



INVOLVING THE BIOEAST INITIATIVE INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU MISSION:

RESTORE OUR OCEAN AND WATERS BY 2030

Preparing the Danube Lighthouse

A successful high-level international conference was organised in Prague during the Czech EU Presidency on the 7th of December 2022. The high-level representatives of ministries from the Danube Region countries were assured by the European Commission's representatives that the EU Mission: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030 will provide resources, specifically the Danube Lighthouse could solve emerging issues and could offer solutions on freshwater related challenges, but a strong

macro-regional commitment is necessary.

Distinguished guests from the European Commission, the Missions Manager Mr Kestutis Sadauskas, Deputy Director-General DG MARE, highlighted the unique opportunity offered by the Mission to rethink our future in the Danube Region. He **emphasized the need for a bottom-up approach, the necessity to map the knowledge of the riverbeds, to develop research and innovation based infrastructure and to become self-sufficient in sea and freshwater sea food.** Ms Elisabetta Balzi the Head of the Healthy Seas and Oceans Unit DG RTD called for synergies and highlighted the opportunities on combining different European funds. She highlighted that the mission should be more than research and innovation priority, should provide an opportunity to solve emerging challenges around pollution, biodiversity and carbon neutral economy.

During the high level panel Martin Kovac, state secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture of Slovakia stressed the need to share innovative approaches, to tackle the big and small water cycles, to link the soil and water related questions. Aniko Juhasz, deputy state secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture from Hungary emphasised the need to coordinate and support properly the wide spectrum of relevant stakeholders, align their needs and balance demands of water management experts, industry, public authorities and farmers. Mr. Gheorghe Constantin Deputy General Director of Water Department, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests Romania acknowledged that proper cooperation along the Danube River basin, and implementation of new solutions for water pollution that can vastly improve the condition of the Black Sea. Petr Chalupa, Head of Fisheries and Apiculture, Ministry of Agriculture Czech Republic highlighted the need to advance upon the long tradition of pond aquaculture, fish farming and solutions that might contribute to the security of healthy nutrition if new innovative solutions are enabled.

The conference shows that freshwater issues are becoming ever more challenging for the BIOEAST countries, at the same time implementation of any agenda is extremely scattered and there is a need



to discuss priorities concerning the freshwater based bioeconomy, specifically on research and innovation agendas. Barna Kovacs resumes: "*BIOEAST Thematic Working Fresh Water Based Bioeconomy has the potential to act as a macro regional science-policy network where different interests can be discussed and national initiatives can be networked so it can act as the horizontal enablers of the EU Mission.*"

The conference was organised during the Czech EU Presidency under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture Czech Republic by the BIOEAST Initiative and the BIOEAST HUB CZ in collaboration with Technology Centre Prague.



The BIOEASTsUP project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No 862699