

# "NGO Participation in Danube River Basin Management Plans": Information, Analysis, and Conclusions



September 1, 2001 – December 20, 2001

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe  
REC Slovakia



# "NGO Participation in Danube River Basin Management Plans": Information, Analysis, and Conclusions on Participation in the Central and Eastern European Implementation of the European Union's Water Framework Directive

September 1, 2001 – December 20, 2001

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# Vocabulary Key

CEE: Central and Eastern Europe

DEF: The Danube Environmental Forum

DRPC: The Danube River Protection Convention

EC: The European Community

EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment

EU: The European Union

EU (WFD): The European Union's Water Framework Directive - EU Directive 2000/60 EC

GEF: The Global Environmental Fund

GWP: The Global Water Partnership

Helcom: The Helsinki Commission

ICPDR: The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River

MOEW: The Bulgarian Ministry of Environment and Waters

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

RBMP: A River Basin Management Plan as described in the EU WFD

REC: The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe

REC CO Slovakia: The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe  
Country Office Slovakia

SAPARD: The Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Regional Development

STUŽ: The Slovak Society for Sustainable Living

WWF: The international NGO formerly known as the World Wildlife Fund

# Section 1: Introduction

The Danube River is 2 857 km long, and its 817 000 sq. km basin covers 17 countries and contains many ecologically significant areas. This natural capital provides important ecological services by supporting an adequate supply of drinking water, agriculture, industry, fishing, tourism and recreation, power generation, navigation, and a final disposal sink for wastewaters. However, intensive industrial, agricultural, and urban usage has created water quality and quantity problems, which threaten these vital ecological services and resources.

International efforts to coordinate and manage the Danube basin have been active since 1991. Danube countries and the European Commission signed the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC) in June 1994. The level of Central and Eastern European NGO participation is currently limited due to insufficient effort into maintaining their participation and involvement. However, a new opportunity to further improve the Danube's management has been presented by the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD).

In October 2000, The European Parliament and European Union Council accepted Directive 2000/60 EC. This legislation established a framework for community action within the field of water policy, which came to be known, in shortened form, as the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The approval of this legislation opened an opportunity for active cooperation between EU member states and accession states, specifically in regard to the protection and usage of the vast water resources within the Danube River basin. Even though various European NGO representatives' expectations were not met, the WFD represents an important breakthrough in the current paradigm pertaining to water and water management problems.

The WFD represents significant progress because it opens the opportunity for active public participation. This includes the active participation of the NGO sector at the national level, specifically during the creation of national river basin management plans (RBMPs). Active involvement of this kind is one of the key administrative instruments found within the entire WFD framework. Its application in water management planning introduces the same successful tool that has been used for many years in various countries [i.e. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes].

The Regional Environmental Center (REC CO Slovakia) for Central and Eastern Europe Country Office Slovakia's NGO Participation In The Danube River Basin Management Plans project was developed to support these processes and complement their implementation in Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Yugoslavia. Its main goal was to improve environmental awareness and encourage participation of NGOs in Danube River Basin Management Plans on national and international levels. Project activities aimed at realizing this goal were possible through the generous support of the United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The NGO Participation In The Danube River Basin Management Plans program officially started on September 1, 2001 and ran until December 20, 2001. REC country offices coordinated nine national workshops in each of the participating countries. National seminars typically engaged twenty participants from the NGO sector and the relevant authorities in discussions involving their respective involvement in the national Danube RBMPs. These meetings also facilitated the selection of two representatives for the international seminar.

REC CO Slovakia held this two-day regional workshop in December 2001. During its activities, thirty designated country representatives discussed their roles and participation in the national Danube RBMPs, which was framed within the international context. An additional result was the creation of a project web page (<http://www.danuberiver.sk>), which serves as a mechanism for further national and international cooperation and coordination.

This report stems from the information developed through the course of these activities as well as the outputs from cooperative process, which were started at the international seminar in December 2001. Project results and outcomes represent a very significant NGO sector and country specific roles and needs assessment in regard to the future preparation and implementation of the WFD and national RBMPs within the Danube River watershed in the CEE region. The remainder of this text presents these results, which are described through the national seminars' summary, the international seminar discussion results, the international NGO roles and needs assessment, some short conclusions, and various related appendices.

# Section 2: National Seminars' Summary Report

## Bosnia & Herzegovina

The project's Bosnian & Herzegovinian national seminar was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina on October 31, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development process. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- The participants characterized the following problems and trends as significant throughout river catchments:
  - 1) Surface waters are polluted and are becoming increasingly polluted.
  - 2) There is inadequate solid waste disposal that results in widespread temporary landfills, which are usually found near riverbanks.
  - 3) The discharge of untreated and polluter water is a common practice.
- Common problems for NGOs' successful participation in River Basin Management Plans are:
  - 1) insufficient public awareness on environmental protection issues;
  - 2) inadequate support from the responsible authorities;
  - 3) limited information capacity within various NGOs throughout B&H; and
  - 4) insufficient funding.
- A NGO representative presented a further issue from the perspective of a catchment area, which has an artificial water storage reservoir. It was noted that there has been significant local climatic changes since water has been stored there, which presents a real issue for the local residents.
- In most cases, current NGO activities focus on riverbed and banks litter clean-ups, which can involve hundreds of volunteers. In addition, several organizations are working on public environmental awareness development by:

- 1) organizing public meetings and expert presentations focusing on environmental protection;
  - 2) publishing cultural heritage and environment protection booklets;
  - 3) collaborating with media on promoting environmental protection activities; and
  - 4) cooperating with schools on similar activities.
- A few representatives stressed their experience of excellent cooperation with local authorities and media, which included:
    - 1) administrative assistance in registration;
    - 2) enthusiasm to cooperatively discuss problems;
    - 3) eagerness to participate in concrete activities;
    - 4) willingness to promote the work of NGOs; and
    - 5) assistance in motivating public participation in concrete voluntary actions.

However, all participants did not share this positive perspective. Some presented the various obstacles they face in their work. Numerous participants expressed their discontent with the existing communication opportunities with the responsible authorities.

- The process of preparing environmental legislation in B&H includes the "Law on Water Protection." A current draft elaborates public participation instruments throughout water management processes, which are in accordance with the WFD (Mrs. Hadjiabdic).

## Conclusions:

- There is an evident increase in the demand for cleaner rivers, lakes and groundwater by citizens and environmental organizations. Generally, RBMPs in the B&H part of Danube basin should focus on ensuring the basis for improving water quality, particularly in regard to:
  - 1) protecting drinking water sources;
  - 2) ensuring cleaner bathing water resources; and
  - 3) guaranteeing water quality as part of the environment (i.e. as a local and regional heritage).
- Active NGO participation into the planning mechanisms and Environmental Impact Assessments should be regarded as successful tools that need to be utilized in the creation of RBMPs throughout the B&H part of the Danube River basin. Several goals that came from the problem analysis and will facilitate this process are:
  - 1) the public environmental awareness development concerning protection issues;
  - 2) the guaranteed support of responsible governmental authorities;
  - 3) the improvement of contacts between the various participant groups involved in

RBMPs; and

4) the increased financial assistance opportunities for different NGO activities.

- A few NGOs presented concrete problems of incidental water pollution, and they characterized the lack exact water quality monitoring data as an obstacle to their activities.
- Almost all of the NGOs deal with problems of providing adequate meeting places and necessary services.
- The participants were particularly interested more effective dissemination of information regarding water management stakeholder activities as well as the ongoing activities under Danube Convention.

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report prepared by Esena Kupusovic)*

## Bulgaria:

The project's Bulgarian national seminar was held in Sofia, Bulgaria on November 21, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development processes. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- Issues concerning official institutions' responsibility for providing information to the public was discussed in two instances of:
  - 1) accidental pollution discharges and illegal waste disposal sites; and
  - 2) the preparation and implementation process of RBMPs.

## Conclusions:

- Information should be provided to the local media and the interested parties (NGOs, citizens groups, and the local population) in regard to instances of:
  - 1) accidental pollution discharges and illegal waste disposal sites; and
  - 2) the preparation and implementation process of RBMPs.
- The Basin Councils should play a role in the:
  - 1) participation of NGOs;
  - 2) provision/dissemination of information;
  - 3) establishment of Sub-Basin Councils; and
  - 4) guarantee of financial resources for their respective activities.

- NGOs should participate on the national, regional and local level. The Basin Councils should:
  - 1) regularly provide information about the activities;
  - 2) RBMP implementation; and
  - 3) monitoring activities.
 The forum also proposed a recommendation for the Ministry of Environment and Waters' (MOEW) in order to facilitate the realization of these activities. This recommendation suggested that the MOEW include the financial resources, needed for establishing the Sub-Basin Councils and ensuring the Councils' operations, in its 2003 budget.
- The interested NGOs are ready to cooperate and work on the RBMP. They have capacity, but they need more background information on the process. In order to keep the network alive, there is a need for a project follow-up and continuous information exchange between NGOs and official institutions.
- NGOs will try to play a role of mediator between the local citizens and official institutions during the process of the RBMPs preparation and implementation in the sub-basins (e.g. the Bulgarian section of the Danube River basin). Mrs. Milena Dimitrova and Mrs. Silvia Kirova from the REC Country Office Bulgaria accepted the responsibility to provide the participants with any information relevant to the discussed issues.

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report prepared by Milena Dimitrova)*

## Croatia:

The project's Croatian national seminar was held in Zagreb, Croatia on November 30, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development processes. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- NGOs should be involved in the basin quality analysis sections of the national RBMP, and this involvement will help fulfill the public's right to know and assist NGOs in preparing appropriate, effective programs in the future.
- There was a NGO perspective discussion specifically relating to surface water pollution on the Drava river basin, which produced the conclusion that the NGO "Dravska liga" should be considered to be an important part of the RBMP preparation.
- Concerns were presented about the issue of impact monitoring for the existing hydropower plants located on the Drava River

- There was little emphasis on the analysis of goals or alternative solutions because the participants considered NGO participation from the beginning of the RBMP preparation process as being an important goal.

