



EUROPEAN UNION



EU MISSIONS

RESTORE OUR OCEAN AND WATERS



Baseline study - Danube-Black Sea Lighthouse

Mission Ocean and Waters lighthouses serve as sites to pilot, demonstrate, develop, and deploy Mission activities across EU seas and river basins. The objective of the Danube-Black Sea lighthouse is to enhance the ecological integrity of the Danube and Black Sea waters, through the following two specific targets:



Restore **at least 25,000 km** of free-flowing rivers in Europe



Contribute to **nature restoration targets**

A baseline study was carried out in 2021-2022 and proposed a draft set of indicators to measure Mission progress towards its targets. It also analysed various elements and actions crucial for achieving Mission objectives, including:

- Governance structures, institutions, stakeholder initiatives and networks, key projects
- Regional, national and macro-regional and Smart Specialisation Strategies, National Recovery and Resilience Plans
- Activities supporting citizen engagement and ocean literacy

The Danube-Black Sea Lighthouse targets are measured using three broad categories of indicators:

- Assessing restoration progress of 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers through indicators like hydrological alterations, wetlands/floodplains reconnection, and interruptions of river continuity for fish migration
- Evaluating proposed nature restoration targets through indicators such as the number, surface area, and status of protected areas, along with assessing the status of freshwater habitats
- Gauging the Good Ecological Status under the Water Framework Directive, focusing on the ecological status of water bodies, as a key measure for both the restoration of freshwater ecosystems and nature restoration goals

The overall objective of the baseline study for the Danube-Black Sea basin, was to focus on the basin's ecological health and restoration efforts. The Danube and Black Sea specificity is outlined, emphasising the need for integrated strategies to ensure a thriving river ecosystem.

With a 2030 target, the EU Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters" aims to protect and restore the health of our ocean and waters through research and innovation, citizen engagement and blue investments.

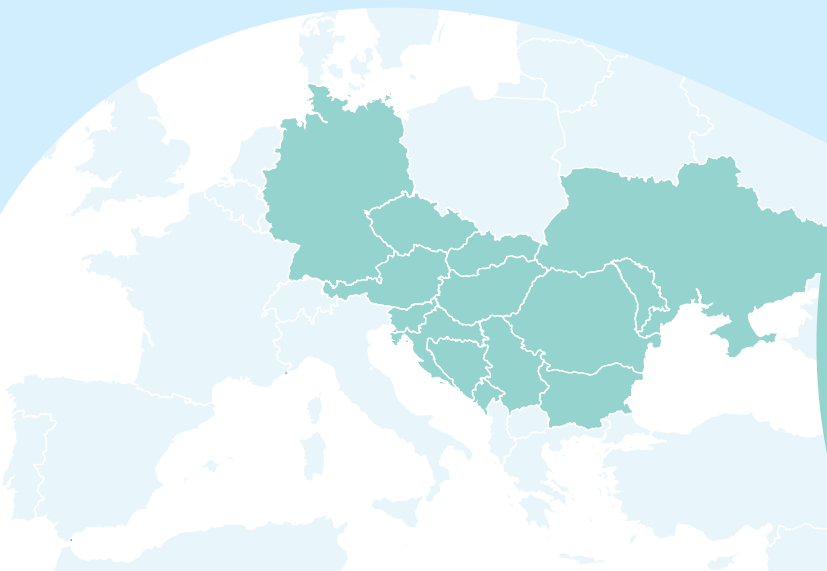
DANUBE-BLACK SEA BASIN



115 million
inhabitants (2018)

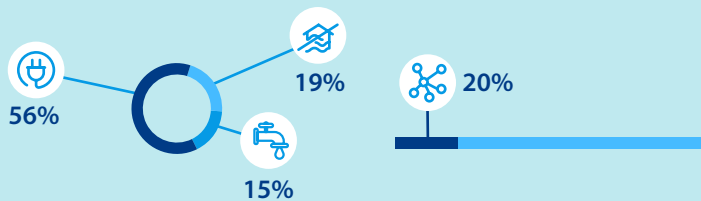


Area coverage
801 463 km²



BASELINE STATE OF PLAY 2021 – 2022

European rivers including the Danube are interrupted due to human interventions, such as dam building, which interfere with the natural migration along the river.



River continuity for fish migration



- Out of 975 water bodies of the Danube River Basin District, 357 are affected, with 93 water bodies being passable for fish.
- 27% of the total number of Danube River Basin water bodies is significantly altered by interruptions for fish migration.



- Several restoration measures for river continuity are planned until 2027, including the construction of 424 fish migration aids.



EU Strategy covering the Danube-Black Sea basin

- The Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) was developed through a consultation process involving stakeholders from various backgrounds and levels, including the EU, partner countries' representatives, and experts. Since 2018, the Danube Strategy Point has been responsible for implementing the strategy and facilitating dialogue.

[Visit website](#)

Data gaps

- There is no agreed upon definition of free-flowing rivers at EU level which poses a challenge for monitoring indicators related to the restoration of free-flowing rivers.
- Data gaps exist in assessing the status of freshwater, transitional water, and coastal Natura 2000 sites, which is crucial for reaching Target 2 on nature restoration.

- The primary driving forces for interruptions are :
 - ⊕ Hydropower generation (56%)
 - ⊗ Flood protection (19%)
 - ⊕ Water supply (15%)

- About 20% of barriers serve multiple functions, such as hydropower generation and navigation

Nature Restoration Targets Evaluation

- Water Abstractions: 69 cases of water abstractions were identified in the entire basin, 5 in the Danube River
- Hydropeaking: 42 cases of hydropeaking are identified in the entire basin, 1 in the Danube River
- Water abstractions restoration measures: For 46 water abstractions, restoration measures are planned to be implemented by 2027. For 18 water abstractions, no measures are necessary for the achievement of Good Environmental Status and Good Environmental Potential and for 2 water abstraction measures will not be implemented by 2027.
- Hydropeaking restoration measures: 4 achieved by 2021, 32 planned by 2027, 3 will not be implemented by 2027, for 2 no measures are necessary, for 1 measure are not yet

Data sources

- The 2021 Update of the Danube River Basin Management Plan (DRBMP) of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).
- The Joint Programme of measures 2021 of the Danube River Basin Management Plan.

[Link to the report](#)



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