



Press release of the Danube Commission: Meeting of the Working Group on legal and financial issues of the Danube Commission

The Meeting of the Working Group on legal and financial issues (WG JUR-FIN) of the Danube Commission (DC) was held under the Chairmanship of the Representative of Ukraine, Mr Oleksii Kondyk, on 14-15 May 2023 in a hybrid format.

The delegations of all Danube States of the Danube Commission (the Republic of Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Republic of Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine) participated in the Meeting.

WG JUR-FIN noted with concern that the consequences of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine continue to have serious damaging impact on the Danube navigation, breaching the fundamental principle in Art. 1 of the Belgrade Convention regarding the regime of navigation on the Danube (1948). In this context, at the 100th Session of the Commission on 14 December 2023 (DC/SES 100/11), Danube states adopted decision DC/SES 100/11, urging the Russian Federation to draw the consequences of its attacks by withdrawing from the Belgrade Convention until 29 February 2024, or, failing that, as of 1 March 2024, the Danube States will no longer consider themselves bound by the obligations under the Belgrade Convention vis-à-vis the Russian Federation. This decision came into force on the 1st of March 2024.

During the meeting, the delegations also discussed the issue of the accumulated debt which the Russian Federation has refused to pay (Member States contribution for the year 2022 and 2023) which amounts to 308.5 thousand euros. In accordance with the Danube Commission decision (DC 100/13 of 14 December 2024), a penalty on these arrears has been applied, starting with 1st of March 2024.

WG JUR-FIN discussed several important legal topics concerning basic principles of the Belgrade Convention i) port access practice of the Danube states; ii) drafting of the new Regulation on the activity of conciliation commissions; iii) validity of the vessel's certificates issued by the Danube states which are not members of the European Union and other issues; iv) modification of Rules of Procedure and other issues.

Danube Commission has started the process of modernization, which shall identify new common goals and tasks for the Organization and its Secretariat. In this regard, WG JUR-FIN also discussed and approved the draft of the strategic document for the next 5 years – Gender Equality Plan 2025-2029 in line with European standards and approaches concerning personnel policy. The document will be proposed for approval by the DC in its 101st Session in June 2024.

The Working group also discussed and prepared documents necessary for the organization of the election of the new DC leadership, planned to take place in June 2024.