

CRUCIAL EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS FOR GUIDING THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANUBE REGION IN SERBIA

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Corridor VII, the Danube development belt and the Danube River Basin represent a basis for the development of Serbia's spatial, economic, social and cultural relations with the Danube countries and the implementation of the European strategic documents concerning the management of the sustainable spatial development of the Danube Region. Therefore, this paper analyzes the implementation approaches, priority areas, actions and instruments determined by the relevant European and international strategic documents for the Danube, and the umbrella European document for all Danube countries – European Union Strategy for the Danube Region. The implementation of an integrated approach, strategic framework, obligations and recommendations determined by the analyzed European and international strategic documents and conventions is especially important for improving the management of the spatial development of the Danube Region and Serbia as a whole. From that aspect, the paper recommends the necessary activities and facilities for harmonizing our strategic planning and management system and practice with the analyzed European documents concerning the Danube and Danube Region.

Key words: *Danube, Danube Region, European and international strategic documents and conventions, strategic approach and obligations, planning and management of sustainable spatial development.*

INTRODUCTION

The spatial integration of the Republic of Serbia into the European environment is taking place and will be taking place at several levels – at the level of the European Union, transnational level of South East Europe (South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme) and cross-border or trans-border level with local and regional territorial units of the neighbouring countries (Cross-Border Cooperation – CBC). The basis for all mentioned levels of linkage will include landscape entities, natural systems (water and mountain systems), infrastructure, natural and cultural heritage, environmental protection, social, economic, cultural and other relations that contribute to the sustainable development of the Republic of Serbia and its integration into the European environment.

The Republic of Serbia will implement and elaborate numerous strategic European

documents within its integration process, whereby especially important for the country's spatial development planning and management are: Europe 2020: A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth (2010), Treaty of Lisbon (2009), European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development (2006, 2009), EU Cohesion and Regional Policy 2007-2013 (2007), Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020, Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions (TA2020, 2011), Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, Turning Territorial Diversity into Strength (2009), Toledo Urban Development Declaration (2010), Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (2007), Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent (2000), as well as numerous conventions (international, European, trans-border and cross-border).

A significant role in the process of Serbia's spatial integration into the environment should be played by the Danube, the only waterway among the ten pan-European transport

corridors and the most important water resource and river basin in Serbia. Therefore, this paper provides an overview of the obligations and guidelines determined by the appropriate strategic European documents and conventions related to the Danube.

Corridor VII, the Danube development belt and the Danube River Basin represent a basis for the development of spatial, economic, social and cultural relations with the Danube countries and integrated implementation of European strategic documents, programmes and instruments in managing the sustainable spatial development of the Danube Region. Therefore, the paper analyzes the implementation approaches, priority regions, actions and instruments determined by the umbrella strategic document for all Danube countries (regardless of their status) – European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (2011). The

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starting point of this strategy is an integrated implementation of the existing documents, policies, programmes, funds and facilities for the sustainable and coherent development of the Danube Region.

The implementation of an integrated approach, strategic framework, obligations and recommendations determined by the analyzed documents is especially significant for improving the management of the sustainable spatial development of the Danube Region and Serbia as a whole. From that aspect, the paper recommends the necessary steps to harmonize our strategic planning and management with the umbrella document for the development of the Danube Region.

CRUCIAL EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION AND USE OF THE DANUBE AND ARRANGEMENT OF CORRIDOR VII

The interest of the European Union in the Danube corridor represents significant development potential and Serbia's obligation involving the future activities related to its spatial development, arrangement and protection, as well as the improvement of the waterway in the territory of the Republic.

The strategic framework for the policy of inland waterborne transport development in the Republic of Serbia and improvement of the waterway on Corridor VII will be based on the following policies and agreements: White Paper – 'European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide' (2001) and White Paper – 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a Competitive and Resource Efficient Transport System' (2011), European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN, 1996), European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC, 1991) with Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC, 1997) and European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterway (ADN, 2000).

