and automation, as I said in this morning, are buzzwords. It is difficult to escape from those words as they really mean something.

When we speak of attracting new staff, new trained and skilled personnel on the board of vessels, we need, of course, first water, so the whole issue of low water flooding should be solved, which is such an important issue that concerns all of us and on which we should work together to try to solve and to mitigate in the same way. Then we also need vessels, good vessels, safety environment and then good people on board, on the ships and everything around the logistics. For that, digitisation will be a very important partner to us, so we need to embark on it. It means quite a challenge that we need to unify several things, so we will work now more and more on standardisation in the field of digitisation, including the river information services. It will not settle, solve everything but at least it will help. Younger people may feel shipping a little bit more attractive when they see that things are a little bit different from what they used to be, but a number of activities will remain a bit difficult which may make them reluctant. Nevertheless, regarding the whole, things are moving. The training will probably move a bit quicker since a lot of efforts have been made at the policy level by the European Union as you know, there are directives adopted for technical requirements for vessels, for professional qualifications, for developing standards that will allow the use of new means of examination. The latter one refers to practical examinations besides the theoretical ones, like by the use of simulators. So things are moving. And I think that in 10-20 years, we will find here a very different landscape in terms of training and formation. The social aspects are also very important for which

I was reminded in this morning as well as in the last week in Vienna at a workshop which we jointly organised with those mooring places important for ships, and when we spoke of the social acceptability of people on the board of the vessels. It is important for them to stay close to the cities and shops, to have a normal life, to quit a ship at some point and to find the family life.

I want to emphasise once more the importance of working at a broader level than just the Rhine, and that although we, of course, do a lot of work still for the Rhine, we are very convinced that our work can be genuinely used for other rivers as well. And so that is what we actually try to do along you in the European Framework for Standardisation, and in the exchanges when we speak together on the good navigation status and on other issues dealing with infrastructure for instance. So, this is my contribution to your discussion, thank you.

Q1:

If I put all these things together, I see what we need is a perspective and if there is a perspective, there is a lot of money in the world. And if there is a perspective for inland navigation, there will be money for the ships, there will be investments on the board, there will be energy to place into the environment. But we go so slowly that there is no energy, and that is very much a pity because inland navigation is lovely. And someone said "Who wants to work in this sector?". Of course, young people do want to work in this sector. But there are differences between the Eastern and the Western European ways of doing that so, especially concerning the family life.

You can actually see that when truck drivers go from Eastern Europe to the Netherlands, they leave their family behind, and do the job alone. While a lot of the Dutch shippers take the whole family along, they have the family on board and the wife is exactly equal to the man on the ship and they do work together. So I think what we need, and what we should give to each other is a perspective. And this perspective could help in solving the problems on board and having a family without sacrificing a shipping career, or the reversed. But without it, it feels like nothing is there for inland shipping, no money, no people, and that is what really lacks us.

Bruno Georges:

I think is important to turn our work towards those goals and to create this perspective, make it more visible, more understandable to our decisions makers and to the population as well because I believe that there is a huge challenge for the people to better appreciate the value-added of inland

navigation. It is a bit like there is something that exists which is good, but a bit old fashioned, while it plays a real part. I think that the Director-General of the Danube Commission remembers the difficulties of the oil being delivered along the Rhine that led to higher prices. Now the people tend to think "Oh my goodness, inland navigation plays a part in this". I think this element of doing our homework as much as we can, trying to get more and more support along the way and at the end by the sheer evidence that we move, that there are things we are moving, showing that we have taken the job extremely seriously, is the most important.

Maybe the last point I would like to highlight is that I wonder whether activities more generally from decision makers and economic actors, so economic activities along the rivers remain central. If you take a look at the development of inland navigation, you will find - it is the case, of course, on the Rhine – a lot of good and strong economic regions which will also generate work. There is probably a lot of work still to be done besides the sheer development of inland navigation, activities that can create transport that I think we should keep in mind. Thank you.

Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov:

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues and Distinguished Guests! This is really an honour for me to be here speaking on behalf of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River. Our Executive Secretary, Mr. Zavadsky sends his congratulations, he could not attend unfortunately. Maybe I will give a different type of presentation since our commission is the only river commission present in this room that does not deal with navigation issues. We deal with water resources management, navigation is not our core business, but we know that in order to deliver on what we have to do, on our work with the water framework directive, we need a dialogue with the other sectors, which is very important. And today we have clearly seen the importance of inland navigation in the Danube Region.

I think it is a particularly important factor: you have 83 million people that call the Danube their home, it is a river that connects many important economic, social and environmental activities and conditions. Environmental activities are important. They are part of our mandate at the ICPDR, so we make sure that the water quality is good. We make sure that the population are protected from floods, and we make sure that the Danube can also be provided as a recreational place for the people in the region. We know that sustainable water management is often challenged by the conflictive needs of different actors. We have heard that this morning, loud and clear, but that needs to be brought into balance. And we really feel that us, with our mandate of being the umbrella organisation which is implementing the water framework directive

in the region, we can contribute to that while we work in a six-year cycle of updating river basin management plans. We feel that in order to achieve the objectives of this plan, we need to have a cross-sectorial dialogue, particularly when we take other sectors on board, and inland navigation is, of course, one of our main partners.

It has been mentioned this morning that a shining example of this cross-sectorial cooperation is the Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin, which was concluded in October 2007, and which was very positively received by all stakeholders. The Joint Statement was a good example of civilised dialogue, of being able to talk to each other, between the economic sector, the navigation, the regulators from water environment (WFD), and the 2009 nature of directives and the NGO communities who are concerned about the environment. We could see that with this initiative, with the proper stakeholder participation, with the proper design and stakeholder implementation, we can carry out and implement an important navigation project that works. This is really important, especially in a region like the Danube's, which is an area of intense contact, the largest river region after the Volga, the Danube is a transnational, a transcontinental river, and by far, the most international river in the world. Although this makes our work more complicated, it also increases the need for cooperation in our basin.

And this, cooperation is a keyword in our basin since it provides territorial attachment to a large number of countries, and for that, the improvement of navigation goes hand in hand with measures to limit the unpredictability of the river and the environmental impacts. This is important, this is part of our cooperation, this is the basis of exchange, and this is the basis for success. We need to protect the environment, but this is what inland navigation is actually doing: it is de facto the most environmentally friendly transport mode - we keep saying that and we will keep saying it since there is a consensus on it, there is a unifying theme for all our countries in the basin. But we shall, of course, remember that pollution knows no boundaries and that it requires a global vision based on localisable activities. So we shall remember that the environment should occupy a central place as an element of cooperation and should be a mobilising aspect in our work.

So, just to conclude, ICPDR fully understands the importance of inland navigation as an environmentally friendly transport mode, this is why 12 years ago we settled the Joint Statement, and this is why we believe in what we were able to introduce in the Platina Manual with the Joint Statement and with the METEET initiative now. It really shows that the strategic planning does work and which is a result of the statement. Hence, I would like to say three key messages, that is my job on behalf of the ICPDR. First, we support the inland waterway transport because it is an environmentally friendly transport

mode. And we, the three commissions, the Danube Commission, the Sava Commission and the ICPDR, we have the means to support this cooperation, where the Joint Statement illustrates with a practical demonstration that it does work. And finally, we are continuing those strategic plannings in motion, where the METEET initiative is the cooperation of DG MOVE, DG REGIO, the Danube Commission and the ICPDR. So, we are fully supportive of such initiatives, but of course this is also our role, and we want to go deeper.

We want to see an even more practical, technical level, the exchange of lessons learnt, experiences, the sharing of good practices where navigation projects are making progress and where the EU Environmental Legislation is being implemented. We want to go towards a win-win situation. Good navigation status is also very important for us, we support the process, we understand that good navigation process is equally important for you as it is for us, that we achieve a good ecological status, and we do not want to have an either-or situation. We have learnt with the Article 4.7 of the Water Framework Directive, that there are exceptions, so we are ready to make concessions, and we are expecting concessions also from the navigation sector.

Again, I conclude by saying that I congratulate the Commission on its 70th Anniversary, that I am very happy to be here with my friends from the navigation sector, and very happy to present again the view of the ICPDR which is important because we have made it a priority to have cleaner waters, healthier and safer rivers for future generations. And I think that we all who are here in this room share these objectives, we want cleaner and healthier waters, the way we achieve it might be a bit different, but the vision is the same. So let's continue this way and let's make sure that we enter a bright future for the future generations. Thank you very much for your attention.

