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ADDED VALUE AND NEED FOR MANAGING WATER RESOURCES AT RIVER BASIN LEVEL: LINKING NATIONAL WITH INTER-STATE /TRANS-BOUNDARY RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION



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- **Water is a key asset for life and economy => an issue of particular public and political attention in AT**
- **Overriding goals in AT:**
 - to secure availability of water in appropriate quality for all sustainable and equitable uses
 - to protect against natural hazards,
 - to keep balance between equitable uses + needs of environment
- **Waters can be managed efficiently only in an integrated way – Clear need to cooperate across sectors and across borders**
- **Approaches + solutions have to be developed with care + tailored to situation in place! => Case AT**

INTRODUCTION



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Structure of presentation

Austria

- **Facts**
- **Challenges**
- **Approaches**

Management at bilateral +international river basin level:

- **Motivation AT to cooperate,**
- **Results achieved by successfull transboundary cooperation**

AUSTRIA – FACTS



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AUSTRIA

Population: 8.3 Mio inh.
Area: 83.871 km²
Density: 100 inh. /km²
Capital Vienna: 1.8 Mio inh.

- Member to EU
 - 9 federal states
 - 3 international river basins
 - 8 neighbouring countries
 - Mainly “upstream country”
-
- 100% access to water and sanitation
 - High share of hydropower
 - Abundant water know how in place



Achievements in water management in AT - Result of integrated management across sectors and borders + priorisations

- **100% access to water and sanitation; drinking water from tap in best quality without prior removal of pollutants!**
- **100% of waste water treated => all lakes in bathing water quality**



Achievements in water management in AT:

- Instruments in place to reconcile uses (e.g. HP) with river ecology
- River ecology is continuously improved
- Broad range of instruments in place to manage natural hazards



Central government: mainly legislation (and steering)

9 Federal States: mainly executing tasks; issuing+control of permits, triggering projects

Traditional steering instruments of a central government:

1. National Water Act + secondary legislation

Quality objectives for drinking water, waste water discharges, water quality

2. Commissions, informal platforms, ... to coordinate

3. Appropriate tools to push priorities

a. Financial supports to set water infrastructure in place, restore river continuity

b. Declaration (of hydropower development) as overriding public interest...

c.

AUSTRIA - CHALLENGES



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Situation end 80ies, begin of 90ies:

Considerable progress achieved (water supply and sanitation, development of hydropower -high share domestic electricity demand covered, flood defences..) **but**

Growing awareness of new challenges

- **“Alienation“ of water administrations of central + regional level**
 - **Differences in approaches between Federal States**
 - **Severe impacts of local action downstream**
 - **Increasingly insufficient data basis to shape policies**
 - **New opportunities in forecasts; shift of flood risk downstream ...**
- => Obvious need for enhanced planning** going beyond local scale

