



# **PREPARING THE DANUBE LIGHTHOUSE EU MISSION ON RESTORING OUR OCEANS AND WATERS BY 2030**

**07 / 12 / 2022 PRAGUE**

International conference organised during the Czech EU Presidency by the BIOEAST Initiative in collaboration with the Technology Centre Prague under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture Czech Republic.

**BIOECONOMY & WATER**

**CONFERENCE CONCEPT NOTE**

In the light of geopolitical and global challenges, the war in Ukraine, food, energy, self-sustainability, resilience and recovery are emerging challenges that the EU currently faces. At the same time, there is an urgent need to face risks of losing the health of ecosystem after decades of intensive damage. A responsible smart transition process is needed that leads Europe to a knowledge-based society that is strongly oriented towards circularity and sustainability.

**Fresh water is a vital element influencing the economies and social structure (among other things), of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries.** National assessments carried out under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) show that only 40% of Europe's surface water bodies achieve good ecological status. The European Environmental Agency's European Water Report showed that 62% are not in good chemical status. The Implementation Plan of the European Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030" highlights that degradation of marine and freshwaters is threatening the EU's natural capital, the essential goods and services that the water system provides and is risking to unsettle the self-regulatory characteristics of the water system beyond the tipping point. A study carried out in 2021 by the BIOEAST Initiative states that the majority of the water bodies of the 11 BIOEAST countries from the CEE microregion have worse than good status. Thus, a further acceleration of action by Member States is urgently needed.

**The European Mission "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030" tackles the degradation of marine and freshwaters.** The objective of the Mission is to restore the health of the EU's Ocean and waters by 2030 by reaching the European Green Deal targets for biodiversity, zero pollution and decarbonisation, with greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 2030. The Mission defines four lighthouses. **The objective of Danube Lighthouse is to connect and structure existing activities, disseminate and upscale solutions, and mobilise relevant actors to develop and deploy solutions to protect and restore the Danube River and its tributaries.**

The BIOEAST Initiative of Central and Eastern European countries defines fresh water as an important thematic area. In 2020 the Thematic Working Group on *Fresh "Water Based Bioeconomy"* was established in line with the Governance Paper of the BIOEAST Initiative, and it is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture in Czech Republic and BIOEAST HUB CZ.

**The current crises - health, climate, energy, and food security are creating pressure in the macro-region on the sustainable management of fresh water. Drought, lack of groundwater, and floods are emerging problems, and are now priority areas of the Czech EU Presidency.** The Czech Ministry of Agriculture CZ is fully supporting the implementation of the European Missions to Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030.



To increase awareness and connect all relevant policy makers to discuss a common approach and concrete action, to enhance the engagement in the European Missions to Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030. Altogether and for all stakeholders, the BIOEAST Initiative and BIOEAST HUB CZ are organising under the auspices of the Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic Mr. Zdeněk Nekula international conference **PREPARING THE DANUBE LIGHTHOUSE – AN EU MISSION TO RESTORE OUR OCEANS AND WATERS BY 2030**. This is focused on the following topics:

- the need for cooperation to achieve Mission objectives and bringing together existing governance structures and networks in the basin to discuss a common approach and concrete action
- the need to involve stakeholders and citizens in the basin by using an inclusive and participatory process from the bottom up
- the need for innovative solutions and support of the innovative eco system in the Danube River Basin
- to enable the Public-Private Participation mechanisms in the above domains, by attracting the interest of related stakeholders and mobilizing key actors.

The conference **agenda** proposes three sessions:

- 1 EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters & 4 Pillars:** Introduction into the mission setup, the mission's charter with Invited speakers from European Commission mission's managers DG MARE and DG RTD. Already running support actions will be Invited to present the future roadmaps.
- 2 Enhancement of the Danube Pillar in the BIOEAST macro region –** Introduction of the BIOEAST Initiative and its bodies, connecting to already existing structures linked to Danube Region, coordination and support actions, good practices and innovation events
- 3 Panel discussions about the needs of the Danube region:** Invited speakers should discuss the broader picture from the perspective of the policy makers, scientific experts and implementing agencies – i.e., the Danube Strategy Region, visions and plans. It is foreseen to Invite ministries, water authorities and research Institutes representatives representing the Danube Region.

**Time & Place:** Prague 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Language:** English

**Participants:** stakeholders from the BIOEAST countries: policymakers, experts, and scientists

**Main contact:** Czech BIOEAST-HUB

