



**Press Release: Working group on technical matters
(10-11 April 2024)**

The meeting of the working group on technical matters, convened in accordance with section C. of the Danube Commission's work plan for the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 (dok. DK/TAG 100/6), met from 10 to 11 April 2024 in a hybrid format.

Mr Igor Zaharia (Republic of Moldova) was elected chairman of the working group meeting, Ms Monica Patrichi (Romania) – vice-chair.

The meeting was attended by the delegations from the DC Member States, as well as representatives of international organisations, leadership, counsellors and experts of the DC Secretariat.

In his opening remarks, the Director-General of the Secretariat Mr. Manfred Seitz emphasised that the meeting was taking place at a very difficult time in the history of the Danube Commission, when people were being killed and infrastructure destroyed as a result of Russian aggression in Ukraine. Accordingly, the objectives and tasks of the Danube Commission have changed substantially, due to the current situation in Danube navigation.

The Director-General noted the importance of the decision taken by the Danube States at the Twelfth Extraordinary Session on 17 March 2022 by the Decision DK/TAG-XII Ao./3 to exclude the representatives of the Russian Federation from the work of the Danube Commission until the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine is restored.

It was stressed that the Danube Commission, at its 100th session held on 15 December 2023, had noted that the ongoing systematic attacks by the Russian Federation on the Lower Danube region continued to violate the fundamental principles of the Belgrade Convention. In view of the substantial violation by this state of the fundamental principles of the Convention, the 100th session adopted the Decision DK/TAG/100/11 on the incompatibility of the continued membership of the Russian Federation in the Danube Commission, urging the Russian Federation to draw the consequences of its attacks by withdrawing from the Belgrade Convention until 29 February 2024. Failing that, as of 1 March 2024, the Danube States will no longer consider themselves bound by the obligations under the Belgrade Convention vis-à-vis the Russian Federation.

The delegation of Ukraine expressed its gratitude to the Director-General of the Secretariat for the significant support provided to Ukraine by the Danube Commission during the ongoing full-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine and made a statement, which reflected the activities of the state bodies of Ukraine on the organization of export of domestic products of the agricultural sector of the economy, as well as the main problems in the work of the Ukrainian Danube cluster during the period of the ongoing systematic massive air attacks by the Russian aggressors on the infrastructure of Ukrainian ports, including the country's hydrotechnical infrastructure, agricultural and civil facilities.

In line with the approved agenda, the working group dealt with several topics under its main sections.

The section "Navigation" focused on the implementation of the new version of DFND-2023 in Danube navigation, adopted by the Decision of the 99th session of the Danube Commission



(dok. DK/TAG 99/6), the updating of the "Local Rules for Danube Navigation", strategic development of RIS systems in Danube navigation. Professional requirements for crew and vessel personnel were dealt with separately, through the process of implementation of the Directive (EC) 2017/2397 in Danube navigation, including the outcomes of the Secretariat's involvement into relevant events at the Pan-European level - the working groups of the CESNI/QP, CESNI/TI and fora on the development of minimum requirements for the design of automatic traffic management systems, on cybersecurity in inland water transport.

Under section "Technology, including radio communication", the implementation of the ESRIN standard in Danube navigation, and the Danube Commission's involvement in the updating of this standard within the CESNI/PT Committee were debated, as well as the follow-up to the new version of the "Manual for Radio Communication".

In the context of the consideration of the support for the implementation of the new version of the "DC Recommendations for ensuring the security of navigation on the Danube", Ukraine's proposals for their update were presented on the basis of the current situation on the Lower Danube.

Considerable attention was given to the modernisation of the Danube fleet in accordance with the European Green Deal concept on the basis of the draft roadmap proposed by the Secretariat (version - March 2024), suggesting possible scenarios for the consistent reduction of harmful emissions, the achievement of climate neutrality under the proposed scenarios, the transition to alternative fuels, new energy-efficient propulsion systems and vocational training in the field of "eco-navigation". The working group supported the draft version, submitted by the Secretariat, and suggested that it be further updated.

The section "Hydrotechnics and hydrometeorology" focused on the results of the Expert Meeting on Hydraulic Engineering (29 February 2024), the updating of the Plan for major works on the achievement of recommended fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other facilities on the Danube, the revision of the TEN Regulation concerning the development of inland waterways, the use and development of the Danube Commission's databank, participation in international fora in the field of climate change impact on inland navigation, as well as the issuance of special DC publications on the hydrology of the Danube waterway.

The section "Operation and Ecology" focused on the participation of the DC Secretariat in the Meeting of Experts on the Rules for the Transport of Dangerous Goods (ADN), as well as on the implementation of the new version of the "DC Recommendations for organising the collection of ship-generated waste in Danube navigation" and the planning of the next expert meeting on this topic in 2025. Information was given on the preparations for the 15th Joint Meeting of the three Commissions: DC, ICPDR and ISRBC to update the "Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin", as well as the participation in various projects on environmental protection in the Danube River basin. The working group also considered participation in cross-border cooperation projects: TEN-T Core Corridor Rhine-Danube, support for the implementation of the DAVID forms in Danube navigation and implementation of the RIS COMEX electronic platform. An array of questions relating to the development of freight and passenger transport, ports and logistics services on the Danube was examined. As a result, the working group had before it the Report of the Expert Meeting on Development of Ports and Port Operations Port (12 March 2024).



The section "Statistics and Economics" focused on the preparation of the DC working documents on economic analysis and statistics of Danube navigation. The Secretariat presented the report on the Market Observation for Danube Navigation - the results of 2023, as well as information on the cooperation with the CCNR on the preparation of joint publications on observation of the European inland navigation market.

The section "Grants. Projects" focused on the grant reports - GRANT II, GRANT III and projects where the DC acts as a participant - HORIZON EUROPE -PLATINA 4.