## Conclusions:

- Future RBMP preparation activities should outline:
  - 1) the role of national NGOs;
  - 2) specific guidelines for participation;
  - 3) specific opportunities for participation in the process;
  - 4) national lists of participating NGOs; and
  - 5) a liaison body responsible for communication with and between NGOs.
- Current NGO experience with the national aspects of international conventions and their implementation is insufficient. Future activities and assistance should address this need.
- In regard to basin analysis of the RBMP (WFD Article 13, Appendix VII), the Croatian evaluation determined that flood protections issues, including dams, should be considered during the RBMP's preparation due the importance of this aspect in Croatia.
- The problem analysis of the RBMP should specifically include waste landfills, artificial lakes (i.e. created through sand and gravel exploitation), and oil drilling.
- The roles and mechanisms of other, relevant government ministries' contributions and responsibilities in the preparation of the RBMP should be clearly stated, especially for those bodies involved with physical planning and water management planning.
- One conclusion from the expert perspective is that NGOs need further capacity for fuller participation in the RBMP preparation process. As a result, a capacity building project should be a very important priority.

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report prepared by Mojca Luksic, B.Sc., Civil. Eng.)*

## Czech Republic:

The project's Czech national seminar was held in Olomouc, Czech Republic on November 22, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development processes. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- The types of conflict that are arising from the management and protection of river basins:
  - Conflicts between NGOs', on one side, and government institutions and organizations, whom are supported by experts, on the other.
  - Conflicts between inhabitants of the same local area with differing opinions.
  - The problem surrounding the social impact of water construction projects.
  - Human/social tragedies that attract little attention (the movement of the local population from areas flooded by reservoirs).
  - Money, not people, is the driving priority because it must be spent by a certain date in order to fulfill the construction plans.
- The level of support among the public for the various plans is fundamentally the same in the different towns.
- Participants presented case studies/examples, which included:
  - The Nové Mlýny reservoirs - The construction of islands as part of the habitat corridor
  - PHARE project CZ 9705-05-03: "Integrated decision-making in the environmental sphere and support for public participation": Carrying out a demonstration study of the strategic environmental assessment (SEA).
  - The Union for the River Morava has contributed to the activities of the DEF by carrying out two studies:
    - 1) The enlargement of the River Morava's riverbed at Olomouc.
    - 2) An alternative environmental proposal for anti-flooding measures on the River Morava.
- New principles for involving the public in the "Natura 2000" environmental protection system were presented (RNDr. Vlastimil Kostkan, Ph.D).
  - The pilot areas for the SENTER-DHV CR project are the Malý and Velký Tisý National Nature Reserve, the area surrounding the Třebon district protected landscape area, and the area north of Litovel in the Litovelské Pomoraví protected landscape area.
- The specialist aspects of environmental care strategies preparation in the Czech Republic are at an advanced level compared with many other countries.
- At present, NGOs are not systematically invited to take part in public enquiries. Moreover, NGOs are unable to make full use of the legal possibilities available to them because they do not have sufficient staff or financial resources to participate effectively in all cases.
- Specialist centers (e.g. the Water Research Institute) offer NGOs access to the river basin planning process.
- There is no current plan of action for the Morava River basin (no plan has been approved)



## Conclusions:

- The introduction of EU legislation in the Czech Republic is slow, and its importance is underestimated.
- The participants presented a recommendation that the existing Danube management materials should be revised. Concrete plans should be drawn up in accordance with the Natura 2000 system.
- The main problems of the river basin are well known but nothing is being done about them. The basis's for a solution exists, but they are not utilized.
- It is necessary to clearly define and appropriately enact the role of NGOs in relation to state administration and bodies.
- NGOs are interested in regular meetings and discussions with the representatives of other key groups.
- If the state wants NGOs to be real contributors, it needs to stop treating them (NGOs) as unequal partners (i.e. who work for free and under unreasonable time pressure). NGOs should be equal partners, whom receive remuneration for their contribution.
- NGOs have little opportunity to interact with professional and state organizations because they lack the necessary capacity and resources, which is one of the reasons why the Aarhus convention has not been implemented in the Czech Republic.
- NGOs are not considered as equal partners in negotiations.
- Lack of trust between NGOs and other partners means that they negotiate with their hands tied.
- It is difficult to obtain useful data from state bodies coming under the Ministry for the Environment (the Hydro-meteorological Institute, the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection, the Water Research Institute). NGOs have a legal right to access to information. In practice, however, it is difficult to enforce this right.
- It is in our own (public managers' perspective) interest to present our intentions and plans to the public in a form they can understand. Otherwise, we will be confronted by purely emotional reactions from the public unsupported by any real awareness, knowledge or understanding of the issues. This is where NGOs can help. The Water Research Institute (CZ) finds that the public fails to react to its attempts to engage in a discussion. In Hanušovice, for example, the Water Research Institute doesn't know



the opinion of the public. It has no counter-proposals and doesn't know what the individual localities want.

- In general, the public sees faults in the way the landscape is managed and demands its rectification with various levels of emphasis on a technical solution.
- It is difficult to explain to the citizens the difference between a general plan and a particular project. In addition, it is challenging to illustrate how general plans can have a direct impact on their lives because such plans have a long-term or, even, permanent influence on the landscape's ecosystems.
- Czech Republic suffers from primary deficiencies in public relations and in attempts to involve appropriate stakeholders in the issues of environmental protection.
- The effectiveness of the different public participation methods were tested in the Czech Republic, and the data showed public acceptance of media campaigns, leaflets and posters.

## Conclusions at the regional level:

- The TGM Brno Water Management Research Institute will offer (and has offered) NGOs access to the working group for planning in the Morava river basin.
- NGOs will need to work on the creation of a pilot project for the implementation of the EU WFD, and RBMP, which involve all elements (e.g. the state, local government, NGOs, the public, etc.).
- NGOs need to demand improved access to information from the Ministry for the Environment (Water Research Institute, the Agency for Nature Conservation and Landscape Protection, the Hydro-meteorological Institute).
- NGOs need to press for the creation of a pilot project at the Nové Mlýny reservoir, which involves the public via NGO venues.
- NGOs need to demand a strategic environmental assessment of the anti-flooding measures in the Morava river basin from the government.

## Conclusions at the international level:

- NGOs throughout all countries, who are signatories to and involved in the Action Plan for the Protection of the Danube, need to demand the regular evaluation and verification of their nation's progress in fulfilling its respective international commitments.

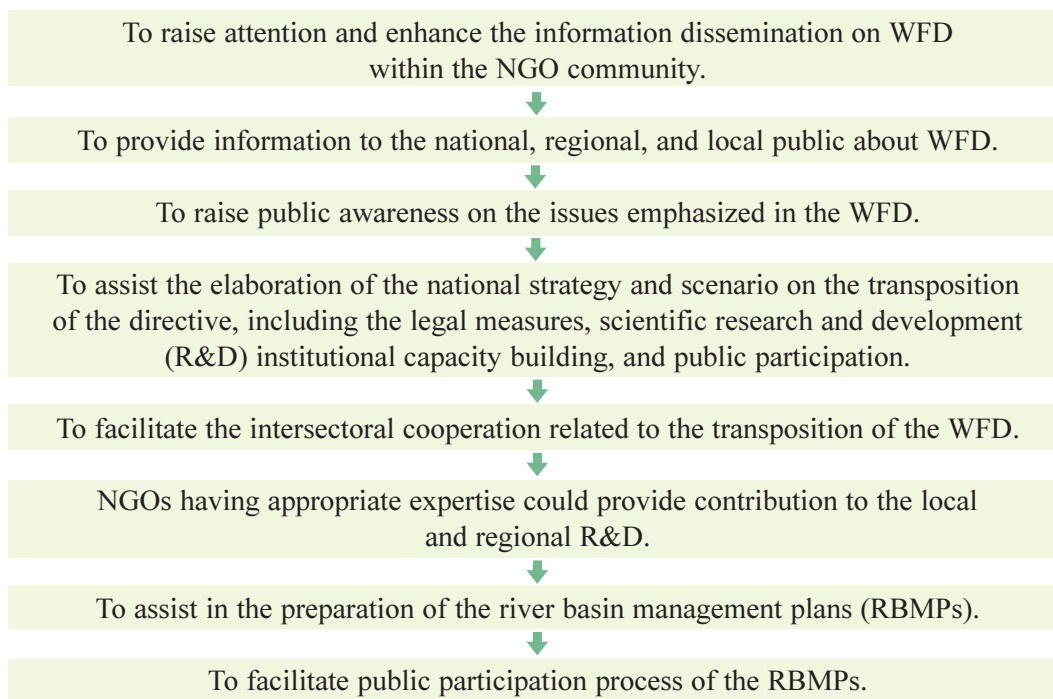
- It is necessary to ascertain the relative effectiveness between NGOs in the various countries of the Danube River basin in order:
  - 1) to ascertain the opportunities for mutual assistance;
  - 2) to exchange experience and knowledge between countries; and
  - 3) to back up the Danube Environmental Forum with local experience and information networks.

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report developed by Mgr. Ida Kousalová and RNDr. Vlastimil Kostkan, PhD)*

## Hungary:

The project's Hungarian national seminar was held in Budapest, Hungary on November 22, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development processes. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- The scope of the NGO participation roles related to the transposition of the directive: Taking into consideration the different elements and phases defined in the directives, the NGOs face the following **roles in the field of public participation**:



- Potential topics for the public participation:
  - Water supply - the quality of the drinking water
  - Protection of the ground water assets (quantity, quality, ecological, landscape ecological aspects) - in close coordination with land use practices
  - Pollution of surface waters
  - Conservation, rehabilitation and reconstruction of wetlands
  - The environmental impact assessment of the measures
  - Development and operation of monitoring systems - information dissemination on trends
  - Designation of the protected areas
  - Preparation and consultation on the RBMPs
  - Information dissemination
  - International cooperation

## Conclusions:

- Very careful coordination is needed to ensure appropriate awareness concerning the consultation activities related to the WFD. There is a need for the integration of the environmental issues into other sectoral policies and plans.
- The WFD entails a lot of open methodological questions that have to be developed within the scheduled time requirements. These timelines are very strictly defined (15 years) concerning the WFD's implementation. This means that:
  - the public participation procedure should start without any delay to in order to be effective;
  - high-level coordination should be developed between NGOs, scientific institutions, and local government in order to enhance the consultations; and
  - most of the RBMPs will extend to foreign counties as a result the international cooperation should be strengthened and facilitated by NGOs.

