



Press release of the Danube Commission: Meeting of the Working Group on legal and financial issues of the Danube Commission

The Meeting of the Working Group on legal and financial issues (WG JUR-FIN) of the Danube Commission (DC) was held under the Chairmanship of the Representative of Hungary to the Danube Commission, Amb. **Kocsis Gergő**, on 9-10 April 2025 in a hybrid format.

The delegations of all Danube States of the Danube Commission (the Republic of Austria, Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine) participated in the Meeting.¹

At its 102nd session, DC launched the process of substantial modernization of its Secretariat, which shall identify some new tasks as well as bring gradual changes into the language regime, with English and German being the only working languages of the Organization. In this regard, WG JUR-FIN discussed the draft of a new structure of the Secretariat, which member states could approve at the next session in June and make it effective as of 1 July 2026.

WG JUR-FIN traditionally discussed legal and financial topics concerning basic principles of the Belgrade Convention, in particular: i) port access practice of the Danube states; ii) drafting of the new Regulation on the rights and obligations of the personnel; iii) validity of the vessel's certificates issued by the Danube states which are not members of the European Union; iv) modification of Rules of Procedure and other issues.

The delegations analyzed the progress of DC cooperation with international stakeholders in the context of the discussed DC modernization process as well as constant threats to the free navigation on the Danube as a consequence of the continuing Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The WG JUR-FIN took note with satisfaction of the signature on the 5 February 2025 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Danube Commission and the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure ("PIANC"), which set the framework for launching official cooperation between both organizations..

The proposal by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) to update an existing cooperation agreement between the DC and the CCNR with the aim of extending and strengthening their cooperation in new areas of common interest was also discussed,

The next WG JUR-FIN meeting is planned to take place in October 2025.

¹ Danube states adopted the decision at the 100th DC Session on 14 December 2023 (DC/SES 100/11) urging the Russian Federation to draw the consequences of its attacks by withdrawing from the Belgrade Convention until 29 February 2024, or, 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. This decision came into force on 1 March 2024.