

**DECLARATION**  
**On the Establishment of the**  
**Danube Co-operation Process**

1. The Republic of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Czech Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Slovenia, Ukraine and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as the States from the hydrological basin of Danube (hereinafter referred to as Danubian countries), the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe,
2. *Considering* that, for the first time in history, these countries share the same democratic principles and values,
3. *Recognising* that all the Danubian countries, EU member States, candidates for accession to the Union, countries taking part at various stages in the Stabilisation and Association process and countries anchored to the EU through other specific ties, wish to co-operate to help bring stability, prosperity and better economic and social cohesion to the entire region,
4. *Noting* that building prosperous societies in all these countries will in part depend on good bilateral and regional co-operation,
5. *Noting* that the natural flow of the Danube, from its origin in the very heart of Europe to the Black Sea, clearly shows this European waterway's potential as a force for integration and observing that it has always been inextricably part of Europe's history, evolution, and that it will continue to be so in the future,

6. *Taking into account* the existing momentum, in favour of broadening co-operation in the Danube region, and noting recent various initiatives as well as the results already achieved in this field,
7. *Considering* that the new political conditions in the Danube region are conducive to better co-operation among the countries of the area, as an additional contribution to the process of building the European identity,
8. *Aware* of the fact that, through common action, these can contribute to the development and the prosperity of Europe, as well as to overall European security,
9. *Noting* with satisfaction the decisive steps taken to reach the full reestablishment of free navigation at Novi Sad, which will be a valuable contribution to the development of the potential of the Danube and the Danube region,
10. *Recognising* the important and continuing role of the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in enhancing cooperation among the countries from the Danube region,
11. *Acknowledging* also the responsibilities and the work of the Danube Commission and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River in their respective fields of activities,
12. *Welcoming* the initiatives of various organisations aiming at promoting sustainable development in the area, like, for instance, the Council of Europe initiative for the quinculateral co-operation in the Tisa river basin or the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe initiative on the Sava river basin,
13. *Stressing* that the regional character of co-operation in the Danube region is a vital tool for the development of the whole region,

## AGREE TO

14. *broaden and deepen* present Danube co-operation and give to it clear political and economic dimensions, without creating new institutions, but taking stock of and using the existing structures and, where necessary, harmonising their objectives and efforts, providing a focus, where appropriate, for their efforts within the Danube region;
15. *address* common concerns, interests and objectives of all the Danubian countries;
16. *highlight* issues related to Europe and the European integration process, which are of great importance to the Danubian countries;
17. *develop* further the various initiatives already launched in different fields of present Danube co-operation, taking particular account of the regional objectives being pursued by the European Union and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe in the region and with a view to bringing greater coherence, pragmatism and added value to these;
18. *give* the Danube Co-operation Process (the Process) a multi-dimensional character, whose main feature shall be its *political dimension* which will establish priorities for action within the Process, in accordance with the specific objectives and concerns of the Danubian countries and which will provide the necessary impetus to effective implementation of various concrete forms of co-operation, as well as to improving the security of the region.

## FURTHER AGREE THAT

19. *co-operation* among the Danubian countries under the aegis of the Process towards sustainable development, should be pursued in the following fields:
  - the "*economic dimension*", with appropriate attention given to transport issues in their various forms, taking into account existing co-operation in particular the work in the framework of the Pan-European transport Corridor VII, and of Corridors IV, V and X connected to it;

- the “*navigation dimension*”, whose main core will be the activities developed under the responsibilities of the *Danube Commission* which should be supported in its efforts aiming at redrafting the 1948 Belgrade Convention;
- the “*environmental dimension*”, which will contribute to enhanced co-operation between the Danubian countries in the field of environmental protection, thereby adding value to the effective activity of the *International Commission for the Protection of the River Danube* in Vienna;
- the „*tourism dimension*“, which will develop the tourism potential of the region, from the source of the Danube to its Delta, including an appropriate role for agro-tourism and eco-tourism;
- the “*cultural dimension*”, which will promote the expression of each Danubian countries’ culture and help highlight the common cultural ties of the Danube region, stemming from our common history and different traditions;
- the “*sub-regional dimension*”, by which the Process shall encourage sub-regional initiatives and projects, such as developing the potential of the already existing Euro-regions of the Danube and establishing new Euro-regions or different forms of cross-border and interregional co-operation.

#### ARE DETERMINED THAT

20. the Process should not lead to duplication with other existing forms of co-operation in the region and its initiatives where relevant should be devised and implemented within the framework of priorities that have already been developed for the South-East European region, notably by the European Commission and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. The Process should add value to these existing efforts by providing a new channel for regional ideas and initiatives, thus focusing greater energies and resources at the Danube basin.

#### INVITE

21. all states which have genuine interests in the region and in activities initiated by the Process, as well as international organisations and financial institutions, to bring a valuable and practical contribution to the activities of the Process.

AGREE TO

22. establish a new framework for co-operation in the Danubian region, in the form of a constant process based on biennial conferences, at the level of ministers of foreign affairs of these countries.

DECIDE TO

23. convene the next high-level conference of the Danubian countries in Bucharest, in 2004.

Done in Vienna on May 27, 2002.