

# DANUBE DROUGHT CONFERENCE

## A CONFERENCE ON CHALLENGES IN DROUGHT MANAGEMENT IN THE DANUBE REGION

**Date: 7-8 May 2019**

**Place: TUtheSky in Vienna, Austria**

Drought in the Danube Region (DriDanube) project is moving towards its end in June 2019 and we are delighted to announce that the project's Final conference "Danube Drought Conference" will take place on 7-8 May 2019 in Vienna.

To emphasize the importance of cooperation in the area of drought management, apart from presenting the results of the DriDanube project, the event will build upon the activities implemented within the Drought Management Center for Southeastern Europe and the Integrated Drought Management Programme in Central and Eastern Europe.

Nowadays, drought is still not getting enough attention at the different levels in the region (political, operational, general public etc.) and is still considered to be a rare phenomenon. Recent droughts (2003, 2007, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2018) showed that such extremes are becoming regular feature of the climate in this region. Are we also getting prepared? Has something changed over the last 10 years? Do we understand how to move from reactive to proactive approach?

**It's time to act!**

### BACKGROUND

Water scarcity and droughts hit the Danube region frequently and have had large impacts on the economy and welfare of the population. Despite the damages in the last decades, drought is still not considered as an issue of high priority and people are not aware of its impacts.



**Drought Management Center for Southeastern Europe (DMCSEE)** was established jointly by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2006. The mission of the DMCSEE is to coordinate and facilitate the development, assessment, and application of drought risk management tools and policies in South-Eastern Europe with the goal of improving drought preparedness and reducing drought impacts. Therefore, DMCSEE has been focusing on monitoring and assessing risks and vulnerability connected to drought. DMCSEE is coordinated and hosted by Slovenian Environmental Agency.

In 2013, Global Water Partnership (GWP) and World Meteorological organization (WMO) launched a joint **Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP)** to improve monitoring and prevention of one of the world's greatest natural hazards. In the same year, a regional IDMP started in Central and Eastern Europe. IDMP CEE supports the governments in the development of drought management policies and plans. It also builds the capacity of stakeholders at different levels for proactive integrated drought management approach and tests innovative approaches for future drought management plans.

As one of the follow up projects of both processes mentioned above, **Drought Risk in the Danube Region (DriDanube)** project, funded by Danube Transitional Programme, started in 2017. The project aims at helping all stakeholders involved in drought management become more efficient during drought emergency response and prepare better for the next drought.

## OBJECTIVES

Danube Drought Conference is a great opportunity to remind ourselves that combating drought is achievable through proactive problem solving, strong community involvement and co-operation at all levels. The aim of the conference is to increase resilience to drought and reduce risk by advocating an integrated, proactive approach to drought planning, adaptation and management.

More specifically, the conference seeks to:

- present the results from the DriDanube project (innovative drought monitoring tool for Danube region, unified approach for drought impacts collection and drought risk assessment, strategy which will support proactive drought management in the region);
- show examples of best practices, sharing knowledge and experiences across the drought community;
- encourage better links between political decision-making, recent research and development, financing, and engagement of all key stakeholders.

## TOPICS

### **Topic 1: Battling drought - what we have learnt**

Present reactions and lessons learnt from countries' responses before, during and after droughts. This session will discuss the triggers that caused operational or political change in a way drought was managed and the current perception of drought among stakeholders.

### **Topic 2: Cross-sectoral inventory of past droughts**

Why to collect drought impacts, how to collect them, what is the cost of drought? This session will provide an overview of drought impacts in different sectors (such as agriculture, hydro-power, tourism, biodiversity and transport).

### **Topic 3: From preparing drought data to communicating drought**

Main drought monitoring tools and drought data hubs in the Danube region and outside of it will be presented. After drought information is ready, how to assure that the message is delivered, read, understood and appropriate actions taken?

### **Topic 4: Strategic planning for drought**

How is drought represented in different strategic documents (Danube, EU, global) and what are the plans to better address risk management approach in the plans. Is the shift from crisis management to risk management seen also in the financing mechanisms?

### **Topic 5: Drought governance**

Progress towards integrated drought management plans, guidelines, action plans at global, regional and local level will be presented and discussed. Policy level round table will discuss the current drought management capacity in the region and the future steps towards preparedness.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Better informed decision makers, practitioners and media about the latest drought impacts and future risks;
- Shared lessons learnt on reactions before, during and after droughts;
- Defined actions on further exchange and cooperation among leading professionals, policy and decision makers for more efficient drought management in the Danube region;
- Increased dialogue and communication space for research, policy and practice;
- Defined approaches towards the sustainability of the developed tools and further strengthening of the international cooperation and financing to tackle drought.