

JRC signs agreement with the Academies of Sciences of the Danube region Member States

Budapest, 17 November - The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has signed an agreement for closer cooperation with the Academies of Sciences of the Danube region Member States. The signatories are the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS), the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS), the Romanian Academy (RA) and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS). The agreement, which comes in the context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, was signed at the Fifth edition of the World Science Forum, organized by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in partnership with UNESCO, ICSU, and AAAS.

The letter announces the launch of a Scientific Cooperation Initiative "Science for the Danube Strategy". Cooperation activities are envisaged in broad areas of mutual interest such as environmental information systems, modelling (for example in agriculture and climate change), sustainable management of natural resources (for example in water, soil, forests, air, land, biodiversity) and environmental risks (for example in forest fires, droughts, floods, desertification).

This initiative will be open to other countries' National Academies from the Danube region to join in, contribute to and benefit from the common activities of the partnership.

The **Director-General of the JRC, Dominique Ristori**, said: *"We believe that there is a great potential for cooperation between our organisations and that expanded cooperation between our research institutions and scientists can yield great benefits for the advancement of evidence-based policy and for the Danube region citizens"*.

The Danube river basin covers parts of eight EU countries (Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania) and six non-EU countries (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Ukraine and Moldova).

The region is facing several challenges, such as environmental threats (water pollution, floods, biodiversity loss, climate change), insufficient energy and transport connections and uneven socio-economic development. There is a need for better coordination and cooperation between the countries and key players to address these challenges.

Background

The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region

A strategy to boost the development of the Danube Region was proposed by the European Commission on 8 December 2010. On 13 April 2011 the European Council welcomed the innovative and integrated approach in addressing common challenges in the region and underlined that the EU Strategy for the Danube Region has a strategic framework guided by the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The Council stressed the importance of due involvement of all EU Member States and all interested stakeholders on transnational, regional and local level, as appropriate, in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The European Council endorsed the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in June 2011 calling on all relevant actors to implement it without delay.

About the JRC

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is the European Commission's in-house science service. Its mission is to provide customer-driven scientific and technical support for the conception, development, implementation and monitoring of European Union policies. The JRC serves the common interest of the Member States, while being independent of special interests, whether private or national.

About the Academies of Sciences

The competences of the Academies of Sciences cover a vast number of research areas and their activities are dedicated to the development of science in conformity with their countries' national interests and promotion and enhancement of the intellectual and material wealth of their nations.

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