

MINUTES

Fourth Meeting of the River Basin Management (Planning) Working Group

Bucharest, 18-19 May 2015

The Fourth Meeting of the River Basin Management (Planning) Working Group (RBMP WG) established under the Agreement between the Ministry of Environment and Water Management of Romania and the Ministry of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria on Cooperation in the Field of Water Management signed at Bucharest on 12 November 2004, took place in Bucharest, on 18-19 May 2015.

The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Elena TUCHIU, Director, Management Plans Department, National Administration Apele Romane, Romania and Mr. Petar DIMITROV, Director of the Danube River Basin Directorate, Bulgaria. The lists of the Romanian and Bulgarian delegations that attended this meeting are given in *Annexes 1* and *2* respectively.

The RBMP WG adopted the Agenda given in *Annex 3*. Related to the point 9 of the Agenda (*Any other business*), Ms. Elena TUCHIU proposed to have a short presentation from Romanian side of the common project "Danube WATER" proposal which was agreed by the Bulgarian party.

The main discussions were focused on aspects related to harmonization of the Danube river transboundary water body (Porțile de Fier II-Chiciu RORW14.1_B3 for RO part, respectively the Danube BG1DU000R001 for BG part) and of the two transboundary groundwater bodies for the elaboration of the Danube River Basin District Management Plan – Updates 2015.

According to the adopted agenda (item 4), both parties presented some information on implementation of the WFD in each country in the process of preparing the up-date 2015 of River Basin Management Plan (RBMP).

The Romanian part informed that it is planned to finalize and report on time the RBMP while the Bulgarian part informed that there will be a delay in reporting of several months.

The presentations given in the frame of the meeting are part of the minutes as annexes 4a (Romanian surface water body), 4b (Bulgarian surface water body), 5a (Romanian groundwater bodies) and 5b (Bulgarian groundwater bodies).

Romania informed that they have designated as HMWB the transboundary surface water body and Bulgaria informed that the process is not finalized but preliminary results of assessment of the SWB do not meet the national criteria for designation as HMWB. Concerning the HMWBs designation, Romania offered to send a presentation (given during the ICPDR HYMO TG meeting) with the steps on designation of HMWB of the transboundary water

body until 30 June 2015. The Bulgarian party emphasized the importance of making coordinated/harmonized assessment of the common SWB using the cumulative effect of pressures on both sides. The Romanian party considered that this opinion could be rediscussed during the 3rd planning cycle.

During the meeting, both parties exchanged information regarding the methodology of the ecological potential assessment and the results of its application. The Bulgarian party informed that the classification system has not been finalized yet and assessment presented is preliminary at this stage.

The Romanian party indicated that the assessment methodology is based on the principle "one - out, all -out" and for the biological quality elements (BQEs) values of ecological potential classes were defined. The approach used by the Bulgarian party is based on the same principle.

The Bulgarian party informed that the classification system is in the process of being finalized within the framework of an on-going project.

Discussions were held about the two options at European level for defining ecological potential, respectively the usage of the values of relevant BQE or the application of the mitigation measures in relation to hydromorphological pressures/ the application of the mitigation measures in combination with BQE.

As a preliminary indication, both parts mentioned that they will investigate also the possibility of using mitigation measures approach (stand alone or in combination with BQE).

It was also emphasized that there are methodological differences on assessment of physico-chemical elements for the Danube river (i.e.: Romania uses the percentile 90 and threshold values are types-specific and Bulgaria uses the average value. Bulgarian threshold values used for the preliminary assessment of the Danube are type-specific for another type /e.g. the Iskar river mouth/ and are stronger than the ones for large rivers.).

In this respect, the parties considered to exchange data regarding the classification systems used by both parties and also about the boundary values between classes. (Links to documents in available format will be exchanged.)

Romanian part mentioned that the result of the ecological potential assessment was moderate for the transboundary surface water body, due to the physico-chemical elements (detergents and COD-Cr) and biological element (fish fauna). In case of Bulgarian party, the assessment is preliminary and is based on the physico-chemical parameters and specific pollutants (RBSP) and indicated a good ecological potential.

From the chemical status point of view, the results for the transboundary surface water body are different between the two parties: for Romanian part, the chemical status is failing to achieve the good chemical status (due to chloroform) and good status for Bulgarian part. Consequently, it was pointed out the importance of exchanging information as regards the chemical assessment method, in general and analytical methods for chloroform. The idea of checking the JDS 3 results has been indicated.

Romanian party presented information that no pollution sources with chloroform have been identified for this transboundary water body neither for the Danube two upstream water bodies of the Romanian side. Romanian delegation highlighted that pollution may come from upstream Danube countries and thus should be further investigated. BG informed that no exceedance of EQS of chloroform has been observed and no sources of chloroform on Bulgarian territory have been identified.

The Romanian party presented an update of methodology applied for the two transboundary GWBs and the results obtained. Bulgarian party presented the national methodological approach for GWBs and the results of their application for the two transboundary GWBs and for additional GWBs in the Black Sea RBD and the results obtained.