The basic aspirations contained in the White Paper of 2001 are the improvement of overall transport efficiency; cost reduction and greater environmental acceptability of the transport system; achieving greater balance between modes of transport by increasing the participation of rail and inland waterborne transport,

implying the development of intermodal transport and removal of bottlenecks in the systems, etc. The White Paper of 2011 defines ten aims for a competitive and resource efficient transport system (benchmarks for achieving the 60% GHG emission reduction target) and strategy to achieve a Single European Transport Area, which should ease the movements of citizens and freight, reduce costs and enhance the sustainability of European transport. For the purposes of this paper we single out several aims for 2030: (i) 30% of road freight over 300 km should shift to other modes such as rail or waterborne transport; (ii) triple the length of the existing high-speed rail network; (iii) ensure a fully functional and EU-wide multimodal TEN-T core network, etc.

The conditions for the use of the Danube as an international waterway are regulated by the Convention regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube (Danube Convention, 1949). This Convention guarantees free navigation and prescribes the obligations of the signatory countries to maintain the waterway at the anticipated technical level and ensure safe navigation. The obligations of the Convention signatory countries are determined by the recommendations of the Danube Commission, which now includes 11 countries of the Danube River Basin. In accordance with the AGN Agreement, the classification of the network of inland waterways was made in the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of the E Waterway Network ("Blue Book", UN ECE, 2006), including the Danube in the territory of Serbia. Under the Agreement, the Danube – the stretch of the Danube from the Serbian-Hungarian border (km 1433) at Bezdan to km 1175, approximately in the zone of Belgrade, belongs to waterway class VIc, and the stretch from km 1175 to the Serbian-Bulgarian border (km 845.65) belongs to class VII, which anticipates the provision of the appropriate waterway dimensions. Although Serbia is the only Danube country which has not yet ratified the AGN Agreement (thus, the conditions of navigation on the Danube through Serbia are still perceived through the recommendations of the Danube Commission), the unavoidable acceptance of the AGN Agreement requires that its conditions should be regarded as applicable to planning the spatial development and arrangement of the international waterway. The Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC, 1997) established technical and operational conditions that

should be met by river port terminals in order to be qualified as ports of importance for international combined transport. The Integrated European Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport (NAIADES) represents an important framework for a better integration of inland waterway transport (IWT), development of appropriate waterway infrastructure, fleet modernization and upgrading with respect to the ecological requirements and use of modern information and communication technologies for improvements in navigation. One of the priority projects is to improve the waterway on Trans-European Transport Corridor VII.

Although waterborne transport is the environmentally most favourable mode of transport, the recorded negative impact of waterborne transport on the environment in Corridor VII in Serbia must be minimized in accordance with Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a framework for the Community action in the field of water policy (EU Water Framework Directive – WFD, 2000), the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Trans-boundary Context (Espoo, 1991), Danube River Protection Convention (1998), Danube Commission Recommendations for the Prevention of Water Pollution of the Danube Caused by Water Navigation (1998), as well as on the basis of the European directives in the field of environmental protection.

The Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River (Danube River Protection Convention) is the main instrument of cooperation and cross-border water resource management in the Danube River Basin, whose implementation is coordinated by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) by establishing joint priorities and strategy for improving the conditions of the Danube and its tributaries. In 2003, the Republic of Serbia became a member of the ICPDR and ratified the Danube River Protection Convention. The major obligations of the Convention signatory countries include the strengthening of cooperation, harmonization and coordination of the measures concerning the preservation, improvement and rational use of surface waters and groundwater; sustainable development and environmental protection of the watershed; protection and rehabilitation of the ecosystems (especially the protected natural and aquatic ecosystems), hazard control and reduction of the pollution load of the Black Sea, implementation of the "polluter pays" and prevention principles. Special attention is

devoted to the significance of planning activities and measures taken to reduce the trans-border impact on the discharge of wastewaters, nutrients and hazardous substances, regulation works on the regime control of surface waters (on waterways) and groundwater, and flood protection, planned use of water power, control and reduction of the negative impacts of existing hydro-engineering structures (impounding reservoirs, hydro-electric power plants and the like) on the environment, hydrological conditions and ecosystems, etc. In that context, the following tasks being important for planning the spatial development and arrangement of the Danube River Basin and Corridor VII were highlighted: identification of groundwater sources, zones of groundwater protection and measures for groundwater prevention and reduction of pollution with nutrients, agro-chemicals and other hazardous materials; the assessment of the impact of planning activities and water quality; evaluation of the significance of different biotope elements for the river ecosystem and determination of measures to improve the ecological conditions in aquatic ecosystems and the like.

