

WORKING GROUP OF DANUBE COUNTRIES



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18th EXPERTS MEETING March 29-30, 2011 - St. Pölten, Austria

OF THE ECOLOGY WORKING GROUP FOCUSING ON SOIL CONSERVATION OF DANUBE COUNTRIES WORKING COMMUNITY

Motivation:

The 18th Experts Meeting is deemed to be a source of know-how transfer and updating current projects on the one hand. On the other hand, the EU Strategy for the Danube Countries with focus on Soil Erosion should be discussed on Expert Level.

Soil Awareness and Networking in the Danube Region

Soil has been the starting point for all life on Earth, and it provides for more than 90 % of our food.

It is threatened in various ways: Mass construction and exploitation in favorable conditions, neglect and give-up in unfavorable conditions. Common awareness among the population seems to get lost and does no longer correspond to reality, respectively.

A new EU Project named SONDAR (Soil Strategy Network in the Danube Region) has been launched in order to set up a network of increasing responsibility for soil: between science and practice, administration and users of land, between education, arts and the entire population. It is a matter of implementing measures and initiating processes, which shall be enabled to develop further, as a consequence, in the regions and countries participating in the project, but also in others. The effect of the project examples shall become relevant to the entire Danube region, and after project termination it shall lead to the development of strategies for a continuation of activities. The measures set by the partners aim at demonstrating quantitative and qualitative soil protection by best-practice examples.

Status of Soil Erosion and Perspectives for Prevention in the Danube Region:

Soil erosion has been identified as one of the main causes of soil degradation. Efficient measures for preventing soil erosion are of utmost priority to maintain healthy, fertile soils for future generations.

Recently, the European Union has launched a new EU Strategy for the Danube Countries including aims for a regional environmental policy. In this strategy, a target is set to reduce the area subject to soil loss of more than 10 tons per hectare due to erosion by 25% until 2020.

This workshop brings together experts from the Danube countries to exchange information on the status of soil erosion and measures currently applied in each country for erosion prevention. Based on this, options and challenges for implementing the new EU erosion target for the Danube region will be

(a) How can we ensure reduction of soil erosion throughout the agricultural land in the Danube region rather than concentrating on a few areas, as suggested in the proposal of the European Commission for a Soil Framework Directive?

(b) Setting single targets for soil erosion reduction neither does address the complexity of interactions between various soil threats, such as loss of organic carbon, compaction and soil erosion, nor the multiple effects of any soil protection action, such as establishing cover crops or reduced tilling. How can we ensure efficiency of the measures in this wider context while trying to implement the erosion target set for the Danube region?

Registration: <http://www.unserboden.at/158-0-Registration.htm?>

Closing date: March 12, 2011

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Enclosed you will find the preliminary programme and a current paper concerning the EU Strategy for the Danube Countries.

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