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report developed by the REC Country Office Hungary and the National Society of Conservationists)*

## Romania:

The project's Romanian national seminar was held in Bucharest, Romania on November 7, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development processes. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- The main goal is to enhance awareness development in the civil society and the reinforcement of the NGOs' role in water management and pollution reduction with particular attention to transboundary cooperation and integrated river basin management. This can best be achieved through practical measures and the support of community-based activities for rational resources management, transboundary cooperation, and pollution control with particular attention to nutrient reduction. (Prof. Pertruta Moisi)
- From the standpoint of pollution production (point and non-point), there will be a categorization of local problem sources with concurrent monitoring implemented by NGOs.
- Monitoring will be implemented for the preparation of new and existing economic activities in the river basin. In addition, an evaluation will be performed in the case of the identification of problematic impacts relevant to the WFD.
- Many people expect NGO and public participation to be limited to warnings about unprotected, forgotten wetlands, or some sort of pollution hazard. One important question to be asked is if there is an opportunity for them to participate in strategic problem solving?
- It was discussed and agreed that **public participation is necessary for the successful implementation of the Water Framework Directive**, and, indeed, **sustainable environmental management as a whole (including water resources)** because:
  - 1) Decision-making, planning, monitoring, etc. needs good information (e.g. pertaining to water impacts, pressures and elements) for the development of measures to achieve "good status", and this **information is often locally held**.
  - 2) Beside mere information, essential NGO and public input provides a **larger pool of ideas and knowledge as a basis for policy formulation and decision-making**.
  - 3) "Ownership" of plans (resulting from involvement in planning) **improves the chances of successful implementation** when the Programs of Measures is enacted.
  - 4) NGOs are often needed by the European Commission to play a **"watchdog" role** concerning the implementation of EC legislation.
  - 5) NGOs have a key role in **strengthening public awareness on water issues while empowering public responses to government actions**, and they are also involved in organizing and leading public initiatives.
  - 6) Decisions regarding environmental management and socio-economic development should simply not be made without involving the public **(It is a democratic right)**.
  - 7) The long-term practice of public involvement will gradually help to **build a culture of cooperation and prevent conflicts and tensions**.

## Conclusions:

- Timing, scales, and levels? - Attention was paid to the questions of: When?; At what geographical scale?; and On what level is public participation required?
  - 1) **Public involvement is needed now, immediately, as soon as possible** ("yesterday"), in order to facilitate the process. Any idea to simply "publish" or "inform" stakeholders of timetable for the development of river basin management plans, significant water issues in the area, and the draft river basin management plans was characterized as erroneous and likely to lead to failure during implementation.
  - 2) **Public involvement is appropriate and required at all geographical scales and at all decision-making levels**, including:
    - the international level (e.g. through relevant bodies such as the ICPDR or Helcom in order to disseminate information and raise awareness, to provide key inputs, etc.);
    - the catchment or sub-basin level (e.g. to collect input for a joint planning of possible Tisza or Drava cross-border development plans);
    - the national level (e.g. to provide information for national decision-making regarding transposition of legislation); and
    - the local level (e.g. for inputting local expertise and knowledge and stakeholder viewpoints into coordinated rural/regional development planning and the integration of nature conservation).
  
- What is needed in order to contribute effectively? - For NGOs in CEE (as with elsewhere in Europe) to contribute effectively to these processes, certain needs and gaps must be filled. It must be recognized that if public participation is to be secured in a meaningful way, **significant financial investments and changes in the nature of relationships between government and civil society**, are required.
  - 1) **Capacity building** is urgently required for NGOs. While energy, enthusiasm, commitment and expert (local) knowledge on the scientific and social aspects exist, policy expertise is often lacking.
  - 2) NGOs have a key role to play in **strengthening public awareness** concerning the main issues surrounding water management, especially in relation to schools and the general public. Many initiatives are underway, but they require additional funding and support.
  - 3) NGOs must be **better organized**, and can often probably do this with additional external funds. Relevant networks already exist, such as the European Environmental Bureau (i.e. coordinated informal water policy information network), GWP, and WWF's policy network, and, as a result, CEE NGOs should actively become engaged in these processes.
  - 4) NGOs can (and already do) play a valuable role in **interfacing between science and society**, but this needs to be strengthened in order to maximize the benefits

and inputs from civil society into the relevant planning processes within the CEE region.

- Proposed next steps for assisting with planning, implementation, and monitoring:
  - 1) A **"resource inventory" or analysis of existing CEE NGO expertise** on river basin management, sustainable water management, public participation, integration of sectoral policies, economic instruments and other relevant areas should be compiled. This needs to be done in order to assess the key areas and the extent NGOs in CEE can and will play a role in implementing and monitoring the WFD's many activities.
  - 2) A **CEE "Expert Pool"** should then be established and managed. Thus, relevant and much-needed CEE expertise can easily and effectively be supplied to the European Commission (e.g. for inputs into the working groups of the forthcoming EC-Member States' WFD Implementation Strategy) and other relevant bodies (e.g. ICPDR, Helcom, etc.).
  - 3) Thus, an **informal CEE NGO network** of interested and competent individuals and organizations should evolve, which is linked into the relevant international policy and information networks in order to strengthen cooperation and joint actions. This will act as a type of open, transparent think-tank on water issues, and it can also secure some of the best available experts (and practices) for use in and guiding the different aspects of the WFD's development and implementation.
  - 4) In particular, the EC-Member States' WFD Implementation Strategy **working groups on Heavily Modified Waters, Economic Aspects (water pricing), Monitoring, and Best Practices for River Basin Management** require and deserve significant CEE civil society inputs. At present, this is at best an ad-hoc process, and, at worst, it is completely ineffective.
  - 5) There is currently no **working group on "Public Participation"** in the EC-Member States' WFD Implementation Strategy, and this seems to be a significant omission. The European Commission, together with Member States and accession nations, should establish such a working group as soon as possible, rather than waiting on or treating public participation as merely an "add-on" to an existing working group. Meanwhile, the EC should ensure that any NGO "inputs" on this issue (e.g. conclusions of this conference) are recognized and taken into account and incorporated into the Joint Strategy.
  - 6) In the meantime, CEE NGOs should jointly and transparently initiate a process for drafting **Guidelines on Public Participation** and should offer these to the European Commission for discussion, input, amendment, and, eventually, adoption. If the European Commission does not wish to participate in this process, the agreed "pan-CEE" guidelines should be used throughout the region as a benchmark against in which to measure the performance of the EC, accession countries, and other bodies such as ICPDR and Helcom. However, the EC should ensure that these NGO efforts are recognized and taken into account and incorporated into the Joint Strategy.

- 7) **Pilot projects throughout the region** should be demonstrating the available participatory approaches and good practices. They should be designed, funded, and implemented in order to highlight how creative, "alternative" approaches to water management can strengthen the implementation of the WFD. The results can be targeted upon international funding sources such as the EC LIFE Fund, GEF, and others.
  - 8) NGOs should take advantage of **existing or planned structures** and seek (and be allowed to) to actively contribute, as much as possible, in the formation of and activities of river basin councils, Global Water Partnership (GWP) facilitated Water Clubs, stakeholder water parliaments, and other such initiatives. For this to happen, there needs to be open access, transparent structures and processes, and a spirit of equality and cooperation.
  - 9) To these ends, it was suggested that **GWP support national NGO workshops** in each of the GWP participating countries in order to maintain momentum developed by this (national) conference and to seek common ground on the possible inclusion of environmental NGOs into current or planned national Water Clubs.
- Concerning hydroelectric dams and other water engineering projects:
    - 1) A **CEE stakeholder conference on dams and the Water Framework Directive** should be urgently organized, possibly facilitated and supported by the GWP/WWF, and, potentially, using the World Commission on Dam's guidelines as a basis for discussion. It has become crucial to raise awareness of these issues and to openly discuss whether alternatives exist and/or are being considered.
  - The cooperation between civil society and local NGOs is essential in ensuring long-term success (Prof. Pertruta Moisi).
  - In this context, the need to support the institutional NGO development has proved of vital importance. Technical/professional assistance and financial support for the DEF and for national NGOs working on trans-boundary pollution issues and nutrient reduction should be focusing on:
    - administrative support for communication and information;
    - consultation meetings and training workshops;
    - special publications; and
    - awareness development campaigns (Prof. Pertruta Moisi).
  - Financial support should be given for the implementation of community based demonstration projects in various Danube River basin countries (Small Grants Program)(Prof. Pertruta Moisi).
  - Funding and support conclusions: It is clear that an adequate WFD implementation will not be feasible without additional human and financial resources at all administrative levels.
    - Capacity building in NGOs will be a vital element in safeguarding an active and efficient role of the civil society in this process.

## Annex 1 – "MAKING THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE WORK" is listed below:

### **MAKING THE EU WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE WORK *NINE/TEN ACTIONS FOR IMPROVING EUROPE'S WATER POLICY***

Despite the major improvements of EU water policy, a number of problems are emerging from the text. They have to be dealt with in the coming years in order to achieve clear results. These problems are for instance:

- complicated and wide ranging exemptions and derogation conditions for the environmental objectives;
- potential implementation problems; and
- shift of important decisions to subsequent political processes

The success of the WFD in improving the European Community's aquatic environment will strongly depend on the political will and on further hard work. The participation of all stakeholders in the subsequent processes needs to be secured as well as the proper utilization of the different tools, which are provided by the WFD.