Q2:

I have a question on the Joint Statement. Is the Joint Statement in the current form sufficient or should it be revised or updated? Thank you.

Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov:

That is a very tricky question. It is good as it is, of course. I think it has proven that it works. I think that we have moved one step forward with the Platina Manual at the time. I think that we have done another step with the METEET initiative. So I think that the Joint Statement does work as a basis for our work. But every statement that you make, needs some revision after a few years. That is legitimate, but that I would say that before focusing on renewing the

Joint Statement, it should be seen what is next after the METEET: How is the initiative continuing? How do we move from this pilot implementation to a real implementation?. I think what we need is a real and secure basis, and we have it with the Joint Statement, so I would like to wait a little bit and to see what is next, and then I can tell you if there should be a revision. Again, these are my views only.

Q3:

You mentioned that you are ready to support the inland navigation. So, how could we imagine it? Or another point of view, if we must keep the water level at 2,5 metres, could you support building dams or locks?

Hélène Masliah-Gilkarov:

I could not, of course, and I think there are other river engineering measures that we can use instead of building dams. But we do support inland navigation believe it or not. We are engaging in a dialogue, we have the same type of dialogues with the hydropower sector and it works very well. We are having the same with the navigation sector. We have no binding role, of course, because inland navigation is not part of our portfolio, but we are there to facilitate and to really understand it. If you have seen the Joint Statement, it has really a common and joint effort on trying to sit together, to consult with each other and it has been written by a practitioner from both sides. So, yes. My answer would be that we do support inland navigation, but we do expect also, exceptions just as we have Article 4.7, we expect some sort of compromise from the navigation side.

Gert-Jan Mulierman:

Thank you very much also for having me here in the discussion that I have heard about all day at the meeting. I will not steal much from your time, instead, I will try to bring the thread to the point that I want to say. I am dealing on a daily basis, together with our sister companies and waterway operators and managing authorities, to come to the situation where the waterway becomes a reliable way of transport and that is the main objective. So if we look at the top three challenges for the next years, I would say that these are infrastructure, infrastructure and infrastructure. That is the basis for everything else, so you cannot load your vessels adequately, if these water levels are too low or unstable. That message is completely understood and we see it as the main mission. We have the Danube River which consists of ten riparian countries, where each country on itself is responsible for proper

maintenance and keeping this river in a good shape - that is even laid down in the Belgrade Convention -. This is a clear target, which has already been in place since the Second World War.

So in the last ten years, we have improved the situation in the sense that we have at least built a cooperation together with our sister companies, waterway managers also by using the platform of the European Danube Region Strategy. And with that cooperation, we can come across some of the problems that we have on the Danube. That is the clear message that we have received today. And also in this morning, I presented the hydrological overviews from the last years and especially from this year since the end of July, and we could see that the water levels had dropped below the navigable water level on 6 percent of the year over the past 30 years. In such a situation, if there is just not enough discharge and water in the Danube, even the best water management cannot solve the problem. However, in the majority of the years, we do have a sufficient discharge to achieve this, to secure 2,50 metres fairway depth through, let's say, softer measures and waterway engineering measures.

We have demonstrated in Austria that my colleagues and all the team of waterway management together could successively treat the critical bottlenecks of about five of the critical spots in the section between Vienna and Bratislava, in case the water levels dropped below the navigable water level. My colleagues are actually almost ready with all of that. Some of these bottlenecks will be structurally improved and through that we will clearly reduce the amount to be dredged in this section. You can imagine that each cubic metre of what needs to be dig out from the Danube sediments costs about 10 Euros, which means that when we need to dredge between 200.000 and 300.000 cubic metres on a regular year, we are spending 2-3 million Euros only on dredging from the taxpayers' money. It is in our and also in the taxpayers' interest to lower this amount by having more structural solutions, and developing and implementing them successfully.