Within the scope of the activities relating to the implementation of the Danube River Protection Convention, the ICPDR adopted "The Danube Basin – Rivers in the Heart of Europe" (Danube Declaration, 2004), confirming the inter-state obligations towards implementing the EU Water Framework Directive and Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks (2007), primarily the elaboration of the Danube River Basin District Management Plan and implementation of the Flood Action Programme – Action Programme for Sustainable Flood Protection in the Danube River Basin (2004); reduction in the total amount of organic matter in the Danube River Basin until 2019 in order to achieve a good ecological status and restore the ecological sustainability of organic matter balance in the Black Sea; stopping untreated wastewater discharge from settlements with more than 10,000 EC and all large industrial plants until 2015; gradual stopping of the discharge of the materials posing the greatest risk to aquatic ecosystems in the Danube River Basin and significant reduction in the discharge of other materials, reversal of the trends towards the physical degradation of aquatic ecosystems and returning the sections of the Danube and its tributaries to their natural state (by rehabilitating flood-prone areas, reconnecting wetlands and retention areas, and minimizing the impact of new projects on the physical degradation of ecosystems); protection,

preservation and revival of biodiversity and different habitats (especially those of rare and endangered species) and the unique ecosystem of the Danube Delta; ensuring that the development of the agricultural sector does not cause the degradation of the environmental quality of the Danube and its tributaries; development of the emissions inventory and trans-border monitoring network for the Danube water quality assessment, etc.

Four countries in the Sava River Basin, the main Danube tributary in Serbia, have signed the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB, 2002) with an aim to develop international navigation and introduce integral and sustainable water management, whose implementation is coordinated by the International Sava River Basin Commission (Sava Commission).

Cooperation within the activities of the ICPDR, Danube Commission and Sava Commission in the Danube River Basin is important for the implementation of the European directives and conventions. In terms of sustainable water use and protection, the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) is essential. It includes the obligation to prepare the Danube River Basin District Management Plan for all countries in the river basin. The WFD aims, which should be attained in the Danube River Basin and Corridor VII until 2015, include achieving a good ecological and chemical status of all surface water and groundwater bodies, or the least good ecological potential and good chemical status for significantly modified and man-made water bodies.

The aims, conditions and obligations determined by the Directive have been elaborated under the first Danube River Basin District Management Plan (DRBMP, 2009), which serves as the platform for coordinating the basin-wide implementation of the WFD among the Danube countries. It is based on the national Danube River Basin management plans, excluding the territory of Serbia whose plan still has to be prepared, together with the programme of measures. Therefore, many of Serbia's significant issues elaborated under this plan have remained non-defined and open for elaboration, especially for the period up to 2015. The most important obligations set out under the Danube River Basin District Management Plan, which are related to the Danube Region in Serbia, include the following activities and propositions for the period up to 2015 and medium-term period:

- The improvement of the water status of surface waters and groundwater – pollution reduction to the level required for a good ecological and

chemical water status: until 2015 – by reconstructing and constructing 8 municipal wastewater collection and treatment systems for settlements, and in the medium-term period – by secondary (and, exceptionally, tertiary) wastewater treatment for all settlements with more than 10,000 EC; nitrogen emission reduction by about 12% (from prevailing 6–9 kg/ha/year to 3–6– and less than 3 kg/ha/year) and phosphorus by 21% (from prevailing 60–75 and 30–45 kg/km²/year to 45–60 and less than 30 kg/km²/year) by implementing best environmental practices (BEP) in agriculture and best available technology (BAT) in agriculture and industry.

- Improving the continuity of the river ecosystem and movement of fish species, by connecting flood-prone areas–wet habitats with the river ecosystem and ensuring barrier passability for fish, whereby a good ecological status or good ecological potential are not expected until 2015, but in the medium-term period – the highest priority is given to the elaboration of the feasibility study concerning the Djerdap dam passability for migratory fish species, and medium priority for the barrier (lock) on the Timis over other barriers (locks on the Timis and DTD Canal connections to the Danube). Until 2015, it is anticipated to connect flood-prone areas–wet habitats to the river ecosystem for 4 protected natural resources – wet habitats.
- One of the future infrastructure projects that may have an impact on the Danube River Basin and are subject to a special analysis in accordance with the obligations under the WFD, is the extension and arrangement of the waterway section in the zone near Apatin.