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) organized an open seminar on November 3-4, 2000 titled "EU Water Policy under the Water Framework Directive - Future Challenges and Environmental Outcomes." The EEB Water Seminar was aiming to:

- assess the instruments, measures and objectives of the WFD;
  - identify key implementation issues of the WFD;
  - define key issues where future NGO work at EU level is most needed;
  - identifying priorities for its successful implementation;
  - formulate draft criteria for assessing a successful national implementation; and
  - promote active NGO participation in the implementation of the WFD for better water protection.
- 1) 25 NGOs from 14 European countries were represented at the seminar and jointly developed nine key actions to make the WFD work and to improve the European Community's water policy "Securing Public Participation and NGO involvement"
  - 2) Particularly, points should be identified where independent NGO involvement is necessary, but not legally required. NGOs should be invited to participate at the earliest possible stage and through all phases of policy development. This involvement will allow NGOs to contribute to raising public awareness. Since the success of the WFD hinges on people's input, EU Member States are well advised to invest in maximum public participation. In doing so, however, full political independence of the involved NGOs needs to be respected and secured.
  - 3) A robust definition of Good Ecological Status

- 4) Cessation goal for all hazardous substances
- 5) Stepping up preventative groundwater protection
- 6) Extending sustainability rules to all water uses
- 7) Integrated and transparent water management
- 8) Water pricing to reflect water's true value
- 9) Implementation and enforcement of existing water legislation in both EU Member States and accession countries

### **Substantial support for WFD implementation**

It is clear that an adequate WFD implementation will not be feasible without additional human and financial resources at all administrative levels.

- Capacity building in NGOs will be a vital element in safeguarding an active and efficient role of the civil society in this process.

*(Note: The above information and annex was provided by the REC Country Office Romania national seminar report)*

## **Slovak Republic:**

The project's Slovak national seminar was held in Bratislava, Slovakia on November 8, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- The first discussion topic was focused on the evaluation of the current NGO sector's cooperative experience with state authorities, specifically in the context of projects or activities related to water issues and water management. Negative experiences seemed to dominate the discussion, particularly in regard to:
  - 1) information access (despite the current Slovak Freedom of Information Act) and
  - 2) the lack of knowledge about NGO initiatives.
 This situation highlighted the challenges that Slovakia faces, especially in the case of the RBMP.
- The participants agreed that RBMP development is an excellent opportunity for the improvement of contacts between general public, various NGOs, state authorities, and other stakeholders.
- The most intense discussion was devoted to evaluating and elaborating the RBMP preparation processes, particularly in regard to the imposed "external" conditions (requirements specified in the WFD).

- Some critical concerns were expressed about of the WFD as a whole, with special emphasis on:
  - the lack of floods and drought prevention agenda;
  - the lack of a plan that deals with the improvement of landscape retention capacity;
  - inadequate devices for dealing with the spatial and temporal (i.e. dynamic) aspects of water quantity;
  - the insufficient stress on an integrated management approach; and
  - the unclear and inadequate emphasis on relevant sustainable development issues.
  
- A further discussion topic was the problem of "when?" and "how?" to participate in the RBMP development process. The majority of NGO representatives agreed that the optimal time should be participation during preparatory phase of the RBMP. They believed that this phase offered the optimal venue for expert NGO members to present their opinions and comments. In this way, greater cooperation with the other stakeholders is possible from the very beginning, which can help prevent hard-to-solve problems that could become apparent during later phases of the process, if this approach was not used. This technique is considered to be more efficient compared to the classical method in which a narrow, unrepresentative team of experts prepares a RBMP and, then, presents it for comment.
  
- One concrete objection concerned the possible abuse of status "artificial and heavily modified" water bodies. This concern highlighted the need for a check on process that characterizes specific reference conditions and the control of relevant exceptions (e.g. time schedule for environmental goal realization, pollutant make-up, and groundwater protection). In contrast, there were specific, favorable comments about the WFD framework, which referred to:
  - 1) the open opportunities to participate in the preparation of the RBMP and
  - 2) the flexibility to implement stricter standards than those suggested in WFD.

## Conclusions:

- The development of alternative RBMPs would be problematic because due to the unequal information access environment (i.e. lack of adequate "available" information as to facilitate the development of appropriate alternative RBMPs). One suggestion to address this significant issue was to guarantee that all alternatives would be supported with equal information resources (i.e. full availability of all pertinent information for all stakeholders).
  
- Successful NGO participation in the RBMP preparation requires effective networking. The idea to create an umbrella organization was elaborated. This suggestion outlined the idea that this organization or network would administer the necessary logistics for public

participation in the RBMP by obtaining and disseminating the relevant information from responsible authorities (ministries, etc.). It could be achieved through creation of databases, brochures, etc. In addition, an umbrella institution would also host a permanent expert board that consists of 4-5 qualified NGO members and ad-hoc external experts. This board would be responsible for the professionalism and completeness of NGO sector comments on the RBMP development process as well as the final national RBMP.

- It was emphasized that NGOs should play an important role in education of the general public during the preparation of the RBMP. As a result, a special grant program for the support of public and NGO participation during the RBMP preparation process should be established.

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report developed by Ján Hanušin and REC Country Office Slovakia)*

## Slovenia:

The project's Slovenian national seminar was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia on November 16, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development processes. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- The facilitated discussion focused on the following topics:
  - 1) key problems and primary actors in NGO participation throughout the RBMP preparation in Slovenia;
  - 2) unclear identity of stakeholders, who should be involved into the discussion with experts and their mandate;
  - 3) ill-defined process for NGO (and public) involvement and the method discussion facilitation;
  - 4) problematic accessibility and information access structures necessary for participation; and
  - 5) NGO participation financing.
- Several problems were characterized and discussed [e.g. point and non-point water pollution sources, construction project pollution sources (e.g. highways, the Sava electric power station, etc.), current water quality, etc.]. Many participants, who are interesting these problems, stressed the significant lack of opportunities to:
  - 1) follow documentation preparation;
  - 2) present opinions;
  - 3) participate in decision-making; and
  - 4) act (prevent, inform, etc.) in the cases of mismanagement or inconsistencies with project documentation or legal initiatives.

## Conclusions:

- Governmental and expert institutions currently do not include public opinions into their processes. It is not common practice to involve or consult NGOs during water management processes.
- There is insufficient information distribution at the government and local levels. Project documentation about water authorities' interventions is often not accessible.
- Law enforcement is currently weak.
- NGOs with an emphasis on water issues should not be the only groups involved in these processes. Additional NGOs (i.e. NGOs dealing in the spheres of environment, nature protection, tourism, agriculture, recreation and sports, enterprises, small businesses, etc.) should be involved into the RBMP processes.
- There are already cases where NGOs involvement has made positive impacts, when involved in water management issues. Examples include:
  - 1) collecting information on water resources (springs) in local communities;
  - 2) gathering data on water polluters at the local level through reporting;
  - 3) developing expert water quality analysis;
  - 4) providing recommendations for the ecological rehabilitation of water resources/bodies;
  - 5) organizing solid waste collections events (organized by fisherman, hunter, and tourist groups);
  - 6) realizing public awareness programs; and
  - 7) prompting effective law enforcement.
- The following suggestions and observations were also made:
  - 1) NGOs should rouse local communities (families, schools, clubs, etc.) and strengthen public opinion within these groups;
  - 2) strong information support is needed from both the government and other stakeholders (e.g. short information reports should be available for each project, water quality monitoring reports, media and internet sources, informational brochures, etc.);
  - 3) NGOs can act as public watchdogs in the case of government mismanagement or legal violations (note: information and knowledge about the legal and institutional systems is necessary for this role);
  - 4) cooperative support is necessary between different NGOs in order to achieve better results and synergy;
  - 5) NGOs can collect and analyze information on various issues;
  - 6) workshops, meetings, and seminars should be organized at appropriate times so as to facilitate high attendance (afternoons, evenings, etc.); and

- 7) announcements for workshops, meetings, and seminars should be informative and provided early.
- In order to achieve effective NGO (and broader public) participation in RBMP preparation, it is necessary to realize the following actions:
    - 1) Define the process of NGO participation within the national water legislation and make it completely transparent by the developing authorities and the participants through the following measures:
      - Regulations should be adapted on the basis of the new Water Law, which will clearly and precisely define the process (and method) of NGO participation (i.e. Who will lead the procedure and invite the NGOs?; Which NGOs will be invited?; How the discussion is to be organized?; Where and when to confront different actors in the process?; etc.).
      - The institutional role of NGO participation in the RBMP formulation process should be clarified (i.e. It should be assured that the NGO input is taken into consideration, if it is applicable. If this input isn't applicable, there should be explanation providing the reasons it is not.).
    - 2) Enable public access to all relevant information (i.e. related to water quality, data, and documents related to interventions into the river basin, information about polluters - in both written and electronic formats) in the following venues:
      - Existing access to information should be improved, and there should be no discrimination between formats (e.g. electronic forms, paper reports, media).
      - A pollutant register should be established or made available to public, if it already exists.
      - Awareness should be raised about RBMP preparation, and a broader discussion opened by the inhabitants about this process in order to develop informed public opinion.
      - Information dissemination among stakeholders should be approved (This is due to fact that a lot of information exists, but it is not know by the public).
    - 3) Actively support the participation in the process of RBMP development and educate the various participating stakeholders. Some of the important aspects of this participation are:
      - adequate announcement in the local and national media (both informative and timely);
      - good information access;
      - financial support provided for NGOs that actively participate;
      - discussions organized at the appropriate times; and
      - different levels of participation enabled.

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report developed by Dr. Lidija Globevnik, Mateja Šepec, and the REC Country Office Slovenia)*

## FR Yugoslavia:

The project's Yugoslavian national seminar was held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia on November 23, 2001. It served as a venue to disseminate information about the WFD and national RBMPs, but, more importantly, the workshop also facilitated the identification of perspectives and challenges facing the local NGO community in its engagement into the national RBMP development processes. Important discussion points, topics, and conclusions included:

- The participants were offered to join one of two working groups each focused on one of the following topics:
  - 1) Analyses of environmental media quality in the Danube River watershed area in FR Yugoslavia.
  - 2) Survey of environmental problems in the Danube River watershed area in FR Yugoslavia.