AUSTRIA- CHALLENGES



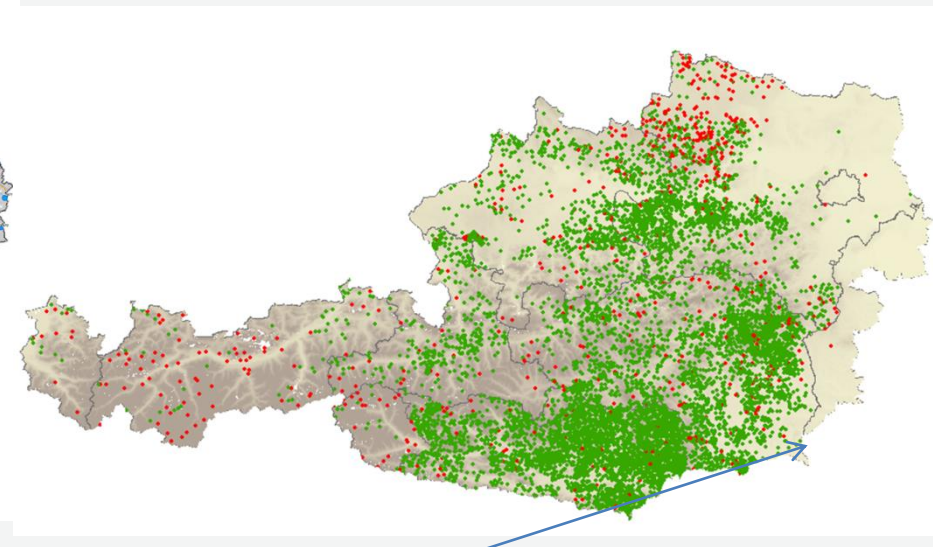
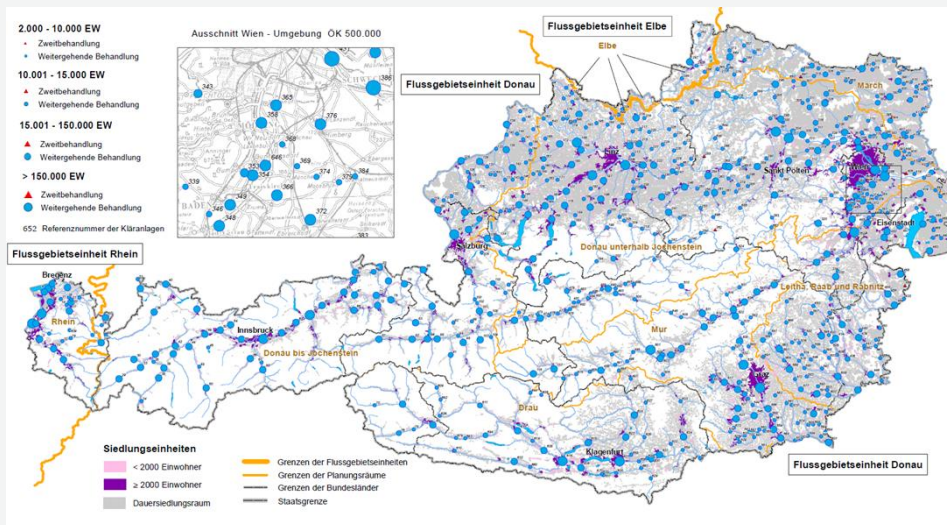
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**100% of waste water treated in line with ambitious standards, but
Marked differences between Federal States in approach**

**635 UWWTP > 2000 p.e., mostly
advanced treatment**

Allocation of ~ 6,000 funded small-sized sewage plants

- UWWTP < 50 p.e.
- UWWTP 50 - 500 p.e.



**Different approaches for small settlements
on both sides of an administrative border !**

AUSTRIA - CHALLENGES



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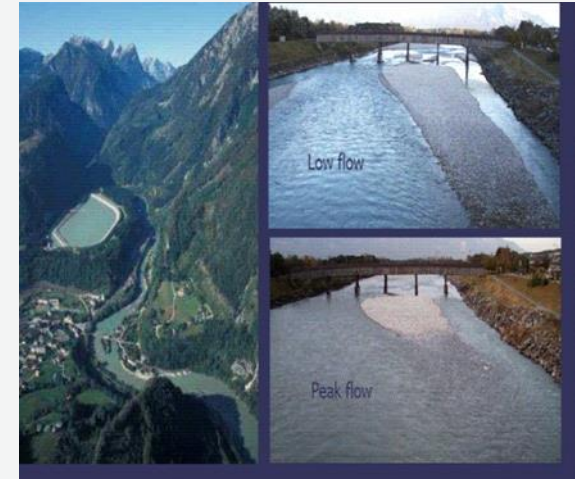
Awareness of impacts of local actions