We also saw that the passenger vessels, which were waiting at the Reichsbrücke Vienna in August/September 2018, could not pass critical stretches in Hungary below a certain water level. That is, I think, a signal to do our homework here, so we are trying to export this approach through the cooperation with our sister organisations. I know that it is not going fast enough, but we have a big project called FAIRway Danube, on which my colleague from OVF presented that we had invested a lot into surveying tools and fairway marking equipment. We coordinate that project and monitor it very closely. Every six months, we are getting data from our sister organisations on where they took measurements, how much they dredged and where they improved the situation, how many surveying tours were made and on which spots. That is being closely monitored and expected since it is also a demand from the

European Commission as a funding organisation. Besides, we demand from our sister organisations to raise their level of proper fairway maintenance. That is to say that we are actually doing our homework and we are also controlling the homework that is being done by our sister organisations, but we certainly need to do this together, because that is the only way how it is going to work properly.

I am hopeful that with this kind of investments and with the constant monitoring that has been implemented, we will be able to and better equipped to solve the future navigation issues that will appear and are expected to come - if you look at the statistics. Climate change is happening, so we have to be equipped for it. That is the key point that I would like to highlight at the end of this day and thank you again for your time and attention.

And one more comment on the solutions. If you are looking for a short-term or a medium-term solution, forget about dams, really, we are just losing our energy on them. We should invest in proper maintenance which means fairway marking, intensified surveying and dredging. Through restructuring some of the waterway engineering works like groynes and training walls along the river, you can make the most of the situation, but still we will not be able to combat the low discharge that we have right now, at this very moment, so water levels are dropping again. Whenever they were low in the history or now, as I said, the best waterway management could not and cannot solve it. In the long-term, you can only combat such situations through dams, that is true, but it will not happen in the next 20 years.

In Austria, after the Second World War, I think that the first lock-dam was built in 1955 and the last lock at Freudenu opened in the mid-nineties. Freudenu is the longest lock in Austria, but as a matter of fact, just like here, in Hungary, building and using dams is a matter of political willingness, and it will not be done. I think that the German stretch is in a way worse state than the section at Eastern Vienna, and the perspectives are not so positive. It is also politically impossible to build the dam there at this very moment. Even small structures like the ones used in Romania, the underwater bottom sills are facing opposition. So I would really like to invest our energy and efforts into improving the regular maintenance to get most out of the situation. And then we just have to accept, if there is ice like in every 11 years, or if there are such low water periods. But we will not accept if within the normal range of discharge of the river, our sister companies are not doing their job. That is what we are looking at every day.

Petar Margić:

Thank you. I would like to be very short because of the time. First, I would like to correct you all, let's say, to give you the real information. We are today celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Belgrade Convention. But the real beginning of the Commission under the name of "Danube Commission" was established in Paris 162 years ago, our founding act was the Paris Treaty. This means that we can celebrate today the 162nd anniversary. Nevertheless, let's go back to the topic of the panel, to the Visions for the Future of the Danube and Inland Navigation.

As you have heard today, we have a lot of problems on our river. We are trying to solve them, but things are moving forward very slowly and I will not repeat them because you have heard those all today. So let's go back to the visions. And our visions are some kinds of dreams.

The first vision is the fairway parameters, to have the fairway depth between 2,5 and 3 metres, as I said, until 2030. It was planned by the European Commission, maybe it looks like a dream, but we hope that sometimes dreams come true.

The second is the multimodality. We would like to have the inland waterway transport to be part of the waterway multimodality transport. You have heard, and you have seen that a container transport to the Danube counts for about 2 percent of the total transport. And this is almost nothing.

Then digitalisation. What we would like and what we are dreaming about is to have all ship documents in an electronic form, because ships sometimes are moving, and the shipping companies have ship control from different authorities at not less than 10 times. This is a waste of time due to the different documents, but if we have all these documents in an electronic form, we can avoid this kind of control because they will be on the server.

Then, what we would like to have, as you have also heard that today, is a different kind of harmonisation for the technical documents. We started that ten years ago with the harmonisation of the navigation rules, and we would like to have finally in the future, to have all the concerned documents harmonised. It will make our work and the work of our stakeholders, and we are all actually stakeholders at inland water navigation, much easier.