These working groups focused on the five sub-areas of key issues (legislative framework, institutional framework, monitoring, public participation, and NGO participation) and, later, submitted their reports during the closing session. These conclusions are outlined below.

## Working Group # 1 Conclusions:

- Working group # 1 was dealing with analyses of environmental media quality in the Danube River watershed area within the FR Yugoslavia. It came to the (Annex 2 Group I) conclusions that present laws governing this field are obsolete and not efficient, regulations are not fully harmonized within the state, transboundary cooperation is not utilized, and local legislation is not harmonized with relevant EU legislation (refer to Annex 2 Group I).
- Working Group # 1 suggested measures for overcoming the aforementioned problems, which include:
  - 1) the adoption of a new Law on System of Environmental Protection;
  - 2) the harmonization of relevant legislation;
  - 3) the regulation of transboundary cooperation; and
  - 4) the harmonization of local and EU environmental legislation.
- Working Group # 1 also concluded that six different ministries and governmental bodies, who are responsible for environmental protection and environmental media quality monitoring, do not have clearly defined competencies. There was special emphasis shown on insufficiently elaborated management mechanisms and lack of special environmental protection funds. The following activities were suggested for overcoming these problems:
  - 1) concentrating competencies;
  - 2) establishing the implementation agency for environmental protection;
  - 3) institutionally strengthening the relevant inspectorates;
  - 4) establishing special environmental protection funds;
  - 5) establishing efficient management and funding mechanisms; and
  - 6) establishing adequate prices for certain natural resources.

- It is also concluded that present system of monitoring is not integrated and that it is realized using obsolete equipment with insufficiently trained staff. Monitoring measurement programs are not fully harmonized with relevant EU standards. Methods for the remediation these challenges included:
  - 1) planning for and integrating the monitoring systems and
  - 2) adequately training staff for, renovating, and harmonizing the relevant programs within EU frameworks and standards.
- Public participation in environmental media quality monitoring was assessed as insufficient and related information flow as poor. Low public interest for obtaining such information is due to insufficient awareness and inadequate promotional activities for involving public in environmental decision-making processes. In order to improve this situation, it was suggested to:
  - 1) design a strategy for implementation of the Aarhus Convention;
  - 2) increase the environmental education of journalists; and
  - 3) realize public campaigns aimed at public environmental awareness development.
- NGOs in the Danube River watershed area in FR Yugoslavia are poorly developed and unequally distributed in this region. They also have a poor flow of information between themselves. The participants stressed that the new Law on Non-governmental Organizations has not been adopted yet and that this new legislation would represent a very important step for facilitating the successful realization of all other public participation initiatives. Some additional activities that would support these efforts could include:
  - 1) NGOs capacity building via NGO sector network development in the region and
  - 2) the establishment of a national environmental information system.

## Working Group # 2 Conclusions:

- Working Group # 2 was dealing with a survey of environmental problems in the Danube River watershed area in FR Yugoslavia. It came to the (Annex 3 Group II) conclusions that related environmental legislation are not harmonized within the country (from nation to the local level), related environmental legislation is not harmonized with relevant EU legislation and multilateral international environmental conventions, the current Law on Environmental Protection is not being implemented, and there is a lack of accredited laboratories in the country (refer to Annex 3 Group II).
- Working Group # 2 suggested measures for overcoming the aforementioned problems, which include:
  - 1) the ratification and approval priority international conventions and treaties;
  - 2) the harmonization of local environmental legislation within the country and with relevant EU legislation;
  - 3) public information campaigns;

- 4) more efficient environmental monitoring by the national inspectorates;
  - 5) efficient enforcement of current legislation; and
  - 6) the accreditation of relevant laboratories.
- Working Group # 2 also characterized primary problems found in the institutional sector as imprecisely defined competencies within the Federation and the respective member republics, insufficient capacity of relevant governmental bodies/institutions, poor equipment in these institutions, and the absence of integrated water resources management. Some measures they suggest for overcoming these problems include:
    - 1) adopting a new law that would precisely define competencies among governmental stakeholders;
    - 2) establishing an Environmental Protection Agency;
    - 3) developing technical capacity in state institutions; and
    - 4) introducing integrated water resources management.
  - This working group also concluded that water quality monitoring is not consistently conducted in a number of established data spots and that the quality of monitoring is not satisfactory. They suggested that a possible solution might be to define new data spots and revising the existing monitoring spots. In addition, the establishment of an effective Environmental Protection Agency may also remediate the problems.
  - The working group also characterized current public participation as poor in general, which probably stems from poor NGO expert capacity in the region and insufficient information on obligations of state authorities as specified by the relevant legislation. One potential solution might be the establishment of a national environmental forum and realization of an informative discussion with the relevant bodies and organizations.
  - An addition conclusion was the insufficient NGO participation in recognizing and addressing Danube River watershed specific environmental problems in FR Yugoslavia, which stems from a variety of specific causes. These issues include the ill-defined status of NGOs in FR Yugoslavia, the fragmentation of NGO interests, and the large numbers of disconnected (and isolated) NGOs in the region. These conclusions also emphasized the lack of partnership between governmental and non-governmental sector and the absence of transparency in certain competitions/tenders. Work group solutions to these challenges were:
    - 1) the adoption of the new Law on Non-governmental Organizations;
    - 2) the establishment of network NGOs;
    - 3) the realization of more intense lobbying; and
    - 4) the mobilization of public pressure.
  - **Annex 2 and 3 from Groups I & II are found on pages 34 - 39:**

## Annex 2 Group I

### Legislative framework

| 1. Present state   | 2. Planned actions  | 3. Expected results                                   | 4. Indicators of success                            | 5. Action implementer(s) | 6. Time frame |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------------|---------------|
| Present laws governing this field are obsolete and are not efficient | Adoption of new Law on System of Environmental Protection | Adopted new Law on System of Environmental Protection | Effective Law on System of Environmental Protection | Ministries               | 2002 – 2004   |
| Regulations are not fully harmonized within the state                | Harmonization of relevant legislation                     | Harmonized legislation                                | Reduction in the number of violations               | Ministries               | 2002 – 2003   |
| Transboundary cooperation is not realized                            | Regulation of transboundary cooperation                   | Regulated transboundary cooperation                   | Number of transboundary activities                  | Government               | 2002 – 2005   |
| Local legislation is not harmonized with relevant EU legislation     | Harmonization local and EU environmental legislation      | Harmonized local and EU environmental legislation     | Number of harmonized regulation                     | Government               | 2002 – 2007   |



## Institutional framework

| 1. Present state  | 2. Planned actions   | 3. Expected results  | 4. Indicators of success                      | 5. Action implementer(s)               | 6. Time frame              |
|---|--|--|---|--|----------------------------|
| Six different ministries and governmental bodies are responsible for environmental protection | Concentration of competencies  | Establishing new institutional frameworks (Ministry for resources and environmental protection; sector based administration) | Integrated river basin management             | Ministries, Local Authorities          | 2002 – 2005<br>2002 – 2004 |
| Unclearly defined competencies  | Establishing the implementation agency for environmental protection and institutional strengthening of inspectorates | Trained personnel, developed awareness   | Rational funds and water resources management | Ministries                             | 2002 – 2003                |
| Lack of special environmental protection funds  | Establishment of special environmental protection funds  | Financing environmental activities from these funds  | Realized concrete activities                  | Government, Ministries                 |                            |
| Insufficiently elaborated management and finance mechanisms                                   | Establishment of effective management and finance mechanisms   | Management and finance mechanisms are effective  |   | Ministries                             | 2002 – 2003                |
| Inadequate price of resources   | Establishment of an adequate price for resources   | Adequate price of resources  | Rational use of resources                     | Ministries, Governmental Organizations |                            |

## Monitoring

| 1. Present state  | 2. Planned actions                                   | 3. Expected results             | 4. Indicators of success            | 5. Action implementer(s)              | 6. Time frame |
|---|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| Present system of monitoring is not integrated                                      | Planning integrated monitoring                       | Adequate monitoring             | Better water quality monitoring     | Governmental Institutions             | 2002 – 2004   |
| Use of obsolete equipment   | Renovation   | Equipped national laboratories  | High-quality monitoring             | Ministries, Governmental Institutions | 2002 – 2003   |
| Insufficiently trained staff  | Staff training                                       | Trained staff                   | Adequate monitoring; fast reactions | Governmental Institutions             | 2002 – 2003   |
| Monitoring measurement programs are not fully harmonized with relevant EU standards | Harmonization of relevant programs with EU standards | Harmonized measurement programs | Comparable results of measurement   | Ministries, Governmental Institutions | 2002 – 2005   |



### Public participation

| 1. Present state   | 2. Planned actions                      | 3. Expected results  | 4. Indicators of success                               | 5. Action implementer(s)           | 6. Time frame |
|--|---|--|--|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Public participation in environmental media quality monitoring is insufficient | Implementation of the Aarhus Convention | Harmonized local legislation with the Aarhus Convention                        | Increased public participation in environmental issues | Institutions, Media Agencies, NGOs | 2002 – 2006   |
| Information flow is poor   | Environmental education for journalists | Better flow of information   | Informed and involved public                           | Institutions, Media Agencies, NGOs | 2002 – 2003   |
| Low public interest for obtaining such information                             | Public campaigns                        | Raised public environmental awareness about needs for water quality monitoring | Number and quality of campaigns                        | Institutions, Media Agencies, NGOs | 2002          |