**Signif. morpholog.-
alterations: 30%**



Missing Eflow: 10%



Hydropeaking: 1,6%



Migration barriers: 33000 (1/km)
ca. 10% due to hydropower



Impoundments 4%



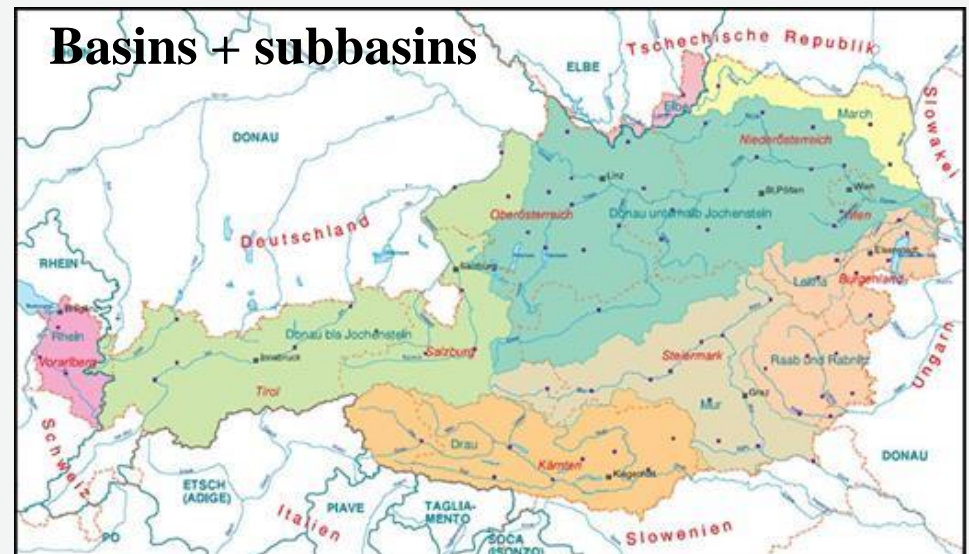
Hydropeaking Stranded fish

AUSTRIA- CHALLENGES



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Adding to challenges:
Federal states do not coincide
with river basins (mainly
Danube) and sub basins !



- **New instrument: river basin management plans (EUdriven)**
- **Monitoring of water quality** with a comprehensive set of parameters; **costs shared** by central government and federal states in order to enhance shared ownership (2:1); **central data base** run by central government;
- **Close info gaps => Central data registers** (pressures, impacts, status of waters...) – Water Information System Austria; delegated to Federal Environmental Agency; basis for national reports, shaping of policies, meeting reporting obligations to EC + EEA
- **Legal obligation to coordinate** with neighbouring countries and International River Commissions
- **enhance shared ownership**; regular meetings of WD; joint meetings of minister with regional ministers...

AUSTRIA - APPROACHES



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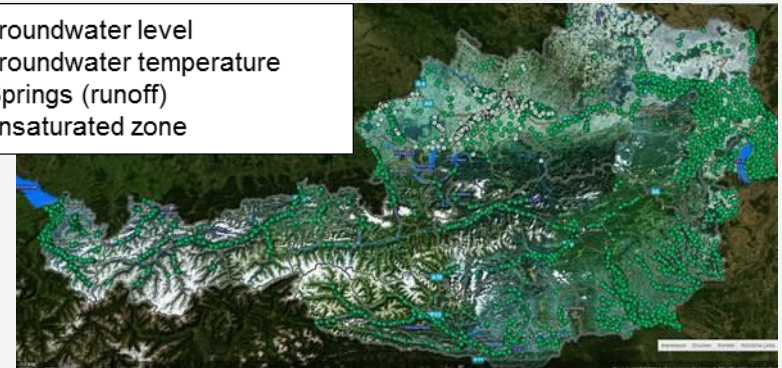
Quantity: Surface waters

800 gauges (water level)
700 for discharge observation
270 for water temperature
30 for suspended sediments