Then, a renewal of the fleet. As you have heard, the average age of our fleet is 34 years, if I am right, or it may even be 40 years. And as you could see, the number of vessels is going down extremely. What is our vision? To have finally a modern fleet on the Danube, and it will happen - we hope -, if we, let's say, fulfil our obligations - but I would like to add that we were sad to hear about this -.

Also, we would like to have, and our vision is to have the renewal of the interest for the shipping, especially of the young generation's interest. You have heard today the different opinions on that, but you can believe me: if you pay them, and you all know this sentence "Money makes the world go round", if companies already paid them well, with big salaries, they would work on ships because money is always moving everything. What we have now is the lack of crew. I do not know if you have heard – based on the information from the American Academy in the Netherlands - but a few years ago a guy from the Philippines - and I do not hold anything against those people, they are good sailors - made the captain license after one week in the Netherlands even though he did not speak the Dutch language. And you know this excursion, this round trip in Vienna, well on the passenger boat, the captain was from the Philippines. Isn't it a little bit funny? That means that we have a serious problem, which actually gives the reason to make this job very attractive for the young generations, if it is possible - we do not know yet but let's try.

And finally, I would like to say that our Commission is doing its duties regarding all the problems to make these dreams or visions come true. We are collecting information with or from our stakeholders, the shipping companies, and there are general director conferences with them on the Danube on a yearly basis. And while we are participating there, we are sharing our experiences and collecting information. We are trying to elaborate the necessary measurements or projects for inland navigation and we are making proposals. But while we, the river commissions, are intergovernmental organisations, we are not decision makers. The decisions makers are our Member States. And sometimes, as you could hear it today, it is not that easy to have this cooperation with them, because ministers are coming and going, and although they are signing these conclusions, sometimes there is a lack of political will. I do not want to believe that it is impossible to have a cooperation with our Members States because we already have it. But sometimes we are missing the real close cooperation.

And the final vision is, on behalf of my Commission and myself, to have the Danube navigable on 365 days in a year. And this is the final conclusion of the today's second open panel.

Q4:

Hello, my name is Zodiambo, Doctor in Engineering and Environmental Service. On what we have been exactly discussing today, my main questions are the followings: What is the European Union's strategy in solving the activities that we have been discussing today in the Danube Commission?

And what is the cost-benefit analysis of the cohesion of partner states in solving the activities we discussed today in relation to the Danube River?

Diána Szőke:

Yes, these two questions are related: the one about the EU's strategy and the one about the cost-benefit analysis behind it.

Gert-Jan Muilerman:

I am sorry for not being able to answer these questions in a deeper sense. The Danube River Strategy (DRS) itself is not taking money at all, it is a cooperation platform. The key reasoning behind the DRS was that there were no institutions or no new budgets and it was and is a matter of putting existing programs and things together. In the sense that the cost-benefit analysis is 2.0 or whatever, I cannot show you a figure. But I know that we see the fruits or the benefits of this work that started in 2011, even in terms of environmental improvements. We are closely cooperating in the different themes within the strategy, we are representing a navigation site and there are also probity areas dealing with environmental issues with which we also have a close cooperation. While on the other hand, we are cooperating with the border police organisations, with which (besides the ministries of interior within the Danube Region Strategy) we have reached an agreement on developing the harmonisation of new forms within the framework of the strategy. So unfortunately, I am not able to present a figure on how the benefits are compared to the costs of the DRS, I am only able to provide examples for what have changed for the better or what are the benefits of that cooperation.

Diána Szőke:

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, that brings us to the end of our second panel. I would like once again to thank our distinguished guests for being here and for sharing their insights with us. Please join me with a round of applause for their contribution.

Iván Gyurcsík
- *Concluding Remarks*

Dear Readers,

Prior to concluding the lessons learnt during the conference, allow me to briefly refer to the events celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Danube Commission in Budapest, 2018. The event series was initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary (MFAT), and was financed and organised together with our partners. In the building of MFAT, on 7th March 2018, the exhibition “Danube Commission 70” was opened together with the Secretariat of the Danube Commission (DC), which presented the beginning of the international regulation on the Danube navigation, the antecedents of DC, its legal and historical sources, current operational framework and results, with an outlook to the international cooperation and future plans and visions.