### NGO participation

| 1. Present state   | 2. Planned actions  | 3. Expected results   | 4. Indicators of success  | 5. Action implementer(s)                 | 6. Time frame |
|--|---|---|---|--|---------------|
| Poorly developed and unequally distributed NGOs in the Danube River watershed within the area of the FR Yugoslavia | Capacity building of NGOs through establishing networks in the region | Establish networks  | Improvement of NGOs' cooperation and coordination                                   | Local Communities, NGOs                  | 2002          |
| New Law on Non-Governmental Organizations has not been adopted   | Adoption of New Law on Non-Governmental Organizations                 | Improvement of cooperation with government                      | Increased influence on decision making  | Local Communities, State, Citizens, NGOs | 2002 – 2003   |
| Poor information flow among NGOs   | Establishing national environmental information system                | Information network on pollution and incidents in the watershed | Number of distributed information through network. Defined indicators of pollution. | Local Communities, State, Citizens       | 2002 – 2003   |

## Annex 3 Group II

### Legislative framework

| 1. Present state   | 2. Planned actions  | 3. Expected results   | 4. Indicators of success                                    | 5. Action implementer(s)            | 6. Time frame |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| International conventions and treaties define obligations  | Ratification and signing of priority international conventions and treaties     | Ratified conventions  | Application of conventions                                  | Federal Ministry                    | 2002 – 2005   |
| Related environmental legislation is not harmonized within the country (from the federal to the local level)           | Harmonization of local environmental legislation within the country             | Effective and appropriate environmental legislation                       | Harmonized legislation (both horizontally and vertically)   | Government                          | 2002 – 2003   |
| Related environmental legislation is not harmonized with multilateral international environmental conventions          | Harmonization of local environmental legislation with international regulations | Harmonized local environmental legislation with international regulations | Number of harmonized regulations                            | Government                          | 2002 – 2007   |
| The current Law on Environmental Protection is not being implemented (The "Polluter pays" principle is not functional) | Public campaigns; efficient monitoring (inspectorates) and penal policy.        | Raised awareness on need for the application of legislation               | Number of paid penalties and number and quality of campaign | Government, NGOs                    | 2002          |
| Lack of accredited laboratories  | Accreditation of relevant laboratories  | Better quality and comparable results                                     | Accredited of laboratories                                  | Government, Scientific Institutions | 2002 – 2003   |

### Institutional framework

| 1. Present state  | 2. Planned actions  | 3. Expected results                       | 4. Indicators of success  | 5. Action implementer(s)  | 6. Time frame |
|---|---|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Imprecisely defined competencies of the Federation and member republics | Adopting a new law that would precisely define competencies among governmental stakeholders | Adopted law                               | Defined competencies      | Government, Ministries    | 2002 – 2004   |
| Insufficient capacity of relevant governmental bodies/institutions      | Establishing an Environmental Protection Agency   | Improved system of monitoring and control | Agency is established     | Governmental Institutions | 2002 – 2003   |
| Poor equipment in relevant governmental bodies/institutions             | Technical capacity building in state institutions   | Adequate equipped state institutions      | Modern quality control    | Governmental Institutions | 2002 – 2003   |
| Absence of integrated water resources management                        | Introducing integrated water resources management   | Integrated water resources management     | Rational use of resources | Government, Ministries    | 2002 – 2005   |

### Monitoring

| 1. Present state                                       | 2. Planned actions  | 3. Expected results                         | 4. Indicators of success                 | 5. Action implementer(s)  | 6. Time frame |
|--|---|---|--|---------------------------|---------------|
| Monitoring is not dully conducted on a number of spots | Defining new and revising current monitoring spots        | Regular monitoring on all defined spots     | Regular publishing of monitoring results | Governmental Institutions | 2002          |
| The monitoring quality is unsatisfactory               | Establishing an efficient Environmental Protection Agency | Established Environmental Protection Agency | Improvement of monitoring quality        | Governmental Institutions | 2002 – 2003   |

## Public participation

| 1. Present state   | 2. Planned actions   | 3. Expected results                         | 4. Indicators of success  | 5. Action implementer(s)                    | 6. Time frame |
|--|--|---|---|---|---------------|
| Poor expert capacities in most of NGOs throughout the region                                       | Seminars and workshops for NGO representatives                 | Improved NGO capacities                     | Number of qualified NGO representatives   | NGOs, Governmental Institutions             | 2002          |
| Public participation is poor in general  | Establishing of a national environmental forum                 | An established national environmental forum | Raised public participation   | Governmental Institutions, Ministries, NGOs | 2002 – 2003   |
| Insufficient information on obligations of state authorities yielded from the relevant legislation | Conducting informative discussion during seminars and tribunes | Conducted informative seminars and tribunes | More knowledge on obligations deriving from membership in international conventions | Governmental Institutions, Ministries, NGOs | 2002 – 2003   |

## NGO participation

| 1. Present state  | 2. Planned actions                                 | 3. Expected results                                  | 4. Indicators of success   | 5. Action implementer(s)        | 6. Time frame |
|---|--|--|--|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Ill-defined status of NGOs in FR Yugoslavia   | Adopting new Law on Non-Governmental Organizations | Definition of position and fields of NGOs activities | Adopted new Law on Non-Governmental Organizations                        | Ministries, NGOs                | 2002          |
| Fragmentation of NGO interests and large number of unconnected/ill-networked NGOs in the region | Establishing a NGO network                         | Increased NGOs influence                             | A strong NGOs network  | NGOs                            | 2002 – 2003   |
| NGOs do not participate in decision making procedures   | Lobbying and applying public pressures             | Number of campaigns                                  | NGOs participation in decision making                                    | NGOs                            | 2002          |
| Lack of partnership between governmental and non-governmental sector                            | Lobbying and applying public pressure              | Number of campaigns                                  | Established partnership between governmental and non-governmental sector | NGOs, Governmental Institutions | 2002 – 2003   |
| Absence of transparency in certain competitions/tenders   | Lobbying and applying public pressure              | Number of campaigns                                  | Transparency of certain competitions/tenders                             | NGOs, Governmental Institutions | 2002          |

*(Note: The above information was formulated from the report developed by Mirjana Bartula, DEF YU and Dr Radoje Laušević, REC Country Office Yugoslavia)*



# Section 3: International Seminar Discussion Results

The project's two-day international meeting was held on December 13-14, 2001 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. It brought together over 20 multi-national participants from nine Danube River basin countries in order to discuss their respective roles and participation on their respective national Danube River basin management plans (RBMPs). This meeting was able to further encourage NGO participation in the environmental protection of the Danube River and facilitate the discussion of existing policies, strategies and conventions regarding this basin. Specifically, it was able to provide the participants with further background relevant to the WFD in the international context via presentations by representatives from Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), Danube Environmental Forum (DEF), WWF, and Comenius University (Bratislava, SR).

A keystone seminar activity was the facilitated discussions between the participants. These discussions produced some very significant results concerning the primary issue that developed through the course of the seminar, which focused on the question of "What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?" The discussion centered on first identifying the different types of roles that NGO communities and NGOs individually can potentially play throughout their engagement in the RBMPs process.

During this dialog, various participants presented examples of these potential roles. Some of the suggestions included the roles of: 1) information dissemination to the NGO community and general public, 2) NGO expert group proposals (i.e. NGO comment and criticism of the RBMP, 3) integrated and cooperative preparation of the RBMP with the decision makers and additional stakeholders, 4) combined approach of #1-3. In further defining the role of the national NGO community, the discussion group reiterated and presented the options of: 1) information dissemination, 2) policy formulation, 3) criticism, etc. Additional profiles/roles were defined as: 1) technical contributors and 2) "translators" of the process (i.e. making the process understandable and accessible for the public). The participants also added that roles are influenced by the conditions in the country, especially from the public decision makers' perspective.

In addition, Michael Kravčik (NGO People and Water, SR) also elaborated upon the multiple stakeholder engagement process, which was later identified as a potential national NGO community role. He proposed that there be a mechanism at the national level, which would include NGOs, trade unions, government bodies, business, etc. He especially emphasized the inclusive character of the process. The questions of "How?"; "Where?"; and "When?" could the stakeholders connect to the process were raised as critical issues. Supplemental questions were also elaborated in regard to the questions of: 1) "How to gain the trust of the public?" and 2) "What can your organization contribute in its chosen role?"

Toward the end of this informative exchange, the Hungarian representatives presented their paradigm concerning the NGO communities' roles, which was inclusive of the aforementioned suggestions as well as adding some additional roles. It was presented in a sequential order, which followed the general process of the RBMP preparation. Everyone present agreed that continuity in the process of public participation and NGO participation throughout the RBMP preparation process is a very important aspect to be considered. In the end, the participants agreed that the Hungarian list was very inclusive and accepted as it was presented as a model or list of roles national NGO communities could assume. The idea to develop a combined position profile paper on the NGO community roles was presented for discussion and agreed upon by all participants.

**Additional important comments in regard to the role of national NGO communities:**

- The Bulgarian representatives presented their national situation's challenges: 1) legislative incorporation of the RBMP measures and 2) the need for money to support the public participation measures.
- The NGO People and Water's (SR) experience was also mentioned. Specifically, the Levoča, SR example of multiple stakeholders and multiple sector integration into community decision making was presented. This example also included the use of technical focus groups, specifically in the elaboration of stakeholder roles or approaches.
- The suggestion was made to produce a statement document, which would be compiled from the results developed during the national and international meetings. It would be then distributed to the participants for comment and, then, compiled into a final statement. It would be then presented to various international stakeholders.

**Why define these national NGO community goals?:**

- The secondary question and issue that was developed through the discussion was: How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?
  - One relevant suggestion was to create a REC based small grant program that would specifically focus on the integrated support of the NGO communities participation in the national RBMPs at various, targeted levels.

**Outcomes relevant to these issues:**

- Considering the primary and secondary issues brought up through the course of the discussion, the following plan was agreed to by the participants. REC CO Slovakia would format and disseminate the NGO community roles (based on the Hungarian document) along with the following questions to all of the international conference participants:

**Questions:**

- 1) Given the above (or attached) potential roles your national NGO could play in the RBMP process, which role or combination of roles would your national NGO community be able to (i.e. sufficient capacity, opportunity) and would want to (i.e. motivation, will) play during the RBMP process in your respective country? Would it be: A) roles I-VIII in sequential order, B) one of the aforementioned roles, or C) a combination of the aforementioned roles? Please cite the specific role(s).
- 2) Given your choice in question #1, what is your opinion on the specific support that your NGO community would need to realize this role?
- 3) Given your choice in question #1, what is your evaluation of the strengths and weakness in your national NGO community?
- 4) Which weaknesses could be addressed through targeted forms of financial or technical support resources?