Regarding the assignment of the GWBs on two different River Basin Districts in Bulgaria, Romanian party mentioned that administrative aspects should not be a barrier of cooperation and exchange of data and information on the same aquifers. The Bulgarian party informed the Romanian party on the letter addressed to the EC containing a request to clarify the issue on assignment of GWB in specific circumstances (e.g. different river basin districts).

Bulgaria asked for information on Romanian transboundary GWBs comparable to the one presented by the Bulgarian party. In this context, Romanian part indicated the link where the draft of the Dobrogea- Litoral River Basin Management Plan- 2015 Update is published and agreed to send a presentation based on available data from the draft document indicated above until 1 July 2015.

Both parties agreed to have a practical exchange of monitoring data on transboundary groundwaters. It was concluded that for a number of 4 quality monitoring sites and 4 quantity monitoring sites /each aquifer structure/proposals will be made by each party regarding their location and monitored parameters.

Both parties agreed to send information on 4 proposed monitoring sites (quality) and 4 proposed monitoring sites (quantity) for Sarmatian and 4 proposed monitoring sites (quality) and 4 proposed monitoring sites (quantity) for Upper Jurassic Lower Cretaceous aquifers on each side of the border, being as close as possible to the border and also being informative and representative. Bulgaria will send proposals for 2 monitoring sites for Danube RBD and 2 for Black Sea RBD for each aquifer - Sarmatian and Upper Jurassic Lower Cretaceous - for both qualitative and quantitative monitoring.

Parties agree to propose sites for quantitative monitoring which are observation wells.

For this purpose both Parties concluded to send each other proposals for the bilaterally agreed monitoring sites using the templates contained in the Annexes 6 and 7 of the minutes, until 31 July 2015.

Both Parties considered that a RBMP WG meeting dedicated exclusively on groundwater issues, needs to be organized back to back with the next Joint Commission on Water Management (JCWM) meeting, in order to decide the monitoring sites for further exchange of data for groundwater.

Related to item 5 of the agenda *Danube GIS data harmonization for the common transboundary SWB and GWBs for updating the draft of the second Danube Rivers Basin Management Plan (DRBMP)*, the necessity for GIS data sets harmonization for the reporting purpose under DanubeGIS and WISE reporting requirements for 2016 has been indicated by both parties, in relation to the geometry of the Danube transboundary WB and terrestrial boundary between the two countries.

It was underlined that according to the terms and conditions for harmonization recommended by International Commission for the Protection of Danube River (ICPDR) the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- The process of harmonization is based on bilateral (or in certain cases on multilateral) activities of countries. Any agreed common action of the countries sharing the International Danube River Basin area should not be a disadvantage for any of the Danube countries involved.
- The harmonization process does not concern the political country borders. The geographic objects resulting from the harmonization process are not always and not by all means border points and harmonized river stretches often do not represent political border lines.
- The process of harmonization should be in line with the requirements of the European Commission within the framework of CIS.

Concerning the Danube transboundary water body, the Bulgarian party proposed to use the Romanian GIS datasets on geometry that are more precise and for the terrestrial borders, the Romanian borders in European Regional Map (ERM) will be used. The Romanian part agreed with this approach.

The parties considered that an exchange of GIS data set for harmonization may be agreed by exchange of e-mails according to the existing rules and if it is necessary this will be presented during the RBMP WG meeting. In this context, Romanian party will send to Bulgarian part the data sets (Danube and ERM data) for the harmonization purpose until 31 July 2015.

At this stage, both parties agreed on the common code for the transboundary surface water, namely: RORW14.1_B3_BG1DU000R001.

Regarding the item 7 *Updating the Working Programme in 2015-2016* both parties underlined that at this stage they will focus mainly on RBMP finalization and reporting.

The item 8 *Improvement of information and data exchange relevant for the common transboundary SWB and GWBs used in the elaboration process of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) based on existing Rules:* both parties

concluded that the aspects on data information exchange have been covered by the two previous items (4 and 5). It was emphasized that the framework for data information exchange is offered by the “Rules on mutual data and information communication on coordination and implementation of the common activities according to the provisions of Water Framework Directive and other relevant EU legislation” which were approved during the second meeting of the JCWM (17th November 2011).

Concerning the item 8 of the agenda, the Bulgarian party proposed that the RBM WG proposes to the Joint Commission on Water Management to make a decision regarding the most appropriate mechanism for bilateral coordination as required by the FD and MSFD. With respect to FD, Bulgarian party proposed that this issue be approached by establishing a new FD group while merging the current Danube and RBM working groups or to include FD issues in the scope of activities of the Danube WG. The Romanian party took note of this proposal and indicated that this issue will be analysed and then discussed by the Joint Commission on Water Management.

For the MSFD there was a proposal from Bulgarian party that the Black Sea WG is the appropriate platform for bilateral coordination. The Romanian party took note on this proposal.

Under the item *Any other business* the Romanian part briefly presented several aspects related to the DanubeWATER project activities.

Signed in Bucharest, on 19 May 2015 in two original copies in the English language.

For the Romanian part

Elena TUCHIU



For the Bulgarian part

Petar DIMITROV