On the board of the ship Budapest, on 2nd October 2018, a celebratory reception was held by the MFAT and MAHOSZ, where the member states of DC and the Hungarian shipping society were represented.

In the building of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), on 13th November 2018, an international conference was organised by MFAT and IFAT on the current status of inland navigation and its future challenges, in cooperation with the Secretariat of the DC.

At the conference, the discussion among the shipping men, the river commissions, the international organisations and experts was moderated in (one closed and) two open panels. The speeches and comments of the panellists, as well as the questions and comments of the audience helped to understand the current situation, to outline the issues, and to search for the solutions. Therefore, I would like to briefly summarise the ideas of the conference in ten points: history and revision process, challenges, environment and navigation, investments and market, competition, multimodality, broadening of the scope, working force, ports, actors, international cooperation: EU and other river commissions, and role of the Danube Commission in the future.

History and Revision Process

- The European Commission of the Danube River (ECD) was established (1856) to ensure the navigability of the Danube Delta and then continued to function in order to pay back the loans taken for this main task.
- The Danube Commission (DC) was established (1948) to bring all the riparian countries around one table in order to improve navigability along the whole length of the Danube, to allow countries to harmonise their regulations and to streamline the flow of goods along the river.
- Both commissions achieved their purpose, and while the ECD was replaced by the DC, we are currently analysing how to transform the DC in order to be able to respond to the challenges we are facing today.
- The adaptation or revision process started in the early nineties, while in 2002, the DC made a decision on launching the review process on the Belgrade Convention, where the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) of the Diplomatic Conference Reviewing the Convention was tasked to steer the process. The PrepCom has already delivered the Draft Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube in August 2008. The discussion is on-going, there is much more to be done, everybody needs to get involved.

Challenges

- We have a structure for cooperation, but we need to adjust it to our current needs. The needs, but we may also call them challenges and opportunities, are obvious – public and private investment, industry, tourism and workforce and the environment. It is important to emphasise that the inland transport is, in terms of emissions, ecologically friendly.
- Now the task is to push forward the common interests of navigation on the Danube River, by having in mind its complexity (e.g. environment, water management, etc.).

Environment and Navigation

- Inland navigation projects on the Danube River present similar environmental challenges, so experience should be exchanged, and working together should become the norm.
- The experience with the extremely low water level on the Danube calls for a complex catalogue of measures involving all relevant stakeholders in order to find sustainable solutions for all sectors.
- Water transportation on the Danube River has high unused capacities which should be exploited to make a higher contribution to the modal structure, in order to reduce congestion and air pollutant emissions.

- This goal should be achieved by a way of complex thinking and planning based on the principles of the Joint Statement (Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin, 2007 – DC – ICPDR).

Investments and Market

- The Danube River is an integrated transport corridor, so investments should be correlated.
- The market conditions for private enterprises might seem unfavourable, however, there are still small- and medium-sized, and even larger companies doing business on the field, which shows that the interest in Danube water transport still exists.
- If we can show to the private sector, transport and industry, that we are really committed towards improving navigation, this will be reflected in their business plans.
- The market observations indicate a booming cruise industry, contrary to the decreased cargo figures we see on the Danube. And compared to the vision of the EU, which requires us to increase the share of inland navigation in the transport mix, we are far beyond the planned figures on the Danube.

Competition, Multimodality, Broadening of the Scope

- We think in terms of competition with other means of transport, but we need to be thinking of access and integration. Since river, road and rail can be developed together, the term we use is multimodality, in order to improve access.
- The Danube itself can open access to the Sava, Tisza or Bega Rivers. And since we are speaking about the world, we need to realise that the European rivers connect the continent to the surrounding seas.

Working Force

- With better conditions, the sector will once again prove attractive to youths, either as dynamic workforce or as entrepreneurs bringing the advantages of the 21st century technology to one of the oldest means of transport.

Ports

- We navigate between ports, and as they represent both the beginning and end points of our journeys, their role is paramount in shaping navigation – not only Danube ports, but ports on the Sava, the Rhine or other European rivers, the Black and North Sea ports.

Actors

- There is an on-going process of re-evaluation of the role of actors in inland navigation, also on the Danube River (e.g. transport regulators, diplomats, ports, waterway administrations, private industry).