## Proposed WFD public/NGO participation components: What roles can the national NGO community can play?

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).
- V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.
- VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.
- VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.
- VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

*(Note: We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Hungarian participants especially as well as all of the other participants from the international meeting in Bratislava, who provided the basic information for this list)*

*(Additional Note: These questions and proposed role framework options were sent to the participants on December 12th, 2001 with the request that they would respond by January 15, 2002.)*

As a result, this list of roles/sequential model could be used to produce a targeted technical and financial support program both at the national and international levels in regard to RBMP process implementation in the Danube River basin. Thus, it would provide a very significant and concrete answer the secondary issues brought up through the discussion.

**There were various further comments on the state of affairs at the international level:**

- There was a suggestion to nominate a NGO network representative to the ICPDR. However, there was little apparent support for this proposal from the body of participants and the discussion moved toward ways to supplement the existing international arrangements in order to achieve international results.
- One side issue was the question on international NGO feedback about the applicability and usability of existing national and international strategic action plans. However, one point that made this into a marginal issue was the fact that many countries and NGO communities vary in the relative capacity and internal conditions, which seems to make the issue of feedback on strategic action plans inapplicable or marginalized due to these reasons.
- Michael Kravčik (NGO People and Water, SR) provided this address (<http://www.water-2001.de>) for the International Conference on Freshwater (December 2001) since it would be a good resource for the participants. He also mentioned the World Water Parliament as an example of international multiple stakeholder involvement.
- One additional comment indicated the need for capacity building of NGOs in negotiation situations in order to promote better engagement and more effective involvement at the local, regional, national, and international levels within the context of the WFD and national RBMPs.
- One final comment emphasized that the RBMP process at the national level and the WFD, in general, at the international level are processes inherent to a high level of conflict and competition between interest groups. They wanted to clarify that environmental groups should make sure that they are participating in the process with the aim to further environmental protection objectives, not assuming the role as a process facilitator.

*(Author's Note: This section was compiled with the objective of organizing the thoughts and ideas brought up during the discussion. The comments and ideas have been organized into a formatted document for understandability. However, there was special effort taken to avoid reformulating the comments and avoid condensation of these ideas in order to preserve the outcomes and issues resulting from this discussion.)*



# Section 4: International NGO Roles and Needs Assessment Report

**Project facilitated research into the self-designated roles and need assessments for national NGO community participation in the preparation and development of European Union Water Framework Directive mandated Danube River basin management plans within the respective CEE countries.**

## Background:

This project's goal was to encourage the active participation of civil society in preparation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) mandated Danube River basin management plans (RBMPs) at the national and international levels. One of the capstone activities was the project's regional seminar, which was held on December 13th-14th, 2001 in Bratislava, Slovak Republic. It brought together over 20 multi-national participants from nine Danube river basin countries in order to discuss their respective roles and participation on their respective national Danube RBMPs. This meeting was able to further encourage NGO participation in the environmental protection of the Danube River and facilitate the discussion of existing policies, strategies and conventions. Specifically, it was able to provide the participants with additional background relevant to the WFD within the international context via presentations by representatives from Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), Danube Environmental Forum (DEF), WWF, and Comenius University (Bratislava, SR). The facilitated discussions between the participants were a primary goal of the seminar and produced some very important results.

This discussion mainly revolved around the question: What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs? It later developed into issues that centered on identifying the different types of roles that NGO communities and individual NGOs can play through their participation in the RBMP preparation process. These activities also developed a proposal to develop combined position profile paper on NGO community roles, which the participants had agreed upon. In addition, the Hungarian representatives presented their paradigm of the NGO communities' roles,

which was inclusive of the previously suggestions for roles as well as adding some additional options. It was presented in a sequential order, which reflects the general process of the RBMP preparation. In the end, the participants agreed that the Hungarian list was very inclusive and accepted it without modification as a model or list of roles national NGO communities could potentially assume.

A secondary question and issue that was developed through the course of the discussion was: How to develop and support NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process? Participants illustrated the significant differences in the challenges that face their respective NGO communities. The lack of appropriate assistance funds in targeted areas within each country was marked as a significant challenge to effectively participating in the national RBMP preparation process.

## Methods:

Considering the primary and secondary issues brought up through the course of the discussion, the seminar participants agreed to the production of a statement document, which would address both of these issues. It would be compiled from the results developed during the national and international meetings as well as the information collected during the process described below. The international seminar participants agreed to the following plan. REC CO Slovakia would format and disseminate the NGO community roles (based on the Hungarian document) along with the following questions to all of the international conference participants:

### Questions:

- 1) Given the above (or attached) potential roles your national NGO could play in the RBMP process, which role or combination of roles would your national NGO community be able to (i.e. sufficient capacity, opportunity) and would want to (i.e. motivation, will) play during the RBMP process in your respective country? Would it be: A) roles I-VIII in sequential order, B) one of the aforementioned roles, or C) a combination of the aforementioned roles? Please cite the specific role(s).
- 2) Given your choice in question #1, what is your opinion on the specific support that your NGO community would need to realize this role?
- 3) Given your choice in question #1, what is your evaluation of the strengths and weakness in your national NGO community?
- 4) Which weaknesses could be addressed through targeted forms of financial or technical support resources?

## Proposed WFD public/NGO participation components: What roles can the national NGO community can play?

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).
- V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.
- VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.
- VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.
- VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

*(Note: We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Hungarian participants especially as well as all of the other participants from the international meeting in Bratislava, who provided the basic information for this model)*

*(Additional Note: These questions and proposed role framework options were sent to the participants on December 12th, 2001 with the request that they would respond by January 15, 2002. These responses were later compiled and, then, sent out for final comments, which were due by February 15, 2002)*

The resulting responses would then be developed into a summarized report (this document), which would outline the(se) chosen role(s) and targeted support needs. It would be then distributed to the participants for comment and, then, compiled into a final statement. This statement would be then presented to the ICPDR, international NGOs, funding organizations, and the relevant government authorities in the participating countries.

## Data:

The data developed and utilized for the compilation of this report was taken and synthesized from the available information in project's national seminar summary report and the international seminar participants' respective responses. More specific information can be obtained from the national and international seminar report summaries as well as from the comments, which can be obtained upon request from REC CO Slovakia.

## Results (Listed By Country)

### Bosnia & Herzegovina:

The Bosnia & Herzegovina specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report. NGO roles in Bosnia & Herzegovina can be characterized as falling under the following venues:

- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.
- VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.
- VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- Basic infrastructure (e.g. office space, basic facilities, etc.)
- Information resources and technologies
- NGO networking resources
- Activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO roles in the RBMP process.

## Bulgaria:

The Bulgaria specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report and the international seminar participants' response. NGO roles in Bulgaria can be characterized as falling under the following venues:

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).
- V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.
- VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.
- VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document and international participant response, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- Informational and technical assistance from the NGO perspective on the WFD and RBMP processes (i.e. informational and technical exchanges between Bulgarian and European NGOs)
- Technical infrastructure
- Awareness development at the NGO community level
- Public participation techniques and methodology development
- NGO networking infrastructure and activities (in both the expertise and financial spheres)
- Intersectoral cooperation development resources (e.g. between NGO and government organs)
- Activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO roles in the RBMP process (e.g. information dissemination, public awareness campaigns, negotiation training, etc).

## Croatia:

The Croatia specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report. NGO roles in Croatia can be characterized as falling under the following venues:

I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.

IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).

V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.

VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.

VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- Informational and technical assistance concerning the national aspects of international conventions and their respective implementation
- Activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO roles in the RBMP process (e.g. information dissemination, public awareness campaigns, negotiation training, etc)
- NGO capacity building in the spheres related to their self-designated role in the RBMP process

## Czech Republic:

The Czech Republic specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report and the international seminar participants' response. NGO roles in Czech Republic can be characterized as falling under the following venues:

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).
- V. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.
- VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.
- VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

*(Note: One further aspect addressed by Czech comments was the need for "balancing the playing field" in regard to government supplementary support of non-profit organizations that assist the state in fulfill its responsibilities. While many charities and non-profit organizations receive some government compensation for their activities, these types of organizations in the environmental sector are often unable to access such resources or are expected to perform service for free unlike other sectors. This trend has a negative impact of environmental NGOs because they cannot effectively render their social service and could significantly limit NGO assistance in RBMP preparation. These type of trends are not limited to the Czech Republic but are also apparent in countries such as the Slovak Republic as well.)*

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document and the international seminar participants' response, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- NGO capacity building in the spheres related to their self-designated role in the RBMP process
- Financial resources for internal and external experts
- Activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO roles in the RBMP process

## Hungary:

The Hungary specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report and the international seminar participants' response. NGO roles in Hungary can be characterized as falling under the following venues:

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres

of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).

V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.

VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.

VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.

VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

*[Note: There was some difference between respondents in regard to the roles. While some NGO (self-described as an umbrella NGO) expressed interested in all possible roles, some of the other NGOs expressed interest in selected roles, which further indicates the diversity of the local NGO community as well as its needs for support. Such differences were demonstrated between the NGO respondents (e.g. GEO-ENVIRON Environmental Association, Holocén Environmental Association, and Tree of Life and National Society of Conservationists)]*

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document and international participant response, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- Basic communication infrastructure (e.g. fax machines, etc.)
- Partnership development resources
- Informational assistance from the NGO perspective on the WFD and RBMP related processes
- Information dissemination resources
- Awareness development activity implementation resources
- NGO networking resources
- Consistent activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO roles in the RBMP process [This includes project related resource needs (e.g. travel funding, materials, etc.)]

