

Serbia: Danube Regulation Project

Name: Regulation of Danube

River-Km: 1214 to 1433 (219 rkm), partly border stretch with Croatia

Budget: EuropeAid funds for project preparation

Beneficiary: Serbian Ministry of Transport

Implementing body: Plovput

WWF Position

WWF does not accept this old-fashioned river regulation project and strongly recommends the EU, the relevant Serbian ministries and authorities to immediately stop it. EU funds should not be used for this environmental destructive project. Improving navigation along this river section, which is unique on Danube and European scale primarily should consider non-structural measures and restoration of partly degraded parts should be emphasized.

WWF criticises the following:

- Potential impacts on international key protected areas and outstanding natural values in Europe
- Not in compliance with EU law (FFHD, BD, WFD, FD) and international standards (Joint Statement & EU-PLATINA Manual)
- No stakeholder and NGO involvement at the start of the planning process



Project location

The scope of the project is located on the Danube between the Hungarian border and the confluence of the Danube-Tisza.

The Croatian “Kopački Rit” Nature Park and Serbian Special Nature Reserve “Gornje Podunavlje” is located within this section as well as several other nature reserves along the Danube in Croatia and Serbia.

Background

The Danube regulation project goes back to the “Serbian Master Plan for IWT” of 2006.

In summer 2011 the EuropeAid project started: Preparation of Documentation for River Training and Dredging Works on Selected Locations along the Danube River¹

Project details

Witteveen & Bos in consortium with Danish Hydraulic Institute (DK) and Energoprojekt-Hidroinzenjering Co. Ltd. (RS) won the tender to study the 18 locations on the Serbian Danube, from which 5 should go into detailed design.

The project aims to channel the still natural shifting river course of the Danube according to the defined regulation corridor.

¹ EuropeAid/129691/C/SER/RS; Tender no: 10SER01/14/11 TOR

The scope of the project includes the joint HR-RS Danube section with a length of about 137 km (1295,5 to 1433 rkm). Since October 2010 the Croatian part is just under EIA procedure (see factsheet on Danube navigation/Croatia).

The planned project tasks include: Review the proposed Danube river training works; prepare the design of training works at 5 selected locations on the Serbian Danube; prepare an EIA and receive the associated permits; prepare the technical specifications for dredging and the tender documents for the future works.

The planned works include:

- Construction of new T-groins and parallel structures
- Construction of new embankments
- Dredging of sand from the riverbed

Impact & Conflict

Several protected areas are located within this project: the Croatian Nature Park "Kopački Rit", the Serbian Special Nature Reserve "Gornje Podunavlje", both Ramsar sites, future Natura 2000 sites and part of the core zone of the planned Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve "Mura-Drava-Danube" as well as several other nature reserves along the Danube in Serbia.

The planned works for improving navigation, especially ensuring larger depth, will have serious impacts on terrestrial, aquatic habitats, fauna and flood control.

This would have considerable impact on:

- international key protected areas, the "Kopački Rit" Nature Park (HR) and the "Gornje Podunavlje" Special Nature Reserve (RS) and several others
- the largest and best preserved softwood forests in the Danube Basin

- the best preserved river stretch and floodplain areas along the ca. 1900 km long upper and middle Danube section
- beside the Danube delta the most important fish spawning area in the Danube Basin, the Kopački Rit floodplains
- the last specimens of the nearly extinct ship sturgeon (*Acipenser nudiiventris*) along the Danube
- the highest density of breeding pairs of White-tailed Eagles in Continental Europe (ca. 70 pairs)



See also key critique of WWF on the current planning (Nov. 2011) of the Serbian Danube IWT project



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Links

Transb. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve „Mura-Drava-Danube“ (TBR MDD)
www.amazon-of-europe.com

WWF
http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/black_sea_basin/danube_carpathian/

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Map credit: Plovput

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