International Cooperation: EU and Other River Commissions

- The relationship between the European river commissions and the European Union can be further strengthened, as the experience and expertise these commissions bring is unequalled not only in Europe but also globally. Nonetheless, the European river commissions of the future need to bring all stakeholders together.
- There are various forms of cooperation around Europe, such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) where we should get deeper engaged, in order to become better integrated into the global flow of goods and ideas.
- The EU has an increasing role in inland navigation on the Danube River by, for example, setting standards, and supporting the removal of administrative and infrastructural barriers etc.

Role of the Danube Commission in the Future

- The Danube Commission can play the strategic role in this process by integrating all stakeholders into a cooperative and fact-driven discussion. The DC is already taking major steps in this direction by being an active partner to the European Commission and the Member States, by taking an important role in cooperation projects in the Danube Region, and also by organising events where the sector can provide a platform for expressing needs and demands.

Finally, I would like to thank all organisers and participants for their hard work, as well as the interest they expressed towards the events celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Danube Commission. The Danube River is our common treasure. It connects us and gives us life, sometimes also showing us its unbridled power. In order to live wisely, safely and in a productive way, we need to cooperate along, on and with the river; and the Danube Commission, which celebrated its 70th anniversary today, offers an excellent framework for this.

Photos from the Conference



1. H.E. Péter Sztáray delivering his keynote speech



2. H.E. Oleg Tulea delivering his keynote speech



3. H.E. Karla Peijs delivering her keynote speech



4. Audience of the conference



5. Audience of the conference listening to the keynote speech of H.E. Péter Sztáray



6. First Open Panel - Panelists from the left: Gábor Sági, Béla Szalma, Petar Margić, Tibor Mátyás, Béla Csányi, Botond Szalma, and Moderator: Róbert Rafael



7. Second Open Panel – From the left: Petar Margić, Diána Szőke, H.E. Gert-Jan Muilerman, and H.E. Iván Gyurcsík



8. H.E. Iván Gyurcsík delivering his concluding remarks

Press Release of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade on the Conference³

On 13th of November 2018, the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT) hosted a conference in cooperation with the Danube Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Danube Commission with the title of “Danube Commission 70 years - Inland Navigation: Diagnosis, Institutions and Visions in Europe”.

Márton Ugródsy, the Director of IFAT and Péter Sztáray, State Secretary for Security Policy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary welcomed the guests of the event. Both told a personal story about their experiences with the Danube in order to emphasise the importance of Europe’s second largest river. Mr. Sztáray highlighted Hungary’s commitment to improve inland waterway navigation and its promotion on the political level. Then Oleg Țulea, Vice-President of the Danube Commission and Karla Peijs, Coordinator of the Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor held their keynote speeches, in which they directed the attention to the cooperation in order to improve the work within the framework of the EU and to be able to install reforms within the region.

The keynote speeches were followed by two panel discussions. In the first panel, experts from various fields of inland transportation discussed the challenges and opportunities of the sector. They emphasised the right use of resources and the urgent need to solve the problem of navigability, while they pointed out the market opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses among the transport industry. The topic of the second panel was the visions for future of the Danube and the inland navigation. The discussants all agreed on the importance of cooperation not just among the Member States, other international organisations and the European Union, but with other stakeholders of the transportation sector. They highlighted the importance of modern infrastructure and environmentally friendly options in order to make this cooperation more interesting.

3 The Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade’s press release on the conference can be read online in English on the following link: <http://kki.hu/en/articles/danube-commission-70-years/222>.

The panel discussions were followed by a Q+A session. A wide range of issues was touched upon, including how inland transportation could be made more attractive to the youth, the aspects of digitalisation, the development of infrastructure and connection with other water transport systems.

Iván Gyurcsík, the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission concluded the conference with his closing remarks highlighting the most important questions of the conference and the main tasks of the Danube Commission for the future.

COMMUNIQUE OF THE
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
SIGNING OF THE BELGRADE
CONVENTION

Danube Commission - Strengthening the Partnership in Free Navigation on the Danube

- Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, 29th June 2018⁴

On 29 June 2018, the Ministerial Conference was held at the Palace of Serbia in Belgrade on the occasion of marking the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube, more commonly known as the Belgrade Convention. The 90th jubilee meeting of the Danube Commission takes place following this conference. The Republic of Serbia, as the host of the whole event, has organised and opened the exhibition “70 Years of the Belgrade Convention” at the premises of the Palace of Serbia on 28th June 2018, ahead of the Ministerial Conference.