## Romania:

The Romania specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report and the international seminar participants' response. NGO roles in Romania can be characterized as falling under the following venues in sequential order:

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).
- V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.
- VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.
- VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.
- VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

*(Note: One response was that "public participation and environmental education are the major pillars for the successful implementation of WFD with the RBMPs.")*

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document and international participant response, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- Environmental education and awareness activity implementation resources
- Consistent fundraising and financial resources for NGO sector activities that assist in the realization of their roles throughout the RBMP preparation process, especially at the local community level [This includes capacity related resource needs (e.g. salaries, materials, etc.)]
- Community and volunteer mobilization activity resources
- Further communication infrastructure and tools development within the NGO community, especially in the field of activity feedback
- Intersectoral relationship and cooperation development resources (e.g. between NGO and government organs)
- Information resources and technologies
- International support for the further development/reform of Romania's fiscal legislation concerning the NGO sector (i.e. further legislation development supportive of non-profit, NGO, and charity organizations in view of their roles as public service providers)
- NGO training and information dissemination resources within the context of the NGO sector institutional framework in order to provide a qualified, alternative voice vis-a-vis the governmental positions
- Enhanced opportunities for NGO participation in EU financed projects

## Slovak Republic:

The Slovak Republic specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report and the international seminar participants' response. NGO roles in the Slovak Republic can be characterized as falling under the following venues in sequential order:

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.

- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).
- V. \*Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.
- VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.
- VII. \*\*Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.
- VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

*(Note: There was some diversity between respondents in regard to the roles. The Slovak Society for Sustainable Living (STUŽ) believed that Role V (refer to \* above) wasn't a generally appropriate role for NGOs in Slovakia because it should be the responsibility of government ministries and/or cross-sectoral (umbrella) bodies, and, as a result, NGOs should play the role of an environmental or sustainable development advocate. However, they acknowledge a deficiency in the fulfillment of such collaborative activities so far and, as a result, they expressed the need for better NGO coordination and cooperation. In addition, STUŽ proposed a change in the language of Role VII (refer to \*\* above), specifically changing "assisting" with "participating" in order to avoid mischaracterization of the potentially active nature of the role. They proposed three sub-role alternatives within Role VII, which are: 1) not or marginally engaged, 2) semi-engaged, 3) full participation)*

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document and international participant response, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- Consistent activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO roles in the RBMP process and, in general, water issues (i.e. grant program(s) that are earmarked for the support of the RBMP preparation process)
- NGO coordination and networking resources
- Intersectoral relationship and cooperation development resources (e.g. between NGO and government organs at various levels)
- Informational and technical assistance especially in the form of soft measures (e.g. information exchange, seminars, case studies, etc.)
- Activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO-municipality coalition projects within the context of the RBMP process

- Necessary logistical support resources in the form of umbrella organization services throughout the RBMP preparation processes (e.g. information database creation, brochures, information distribution, coordination of stakeholders, etc.)

## Slovenia:

The Slovenia specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report. NGO roles in Slovenia can be characterized as falling under the following venues:

III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.

VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.

VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

In supporting these roles, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- Information access and dissemination resources (e.g. technical, legal and institutional information)
- NGO coordination and networking resources
- Consistent activity implementation resources that facilitate the concrete realization of NGO roles in the RBMP process at various levels
- Public participation venue resources (e.g. public meetings, publications, etc.)

## FR Yugoslavia:

The FR Yugoslavia specific results concerning the aforementioned primary issue [i.e. What role should the national NGO communities (and individual NGOs) play in the RBMP process, when the roles and capacity can vary from country to country and between various NGOs?] and secondary issue (i.e. How to develop and support the NGOs for their chosen roles in the RBMP process?) were developed from the available information in national seminar summary report. NGO roles in FR Yugoslavia can be characterized as falling under the following venue:

### III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.

In supporting this role, there are several identified target areas that were elaborated in the national seminar document, which reflects the national NGO community's needs for assistance.

- NGO capacity development resources
- Environmental education and awareness activity implementation resources
- Information access and dissemination resources (e.g. technical, legal and institutional information) in the NGO sector and in the form of national information resource network
- NGO coordination and networking resources
- NGO expert capacity development resources
- Intersectoral relationship and cooperation development resources (e.g. between NGO and government organs at various levels)
- The development/reform of FR Yugoslavia's legislation concerning the NGO status (i.e. new legislation adoption that is supportive of non-profit, NGO, and charity organization in view of their roles as public service providers)

## Conclusions:

As shown by each of the country specific result summaries, the probable roles and needs of the respective NGO communities are very diverse due to the differing conditions in the participating Danube basin countries. The successful preparation and application of the WFD's nationally specific RBMPs within the affected CEE countries requires an investment of political will, technical support, and financial resources. While a portion of the cost will be the responsibility of the participating countries, the need for European Union and international assistance in this long-term process is desperately needed. It is an investment in the future of the European Community as well as the participating nation's civil society and environmental management dynamics.

The information contained in this list of roles and need assessments can be used to produce targeted technical and financial support programs both at the national and international levels in regard to RBMP process implementation within the Danube River basin. Thus, it would provide a very significant and concrete answer the secondary issues brought up through the project's multinational discussion. International assistance in these venues is imperative for the successful application and implementation of the WFD process. It also has the potential to establish a powerful example of the European Community's ability and commitment to address the complicated environmental management challenges facing the world in the 21st century while improving the stability and productivity of its CEE neighbors.

**[Author's Notes Concerning EU Funding Programs' Accessibility Challenges Relevant To NGOs and Community Groups:** This analysis emphasized challenges concer-

ning NGOs' and community groups' access to European Union funding programs. Such challenges are highly significant due to the importance of these groups' participation and/or realization of activities that facilitate or assist in the fulfillment of accession related objectives. Informal discussions at the project's international conference indicated that many of these funds are inaccessible for NGOs and community groups because of current program structures and requirements, which are nearly impossible for such groups to completely realize though they could realize significant and locally supported projects. Examples of problematic areas are that:

- 1) grant or program support applications are overly demanding for the available capacity of the NGOs' and community groups' logistical support;
- 2) post-activity funding transfers structures are a major logistical challenge (generally, NGOs do not have the available cash or resources to front the money needed to complete project expenses and, then, wait for the grant funding reimbursements);
- 3) EU accession and legislative norm implementation packages are standardized and are, sometimes, inappropriate for the varying intersectoral situations, conditions, and dynamics between the very different needs within the respective CEE countries;
- 4) information access pertaining to EU assistance and/or accession funding programs is not adequately disseminated; and
- 5) Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Regional Development (SAPARD) funding structures and programs miss out on significant investment potential in **alternative small-scale infrastructure** at the community level (e.g. demonstration projects).

More flexible alternatives pertaining to these grant and assistance programs would open opportunities for qualitative progress in EU accession related measures at various levels, especially at the local and regional levels. These challenges are not limited to EU related assistance programs, but are also applicable to various bi-lateral assistance programs, which could be made even more effective, if adjustments were made to address these realities.]



# Section 5: Final Conclusions

The implementation of the NGO participation in the Danube River basin management plans project's activities and framework has yielded some very significant results as the previous sections demonstrate. Both the national and the international seminars produced unique synergies of various nationally specific information sources and perspectives, especially from the NGO sectors of the participating countries. These outputs are highly valuable in defining and implementing the public participation aspects of the national RBMP planning processes within each participating nation throughout the Danube River basin.

Organizations from the European Commission to private foundations can use this information to target assistance and support programs that would facilitate a more democratic and, as a result, effective RBMP preparation process within the participating Danube River basin nations. While possessing this information is an important step, utilizing this knowledge to help facilitate these roles and meet these needs is an integrated and cooperative effort at the international, regional, national, and local levels. Cross-sectoral collaboration at all levels opens the opportunity to protect and effectively manage Europe's environmental resources and heritage during the 21st century. During the 20th century, the Danube was seen as an example of contamination and pollution, which was due to its consistent mismanagement and neglect. However, the Danube of the 21st can be a sign of hope and life. It can represent an example of successful international cooperation and management, which shows how people and their representatives can participate in the management and protection of their and their children's natural heritage.

## Appendix 1: Proposed NGO Roles Model

### Proposed WFD public/NGO participation components: What roles can the national NGO community can play?

- I. Raising NGO attention and enhancing information dissemination on the WFD within the national NGO Sector.
- II. Disseminating information about the WFD and the national River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) development process to the general public at the national, regional, and local levels.
- III. Developing public awareness of the issues emphasized in the WFD and the national RBMP.
- IV. Actively assisting in the elaboration and development of the national strategy and process in regard to the transposition of the WFD within the spheres of legal measures scientific research and development, institutional capacity building, and public participation instruments (i.e. active cooperative approach through the development and elaboration of the RBMP).
- V. Facilitating the intersectoral cooperation for the transposition of the WFD and, consequently, the national RBMP.
- VI. NGOs with appropriate experience and capacity would be contributing to the regional and local research and development applicable for the RBMP compilation and elaboration.
- VII. Assisting in the preparation and development of the RBMP.
- VIII. Facilitating public participation in the RBMP elaboration processes.

*(Note: We would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Hungarian participants especially as well as all of the other participants from the international meeting in Bratislava, who provided the basic information for this list)*

## Appendix 2: List of International Seminar Participants

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## About the REC

The Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) is a non-partisan, non-advocacy, not-for-profit organization with the mission to assist in environmental problem resolution throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). REC fulfills its mission through the encouragement of cooperation between non-governmental organizations, government bodies, and businesses while supporting the free exchange of information and promoting public participation in environmental decision-making.

The United States (US), the European Commission (EC), and Hungary established the REC in 1990. The REC's current legal mandate is based upon an International Charter signed by the governments of 25 countries, the European Commission, and an International Agreement with the Hungarian Government. The REC has its headquarters in Szentendre, Hungary and maintains local country offices in each of its 15 beneficiary CEE countries, which are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, FYR Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Yugoslavia.

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REC CO Slovakia's recent donors include the United Nation Development Program (UNDP), European Commission (EC) - DG Environment, United Nation Environmental Program (UNEP), Slovak Ministry of Environment, NPOA - Civil Society Development Foundation, Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Matra Programme), and UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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