
**Press Release: Working Group on Technical Issues
(13-14 May 2025)**

The Working Group on Technical Issues, convened in accordance with Section C. of the Danube Commission's Work Plan for the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025 (doc. DC/102/OP/5/1), met in a hybrid format from 13 to 14 May 2025. Oleksii Somin (Ukraine) was elected as chairman of the working group.

The meeting was attended by the delegations from all the Member States of the Danube Commission (DC), as well as representatives of international organisations, counsellors and experts of the DC Secretariat.

The Director-General of the Secretariat Manfred Seitz particularly welcomed the participation of the delegation of Ukraine, noting that the meeting was taking place in the context of the ongoing military aggression of Russia against Ukraine, which results in the loss of lives, as well as destruction of industrial and civil infrastructure in Ukraine.

The delegation of Ukraine expressed its gratitude to the Danube Commission for the significant support provided to Ukraine during the ongoing full-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine and updated on the current status and the existing key problems during the period of the systematic massive air attacks by the Russian aggressors on the infrastructure of Ukrainian ports. In some cases, the wreckages of Russian unmanned aerial vehicles were found on the territory of neighbouring Danube states.

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

The section "Navigation" focused on the monitoring of the introduction and implementation of the DFND-2023 in Danube navigation, the updating of the "Local Rules for Danube Navigation", strategic development of the RIS. Professional requirements for crew and vessel personnel were dealt in the context of implementing Directive (EC) 2017/2397. The participation of the responsible EC/DG MOVE D3 policy officer gave member states an opportunity to have a direct information exchange on this essential topic. The Secretariat informed about its participation in the relevant CESNI and UNECE events regarding the development of standards for new competences for crews of inland navigation vessels.

Under the section "Technology, including radio communication", the following topics were discussed: the rollout of the ES-TRIN standard in Danube navigation; the Danube Commission's involvement in the updating of this standard within the CESNI/PT working group; the new version of the "Manual on radiotelephone service on navigable inland waterways, Regional part – the Danube"; the cooperation with the RAINWAT Committee. Also, in relation to this agenda item, the Report on the results of the Expert Meeting on Security in Inland Water Transport (12 March 2025) was presented.

Regarding the fleet modernisation and measures to reduce air pollution from inland waterway transport, the Secretariat gave an update on the draft Strategy and Roadmap for the Modernisation of the Danube Inland Waterway Transport Fleet (version – May 2025, a



discussion paper). This document proposes possible scenarios for the gradual reduction of harmful emissions, the achievement of climate neutrality, the improvement of the fleet's energy efficiency, the transition to alternative fuels and vocational training in the field of "eco-navigation". The delegations were also briefed on the main outcome of the second workshop "Roadmap and actions towards zero-emission Danube fleet" organised by the DC Secretariat in cooperation with Priority Area 1a of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region on 12 May 2025. The workshop delved into particular elements of the introduction of hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in Danube navigation as most realistic mid-term alternative fuel for the majority of the Danube fleet.

The section "Hydrotechnics and Hydrometeorology" focused on the results of the Expert Meeting on Hydraulic Engineering (5 March 2025), the updating of the Plan for major works on the achievement of recommended fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other facilities on the Danube, the implementation of the new TEN Regulation concerning the development of inland waterways, the impact of climate change on inland navigation and the pertinent adaptation of hydraulic engineering works on the Danube, along with the preparation of the DC's special publications on the hydrology of the Danube navigable waterway.

The section "Operation and Ecology" discussed the results of Expert Meeting on Ship-generated waste (6 March 2025). In addition, the status of the joint work of DC, ICPDR and ISRBC on the renewal of the "Guiding principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin" (Joint Statement 2.0), as well as participation in international projects on environmental protection in the Danube basin were debated. The working group also reviewed the participation in cross-border cooperation projects within the TEN-T network, the implementation of the DAVID forms in Danube navigation and the implementation of the CEERIS electronic platform developed by the RIS COMEX project. An array of questions relating to the development of freight and passenger transport, ports and logistics services on the Danube was examined. The results of the Expert Meeting on Development of Ports and Port Operations (26 March 2025) were also presented on the basis of the expert group's report.

The section "Statistics and Economics" reflected progress in the preparation of the DC working documents on economic analysis and statistics. The Secretariat presented the Report on the Market Observation for Danube Navigation 2024, including information on the cooperation with the CCNR on the preparation of joint publications on market observation of the European inland navigation market.

Within the section "Grant Agreements. Projects" members of the Secretariat briefed the participants on the activities financed by the GRANT III and the activities carried out in the Horizon Europe project "Platina4Action" where the DC is a consortium member.

At the end of the meeting, the Director-General of the Secretariat presented a Concept Paper for streamlining the Danube Commission's Technical Working Group. The achievement of a consensus among the member states of the Danube Commission on the formation of a new structure of specialised thematic working groups with clearly defined goals and objectives is a prerequisite for adopting the new Concept which is planned for the next meeting of the working group scheduled for 5-7 November 2025.