The Danube Conference in Belgrade which was attended by 163 members of state delegations as many as 83 accredited journalists commenced its work on 30th July 1948. During the Conference, substantial agreements on a new navigation regime on the River Danube were reached. The Convention re-established the freedom of navigation. Its application contributed to the improvement of economic and cultural ties as well as the strengthening of trust along the Danube. For the first time in the history of Danube navigation, the new convention established a uniform navigation regime with common traffic regulations as well as a single regulatory body for the River Danube. The first Article of the Belgrade Convention guarantees free navigation on the Danube and non-discriminatory port charges for merchant ships and goods of all countries “on the basis of equality in respect of port and navigation charges, and conditions for merchant shipping”. The Belgrade Convention was adopted at the last session of the Conference on 18th August 1948 and entered into force on 11th May 1949.

Given the complexity of historical circumstances in which the Convention on the Danube Navigation Regime was signed and the Danube Commission (DC) was formed, as well as the fact that the Convention is still in force and operation today, the extent of the changes, the Belgrade Conference of 1948 brought about for the Danube, became clearly visible. There is a continuity

⁴ The Danube Commission’s Communiqué on the conference can be read online in English on the following link: <https://www.danubecommission.org/dc/en/2018/06/05/90th-session-of-the-danube-commission/>.

of the free navigation regime from the distant 1815, 1856 and 1921, with the principle of the “Danube-River of Cooperation” becoming the foundation of seven decades of existence of the Danube Commission and the duration of the Belgrade Convention. That is why the year 1948 – representing the turning point for navigation on the Danube in recent history - is placed in the DC’s coat of arms, along with symbols representing the river navigation.

Today, the Danube Commission has 11 member countries: The Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine. At the beginning of the 21st century, the DC entered into a close cooperation with now 10 observer countries. Since 2001, this status has been granted to: the Republic of Turkey, the French Republic, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, the Hellenic Republic, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, the Republic of Cyprus, and Montenegro. In addition, the DC’s meetings are attended by the representatives of important international organisations: the European Commission (EC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube (ICPDR), the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), the Moselle Commission and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC).

The modern trends in the countries of Europe have created conditions in which certain articles of the Belgrade Convention need to be actualised and adapted to the new conditions in the transport sector.

At the 60th session of the DC in 2002, by agreement of the Member States, the work of the Preparatory Committee for the diplomatic conference was renewed in light of revising the Convention on the Danube Navigation Regime in accordance with the new geopolitical circumstances, but still on the basis of non-discrimination and mutual benefit of the Contracting Parties, respecting the sovereign rights and economic interests of the states. The audit process is still ongoing.

In the view of new political, economic and environmental challenges, DC Member States and all relevant stakeholders aim collectively at the enhancement of safety and security by means of improving common regulations for Danube navigation. Modal shift should be tackled jointly in favour of inland waterways. Further development of the DC, whose 70th anniversary is celebrated in 2018 today in Belgrade, should be considered in the light of new ideas and changing political circumstances.

Bearing in mind everyone’s desire for the Danube to become a single traffic, cultural and natural space, the active participation of the DC in the

implementation of projects for improving the conditions of navigation on the Danube, with the acceptance of all the requirements of environmental protection, is an imperative for the further development of the countries in the Danube Basin. In that sense, the DC, with its traditional role in the field of navigation and in enhanced cooperation with other organisations, encourages the role of safe, environmentally friendly and economically efficient water transport. The DC Member States are promoting multimodality and balance of development of all modes of transport, since the European inland waterways of international significance should be fully integrated into the European Transport Network.

All the stakeholders support the necessary investments in 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) that include waterways, ports, fleet modernisation, digitalisation and education, improvement of administrative procedures, and the development and application of Intelligent Transport Systems which shall ensure the environmental benefits of Inland Waterway Transport and resistance to climate change, thus preserving the Danube as a cornerstone of the common European house.

