

Therefore, most promising could be a stepwise adaptive management approach, closely monitoring the effects of controlled water supply, beginning with low amounts of nutrient and sediment poor water to reduce the described risks, then further increasing the supply and if the targeted reversion in succession is not achieved a partial re-connection can be implemented in a second step (Reckendorfer et al. 2013).

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Danube Landscapes – history, diversity, conflicts, identity, but no lobby!

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The International Association for Danube Research (IAD) is in many ways actively contributing to both the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) and European Macro-Regional Strategy for the

Danube Region (EUSDR). The Sturgeon Action Plan after 2005 set the fundament for all further networks and has been established in a Danube Sturgeon Task Force (DSTF). The Danube Invasive Alien Species Network (DIAS) has been developed since 2014. Continuous cooperations between the Working Community of the Danube Region, the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA) and the IAD expert group Sustainable Development and Public Participation (IAD EG



Figure 1. Practical implementation of the European Landscape Convention in Czech Republic (© Harald Kutzenberger)



Figure 2. Sharing experience between botanical gardens Linz and Novi Sad (© Harald Kutzenberger)

SDPP) exist since 2012. Since 2020 a Danube Landscape Task Force has been set up within the EUSDR.

Do we forget about cultural Landscapes

'Landscape means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (ELC 2004: Article 1a). Cultural landscapes have never been static ecosystems but geographic mirrors of economic, technological and social conditions. Twenty years have passed since starting the implementation of the European Landscape Convention and 28 years of implementing the NATURA2000 network: these are milestones to have a look at the history and diversity of cultural landscapes in the Danube region, covering the total catchment.

What we consider that 'typical' in cultural landscapes is often connected to a specific period. Feudal and totalitarian political systems have left their traces over millennia as well as language and handcraft. Local geological and environmental resources brand cultural landscapes and

create the strongest imprint on cultures and identity. The unleached population development of the last century has raised the pressure on landscapes and all their resources in an unprecedented dimension. Most conflicts in nature conservation and sustainable land use needs find their origin in this fact. Managing this continuous change in cultural landscapes needs practical implementation in every project in an integrated way comprising quality of life (human recreation etc.), diversity of life (species and habitats) and the fundamentals of life (soil, water, climate).

Structure and identity of DL:TF

Cultural landscapes in their diverse structures and connections provide essential services and functions for our well-being. The Danube Landscapes Task Force (DL:TF) comprises an international and interdisciplinary network of experts from all Danube and Black Sea regions to cover both the diversity of the region and the scientific complexity of the topic. So, we chose a twofold identity of the DL:TF structure:



Figure 3. Integrated landscape management includes quality of life, diversity of life and fundamentals of life (© Harald Kutzenberger)

- Regional structure: informal, decentral, interdisciplinary cooperation in lower, middle and upper Danube region with connection to the Black Sea region and the Alpine region
- Thematic structure: continuous cooperation of experts in academic activities, working groups, pool of experts with experience in a wide range of landscape relevant aspects including participation and implementation

An important part of the cooperation is the exchange between academic institutions and local initiatives to support the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), to encourage actors on policy and governmental level to raise awareness on the vulnerability of cultural landscapes and to contribute to the work of the macroregional EU strategy for the Danube region (EUSDR), especially the Priority Area 6 biodiversity, landscape, quality of soil and air.

DL:TF mission statement

Being aware that cultural landscapes are the expression of our cultures in interaction with the natural conditions, the Danube Landscapes:Task Force (DL:TF) promotes an improved coordination among actors in research, assessment, planning and management of cultural landscapes within the Danube and Black Sea Region. Politically independent, it brings together scientists, authorities and stakeholders and aims to raise the awareness on the vulnerability and crucial importance of cultural landscapes for the sustainable development in the Danube and Black Sea region. The members of DL:TF coordinate their activities to

- discuss the interactions of Danube cultural landscapes in the frame of the implementation of the EU Biodiversity strategy 2030 and the European Landscape Convention;
- prepare a strategy and work plan to efficiently tackle the issue of an integrated landscape protection and management in the Danube Black Sea Region, such as: characteristics and transformation trends of Danube landscapes, integrated planning tools; management and restoration; dissemination and awareness raising;
- support a holistic approach within a network of specific thematic regulations in the EU environmental and regional policies;
- foster an integrated perspective on landscapes in their cultural, recreational, historical, biological and climatical aspects;
- establish a scientific advisory board for landscape related topics within the EUSDR;
- consider and cooperate with existing European and global landscape networks and organizations;
- develop individual but coordinated local implementation projects in all parts of the Danube and Black Sea region, to connect the local partners and create a network of learning microregions;
- Award individuals and institutions within the area for special contributions of sustainable development in cultural landscapes

- explore options for cooperation and funding within the frames of the participating networks, institutions and other organisations and
- promote the transfer of knowhow and expertise to actors on all administrative level

in a transnational context in order to contribute to a sustainable and liveable future of the Danube and Black Sea Region.

Three regional conferences to foster implementation

A 3rd Danube Landscapes:Task Force Conference 2022 'Implementing the European Landscape Convention' has been held from 28th to 30th September 2022 in Austria on changing locations between Tulln, Krems, Linz and Traun. It was the first full face2face event and participants from eight countries could be welcomed. There are several common initiatives within the DL:TF network.

One common project takes care of the way to a Botanical Garden in Novi Sad, coordinated by long term IAD member Dragana Vukov. The common vision is a micro-cosmos of Danube landscapes in the historical ensemble of Petrovaradin. Botanical gardens can be much more than a collection of plants: awareness raising on eco-systems, climate and soil protection and of course, cultural landscapes.

A new initiative prepares strategies for the restoration of green infrastructure in Ukraine in war affected areas. The damage is comparable to the hurricane villages in Czech Republic last year, but on a huge scale. Our Czech colleagues Alena Salasova and Petra Malá share experience how to prepare together with Oksana Manturova and Olena Lietyska from IAD Ukraine.

On regional level, Austria is one of the last countries to ratify the ELC within Danube region. Negative results of the neglect of landscape can be seen more and more obvious in Austrian municipalities in daily decisions. The coordination team continuously reminds the responsible authorities of the Austrian government to set action in the ratification process.

Perspective

Within a Danube Landscapes:Task Force an interdisciplinary network of experts with practical experience is developing as an exchange platform between academic institutions and local initiatives to support the implementation of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), to encourage actors on policy and governmental level to raise awareness on the vulnerability of cultural landscapes and to contribute to the work of the macroregional EU strategy for the Danube region (EUSDR), especially the Priority Area 6 biodiversity, landscape, quality of soil and air, and EUSDR PA10, Institutional capacity and cooperation in Danube Region. Cultural landscapes are often in a trap between institutional weakness and contradicting sectoral laws.