In the Joint Statement on Inland Navigation and Environmental Sustainability in the Danube River Basin (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, Danube Commission and International Sava River Basin Commission, 2007) – in achieving a good ecological status and good ecological potential – special significance is attached to an integral approach to planning the spatial development of the regions along the Danube and reconciliation of conflicting interests on some sections between the planned development of the waterway and impact on aquatic ecosystems and water status, as well as between the required preservation and rehabilitation of protected natural and river regions and ecosystems of high ecological value and the impact on the navigability of the international route.

Bearing in mind an exceptional concentration of natural and cultural heritage in the Danube

development belt, the implementation of the following international and European conventions is relevant for the spatial development and arrangement of Corridor VII and the development belt: Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Berne Convention), which provides a basis for the development of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention), Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention), Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, European Landscape Convention (Florence Convention), Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention), Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention), European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage, Resolution CM/Res(2007)12 on the cultural routes of the Council of Europe, etc.

Cross-border cooperation, which is significant for the Danube Region in Serbia, is carried out within the IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, for the period 2007-2013) cross-border programmes of Serbia with Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some potential areas of trans-border (cross-border) cooperation within these programmes are the intensification of cooperation between border cities in the formation of joint space and environment information systems, joint use of public service facilities and joint construction of utility facilities; joint implementation of actions to prevent natural disaster risk in the border area; development of cooperation in trans-border employment; enhancing border space accessibility by modernizing transport routes and border crossings.

Apart from the mentioned cross-border cooperation framework, the topics of common interest for cooperation with the neighbouring Danube countries – Hungary, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria in the spatial development and arrangement of Corridor VII and the Danube development belt can also be more precisely defined on some other basis, through the Euroregion ("Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisza", "Danube 21" and the like) and bilateral activities. Some potential areas of bilateral cooperation are: waterway arrangement and infrastructure equipping; integral management and sustainable use of waters; joint programmes and projects of energy infrastructure development, river landscape

protection, cross-border natural values and linkage of cultural inheritance, linkage of tourism supply of border spaces and the like; elaboration of joint cross-border spatial plans and regional development programmes. During the past period, the following priorities for cooperation were determined: with Hungary – infrastructure and environmental protection, economy, education and culture; with Romania – economic and social development; environmental protection and emergency response; and "people to people" actions; with Bulgaria – the development of minor infrastructure facilities and capacity building for joint planning, problem solving and sustainable development; with Croatia – socio-economic development.

EUROPEAN UMBRELLA STRATEGIC DOCUMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DANUBE REGION

In spatial and functional terms, the adoption and implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region, approved by the Council of the European Union in June 2011, is especially important for the Republic of Serbia in the process of Euro-integration.

Covering a fifth of the EU (100 million inhabitants), the Danube Region is key to the well-being of the EU as a whole. The Strategy concerns 14 countries of which 8 are member states (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania) and 6 are non-EU countries (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ukraine and Moldova).

The EU Strategy for the Danube Region has a strategic framework guided by the Europe 2020 Strategy and European Sustainable Development Strategy, so that its potential to contribute to the long-term objectives, such as the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and competitiveness of the EU is ensured. The Strategy provides a sustainable framework for policy integration and coherent development of the Danube Region. It sets out priority actions to make it an EU region for the 21st century, and one of the most attractive in Europe.

The Strategy underlines an integrated approach to sustainable development. This emphasizes: better and more intelligent connections for mobility, trade and energy; action on environment and risk management; cooperation in security. There is a benefit from common work on innovation, tourism, information society, institutional capacity and marginalized communities.

The integrated macro-regional Strategy focuses on four main pillars. Each comprises priority areas, distinct fields of action, such as:

1. Connecting the Danube Region, with priority areas

- To improve mobility and multimodality: (a) inland waterways; (b) road, rail and air links;
- To encourage more sustainable energy;
- To promote culture and tourism, people to people contacts.

The projects under this priority include: the removal of shipwrecks and other debris from the river bed, connection of multimodal terminals at river ports to inland waterways with rail and road transport, completion of the railway axis linking Paris-Budapest via Stuttgart, Ulm, Munich, Vienna and Bratislava, the 4Biomass project to boost renewable energies, transnational tourist packages for combined rail-cycle-boat trips along the Danube, etc.

2. Protecting the environment in the Danube Region, with priority areas

- To restore and maintain the quality of waters;
- To manage environmental risks;
- To preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils.

