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Report on the priorities of the Trans-European Networks for Transport

Specific input with regard to

Project N° 2: Removing bottlenecks on the Rhine-Main-Danube link

Priority project No. 2 calls for a minimum *draught* of 2.5 metres along the entire length of the waterway.

This is significantly different than the recommendations of the Danube Commission¹ (1988), to which Danube countries have already agreed, which speaks of a minimum *total depth* (i.e. draught plus negative surge) of the Danube waterway of 2.5 metres for free-flowing conditions over gravel ground over 350 days per year (94% of the year).

A minimum draught of 2.5 metres on 350 days per year would require significant modifications along large parts (1000 km or more) of the Danube waterway, and would have significant negative – even disastrous – impacts on, among others:

- the valuable wetland areas between Vienna and Bratislava, including the Danube National Park in Austria;
- large sections of the Danube in Hungary, including the Danube-Drava National Park;
- the most valuable intact stretches along the lower Danube between Bulgaria and Romania, including hundreds of islands.
- numerous existing and candidate Natura 2000 sites along the Danube, thus contravening the Birds and Habitats Directives;
- the ecological and chemical status of the waterway, thus contravening the Water Framework Directive.

For these reasons, we recommend that:

No further artificial deepening of the Danube waterway be permitted beyond existing requirements recommended by the Danube Commission (1988), i.e. 2.5 metres for free-flowing conditions over gravel ground on 350 days per year.

¹ Danube Commission: Empfehlungen bezüglich der Aufstellung von Regelmassnahmen fuer die Schifffahrtsrinne sowie den wasserbaulichen und sonstigen Ausbau der Donau, Budapest, 1988.