

Navigation and natural treasures – conflicts and focal points

The situation of the Danube in Bulgaria

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Navigation in the Bulgarian Section

- The High-Level Group on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) - report from 27.06.2003 listed the elimination of the bottlenecks on Rhine-Main-Danube link as priority project for the EU (Project No 2) and should be complete until 2010
- In Bulgaria there are river stretches with a draught of less than 250 cm (guaranteed for 343 days a year), which corresponds to a depth of the navigation channel of 280 up to 320 cm. This standard is higher than all current international agreements, which call for a depth of the navigation channel of 250 cm
- In Romania and Bulgaria, hydro-technical engineering works are required to ensure natural dredging of the river, as well as construction projects to reinforce embankments
- The report underlines as long term benefit the increasing the overall capacity of freight transferred by around 30%.
- As reason for delay: the existence of environmental constraints, connected for example with being in a NATURA 2000 area

Navigation in the Bulgarian Section

- The Bulgarian Section of the Danube is from the Timok river mouth (rkm 845) to Silistra (rkm 375)
- The two most important bottlenecks for navigation are located at Belene (rkm 576 - 561) and Batin (rkm 530 - 522) Islands
- The EU Commission estimates the works for 26 km to be completed until 2011 at total cost €m 137 - co-financing (30 % EU; 20 % privat sector; 50 % national budget). Planned after 2006
- The Bulgarian Government has officially elaborated and published Programme for Transport Infrastructure Development for the period 2001-2005

Navigation in the Bulgarian Section

Navigation in the Bulgarian Section

Alternatives for Improving Navigation in the Lower Danube River – proposed by Bulgarian Transport Experts:

- "Autonomous scenario" – that means both countries to continue the works concerning maintenance of navigation channel like as last 10 years. Due to insufficient funds after 1990 this activities are very limited. For the section between Vit River (rkm 610) and Silistra (rkm 375) neither any improvement works have been implemented nor maintenance dredging has been carried out for the Danube
- Constriction of the width of the river, particularly at low water, thereby increasing the available depths of the river through a natural process
- Application of maintenance dredging (recurrent) only for the navigation channel of the river
- Combination of constriction works with maintenance dredging and Bank protection where necessary
- Building up Hydro Power Plants (Dams)

Navigation in the Bulgarian Section

- Special attention is paid for the bottlenecks – the heaviest from navigational point of view section – Belene island – navigable depth 18,5 – 19,5 dm, navigable width 40 – 100 m, average duration – 60 - 85 days
- Construction of two Hydro Power Plants at Nikopol/Turno Magurele (rkm 580,65) and Silistra/Calarasi (rkm 384,50)
- From the impact of the dams will benefit the irrigation and agriculture, water supply and

sewerage system, electricity energy outputs, navigation and infrastructure

- The construction of the dams is strongly recommended as general solution of the problems of Lower Danube and in the same time different hydraulic and hydrological activities are strongly criticized that they do not take in to account the needs of the navigation.

Navigation in the Bulgarian Section

- The environmental specialists and NGO community in Bulgaria founds the Hydro Power proposal rather overestimated
- In the same time the Bulgarian Government implements the project “Bulgaria: riverbanks and coastline protection from erosion and water abrasion and the related landslide processes” - funded by the European Investment Bank /EIB/ and the Bank for Development of the Council of Europe
- Local activities for dredging are permitted by Ministry of Environment and Waters in the Belene canal
- “Restoration of wetlands and nutrient reduction” project on Belene island and Kalimok-Brashlen marches is in advanced phase with the support of the World Bank/GEF

Natural Treasures in Bulgarian Section

- Bulgaria proposed 27 water – related protected areas with Danube basin-wide importance to be included in the River Basin Management Plan
- From them 14 are along the river banks or on the Danube islands
- From high importance are:
 - Nature Park – “Persina” (incl. strict reserve “Kitka”)
 - maintained reserve – “Srebarna lake” – example of Lower Danube floodplains lakes, Ramsar site, UNESCO World Heritage site, Biosphere Reserve
 - Protected site “Kalimok Brashlen” – example of Lower Danube floodplains,
 - Belene island complex – example of Lower Danube floodplain islands, Ramsar site

Natural Treasures in Bulgarian Section

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 Orsoya fish pond | 9 Belene - Bottleneck |
| 2 Ibisha island maint.reserve | 10 Nikopol/Turno |
| 3 Persina NP | Magurele dam |
| 4 Belene Island Complex | 11 Silistra/Calarasi |
| 5 Stariat dab – PA-IBA | dam |
| 6. Pojarevo island | |
| 7 Kalimok-Brashlen | |
| 8 Srebarna lake | |

THE “BELENE” CASE

- Removing bottlenecks
- NPP – Nuclear Power Plant Place
- Water Supply for NPP
- NP “Persina” border
- ← Nikopol/ T.Magurele dam

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