The projects under this priority include: setting up buffer strips along the river to retain nutrients, the "Blue Danube" cooperation project relating to urban wastewater treatment, reduction of pharmaceutical residuals in water, wetland restoration to enhance flood protection, implementation of a network of protected areas, etc.

3. Building prosperity in the Danube Region, with priority areas

- To develop knowledge society through research, education and information technologies;
- To support the competitiveness of enterprises, including cluster development;
- To invest in people and skills.

This will take the form of joint research centers, joint programmes for professional education and vocational training, projects to increase the use of e-Government and e-Health services for citizens, initiatives to support Roma communities, etc.

4. Strengthening the Danube Region, with priority areas

- To step up institutional capacity and cooperation;
- To work together to promote security and tackle organized and serious crime.

The examples of these projects include training and best practice exchange, especially with respect to public finance management, the establishment of a Danube Civil Society Forum and development of common guidelines for spatial planning.

The Strategy proposes an Action Plan to which a strong commitment from the countries and stakeholders is needed. This Action Plan (2010) sets priorities, identifies projects and proposes some deadlines. It is an indicative framework, evolving as the work progresses, making it a 'rolling' plan.

For the purposes of this paper several priority areas with fields of action, and example projects were singled out.

Good connections of the Danube Region will ensure that no part should remain peripheral. This encompasses better connections among people, especially through culture and tourism. The physical capacity of the Danube and its tributaries should be improved, and existing bottlenecks removed, to ensure the proper level of navigability, implementing the NAIADES programme and respecting environmental legislation. Targets as examples of interest for Serbia could be to increase cargo transport on the river by 20% by 2020 compared to 2010; remove existing navigability bottlenecks on the river so as to accommodate type Vlb vessels all year round by 2015[2]; develop efficient multimodal terminals at Danube river ports to connect inland waterways with rail and road transport by 2020. The example project is "To remove shipwrecks, bridges debris and unexploded weapons from the riverbed of the Danube", which should be implemented in the lower part of the Danube in Serbia.

The common history and tradition, culture and arts reflecting the diverse communities of the region, as well as its outstanding natural heritage, offer the opportunities to develop the Danube Region as a European "brand", and establish the Danube Region as an important European tourist destination. Overall sustainability should be an important criterion in developing tourism in the region. Serbia should take part in project-oriented cooperation with the neighbouring countries in the region, especially in cultural and heritage matters and inter-related topics. The areas of developing tourism, tourism infrastructure and improving tourism services, cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue are typically inter-related topics. In that context, joint actions to improve tourism planning and related infrastructure, to further develop the navigation and port system for Danube river cruise ships

and private yachts, to intensify activity tourism, as well as other actions are needed. Example projects are: "To create transnational tourist packages, such as: for combined rail/cycle/boat trips along the Danube", "To realize the Danube walking path", "To support green ways and cycle tourism" (planned as the Iron Curtain trail), "To strengthen the Danube regional potential through cultural cooperation", "To implement the Danube cultural route", etc.

Protecting the environment in the Danube Region needs good cooperation among all countries, regions and local communities. The 2020 EU target for biodiversity must be met, by halting biodiversity and ecosystems loss, and by restoring ecosystem services and reconnecting habitats. The objectives of nature protection areas, such as Natura 2000 sites (Emerald sites in Serbia), can be achieved only by paying due attention to the ecological requirements of the whole region. Targets as examples of interest for Serbia could be: to achieve the environmental targets set out in the Danube River Basin Management Plan; implement Danube wide flood risk management plans - due in 2015 under the Floods Directive - to include a significant reduction of flood risk by 2021, while also taking into account potential impacts of climate change; draw up effective management plans for all Natura 2000 sites (Emerald sites in Serbia); secure viable populations of Danube sturgeon species and other indigenous fish species by 2020, combating invasive species and reduce by 25% the area affected by soil erosion exceeding 10 tones per hectare by 2020. In that context, joint actions to develop green infrastructure in order to connect different biogeographic regions and habitats; develop and implement transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographic areas (river basins, mountain ranges, etc.); raise awareness of the general public, by acknowledging and promoting the potentials of natural assets as drivers of sustainable regional development, as well as many other actions are needed. A very important task for the Serbian planning system is the development of coordinated spatial planning policies focusing on the protection and, at the same time, sustainable development of functional geographic areas. The development and promotion of green, soft and eco-tourism provide an opportunity for Serbia, which could increase the perception of preserved nature as a valuable asset. Example projects are: "To implement the Danube River Network of Protected Areas (DANUBEPARKS)", "To establish fully the Mura-Drava-Danube Biosphere Reserve", "To complete the Lower

Danube Green Corridor", "To connect people with the Danube", etc.

One of the main issues of strengthening the Danube Region is the institutional capacity and cooperation. It indicates the structures and capacity for private and public sector decision-making need to improve, including good planning and international cooperation supported by a macro-regional approach. For Strategy implementation the commitment and practical involvement of all authorities is needed at the national, regional and other levels. Working together with international and cross-border organizations across the Region will encourage synergies and avoid duplication. A reinforced territorial dimension will provide an integrated approach, and encourage better coordination of sectoral policies. In that context, joint actions to build Metropolitan Regions in the Danube Region, to combat institutional capacity and public service related problems in the Danube Region, to ensure sufficient information flow and exchange at all levels, and other actions are needed. A very important task for Serbian planning and governance systems is to support the emerging Belgrade-Novi Sad Metropolitan Region to become part of a metropolitan network in the Danube Region in order to establish a framework for learning and developing common ideas in all areas relevant to metropolitan development. Example projects are: "To establish common guidelines for improving spatial planning", "To transfer knowledge and enhance urban technologies and strategies", etc.

Countries and regions will coordinate each priority area of work. Serbia is involved in the coordination of two priority areas: (a) to improve mobility and inter-modality, and (b) to develop knowledge society (research, education and ICT). One of the first tasks of the Priority Area Coordinators will be to agree and refine the set targets with the countries most involved in each area of work. The Commission will monitor the implementation of the strategy and will publish its first report at the end of 2012.

CONCLUSION

The integration of the Corridor VII and the Danube Region in Serbia into the European territorial and functional context and sustainable spatial development of Serbia will be achieved by defining, promoting and adjusting the modalities of international, transnational, cross-border and regional cooperation, and implementing the provisions of European and international strategic documents. In implementing international and European

conventions, European strategic documents and directives, the implementation of the EU Danube Strategy and preparation and implementation of the National Danube River Basin Management Plan in Serbia will be of utmost direct significance for international and cross-border cooperation in the sustainable development of Corridor VII and the Danube Region.

International cooperation in the protection, spatial development and arrangement of the Danube River Basin in Serbia will be carried out within the scope of the activities related to the implementation of the Danube River Basin District Management Plan (DRBMP). Priority is given to the establishment of cooperation with the Danube countries in defining significant issues, priorities and measures to achieve the aims of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and Directive on the assessment and management of flood risks in the part of the Danube River Basin in the Republic of Serbia for the period up to 2015 and medium-term period, in order to supplement the Danube River Basin District Management Plan and elaborate the National Danube River Basin Management Plan in Serbia (including the programme of measures) and action programme for sustainable flood protection. Cooperation with the Danube countries will include the development and harmonization of the assessments of the water status and effects of measures taken on the water status, evaluation of the significance of the biotope elements for the river ecosystem and landscape and elements of biological quality for the assessment of the ecological status and potential, information systems, trans-border emissions inventory and transnational monitoring network for the Danube River Basin.

Despite the fact that Serbia is the only Danube country that has not yet ratified the AGN Agreement, the inevitable adoption of this Agreement anticipates that the prescribed conditions should be regarded as applicable for planning the spatial development and arrangement of the international waterway, which belongs to waterway class VIc from the Serbian-Hungarian border to Belgrade and class VII from Belgrade to the Serbian-Bulgarian border. What is of importance for Serbia is its inclusion in the implementation of the priority European projects relating to the improvement of the waterway along Trans-European Transport Corridor VII, primarily for the development of appropriate waterway infrastructure, modernization and improvement of the river fleet so as to meet the ecological requirements, and the use of modern information and communication technologies for navigation improvement.

The management of the sustainable development of the Danube Region in Serbia will be based and harmonized with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. It is of utmost importance for the improvement of our system and practice of sustainable development planning and management to harmonize them with a strategic approach, main pillars and priority areas of the Strategy, which provides a sustainable framework for policy integration and coherent development of the Danube Region. The Strategy brings a new and ambitious dimension to cooperation in the region based on macro-regional and integrative approach, whose implementation is crucial for directing all activities and managing the sustainable spatial development of the Danube Region and Serbia as a whole.

Cooperation within a "macro-regional" framework is intended to produce a more effective coordination. This approach does not imply new laws or institutions; rather, it strengthens links between different policies and a wide range of stakeholders. Although the Strategy does not come with extra EU finance, a considerable amount of funding is already available for the region through a various EU programmes. The aim is to use this available support – €100 billion alone has been allocated from the cohesion policy (European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund) between 2007 and 2013 – to a greater effect and show how macro-regional cooperation can help tackle local problems. There are also other means which Serbia can use, such as the Western Balkan Investment Framework, IPA funds as well as the international financing institutions (e.g. EIB, EBRD).

In the Strategy and Action Plan emphasis is laid on an integrated approach, namely good links between urban and rural areas, fair access to infrastructures and services, and comparable living conditions that will promote territorial cohesion, now an explicit EU objective. Therefore, numerous joint actions were proposed, including the development and implementation of transnational spatial planning and development policies for functional geographic areas. This implies reviewing and improving our strategic planning system, the coordination of strategic planning in the first place. For the EU Strategy for the Danube Region with Action Plan implementation in Serbia the key planning framework should be set by coordinated spatial planning (national and regional spatial plans) and recently proposed regional planning (national regional plan and regional development strategies). The second task is to develop the procedures and mechanisms for coordinating

sectoral planning with spatial and environmental planning at all management levels (Maksin, Milijic, 2010; Maksin et al., 2009). In so doing, it is necessary to be guided by the commitment from the Strategy that only a reinforced territorial dimension will provide an integrated approach, and encourage better coordination of sectoral policies.

Achieving the sustainable spatial development of the Danube Region in Serbia as part of the Danube Region should be based on the following pillars and facilities:

- The creation of institutional and organizational arrangements for horizontal and vertical coordination of government to support the EU Strategy for the Danube Region with Action Plan implementation. This could be achieved by allocation of tasks to new or existing departments for EU pre-accession within government bodies at national level and regional agencies, and by establishing coordination bodies at all levels of government.
- The creation of institutional and organizational arrangements for cooperation with the neighbouring countries and the countries in the Danube Region, primarily in the area of strategic planning and sustainable development, transport and energy infrastructure, water arrangement and protection, cooperation in the fields of education and culture, economic development, environmental protection, security management and the like with a view to achieving better functional integrity among the neighbouring regions.
- Following a new European regional development policy, which brought significant progress relative to the earlier approach aimed with a view to spurring the development of underdeveloped regions and enabling the growth and development of regions that should play the role of the "levers that can pull" general development (which refers above all else to the so-called. "propulsive", "innovative", "creative" and related regions, most of which belong to the part of the (most) developed regions).
- The use of the instruments of managing the sustainable territorial development of the new TA 2020 with the aim of strengthening the territorial coordination of policies and territorial cohesion implementation mechanisms, and specifically: (i) multi-level governance formats to manage different functional territories and ensure balanced and coordinated contribution of local, regional, national and EU actors in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity;

(ii) territorial coordination of sectoral policies should be supported by instruments such as the assessment of territorial impacts and integrated impact assessment for all significant EU, national and regional policies and programmes, and by coordinating planning mechanisms and territorially sensitive monitoring; (iii) contributing to territorial cohesion and cooperation at cross-border, transnational, and inter-regional levels by flexible territorial programming, which allows co-operation activities with different territorial scope to be flexible enough to address regional specificities, etc.

- A timely elaboration of strategic documents (spatial plans, regional, sectoral and other strategies and programmes), which are necessary as platforms for cooperation with EU institutions and, in particular, for achieving a harmonized, autonomous and joint approach, together with the neighbours, to EU funds, through joint strategic plans and projects in cross-border and other related cooperation.

Within the scope of its first activities and steps towards the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan, Serbia should make use of its current advantages in advocating and promoting national and regional aims and priorities in the development of the international waterway, protection and arrangement of the Danube River Basin and sustainable spatial development of our part of the Danube Region. The first advantage is that it is one of the coordinators of two priority areas – to improve mobility and inter-modality, and to develop knowledge society. The other advantage is that the first tasks of the Priority Area Coordinators is to agree and refine set the targets with the countries most involved in each area of work.

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