Groundwater

3050 Groundwater level
350 Groundwater temperature
73 Springs (runoff)
10 unsaturated zone

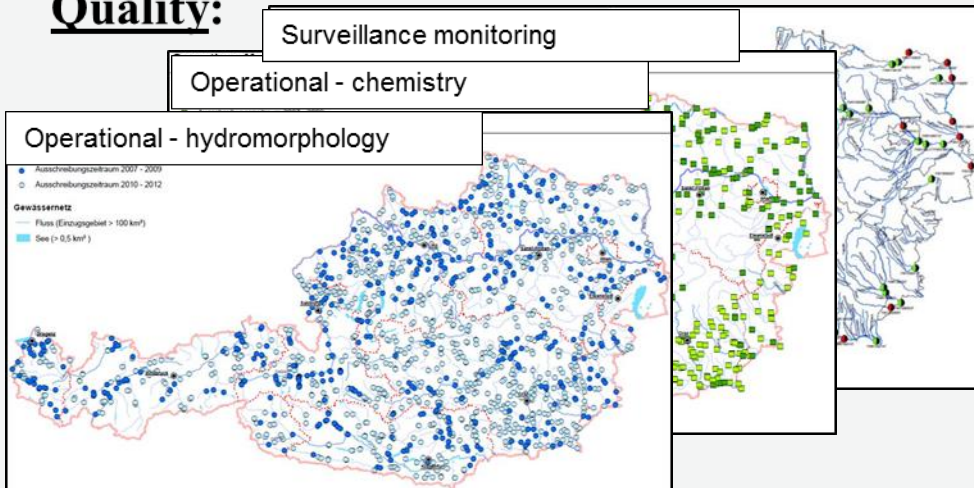


Quality:

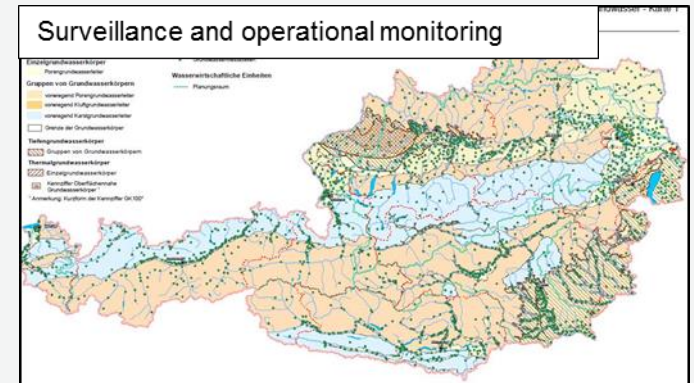
Surveillance monitoring

Operational - chemistry

Operational - hydromorphology



Surveillance and operational monitoring



River Basin Management –separate „river (sub)basin authority“ or coordination

- **Options carefully assessed at national level**
- **Clear preference to maintain „one stop shop principle“** (all main needs of citizens covered at one „stop“ from driving licence to passport, social support to issuing of water permits..., coordination in case of emergencies...)
- **Concerns about enhanced needs for coordination** due to „dislocation“ of water competence from other policy areas (agri, energy...)
- **No willingness to change competences in place!** at national level; strong opposition - in case of Danube, Rhine...- to delegate national competences to international RBD authorities - water seen in AT at all levels as key asset ! => **keep structures in place but enhance coordination**

Central gov. + federal states: obliged to elaborate management plans jointly– unique approach in EU tailored to our needs.

Cornerstones:

- **1 National RBMP to cover entire national share (territory of 8 Federal states) of Danube...**
- **Central government produces first draft** based on all info available at central level + on contacts with key stakeholders
- **Federal states get draft to complement and to correct within 6 months;** revised draft is returned to central government
- **Central government: public consultation, finalisation, adoption**

joint elaboration of management plans:

Central Government contributes

- a. Insight into EU + national water policy, into
- b. expectations from European Commission,
- c. agreements at level of International River Commissions + bilateral level,
- d. agreements with „roof organisations of stakeholders“...
- e. **Provides advanced draft with texts, tables, maps to ensure comparability across Federal States**

Federal States bring in their

- a. wealth of regional+local knowledge based on their permits + controls,
- b. Practical experiences with projects and solutions in order to shape program of measures

Process of „joint elaboration“ of RBMP ensures

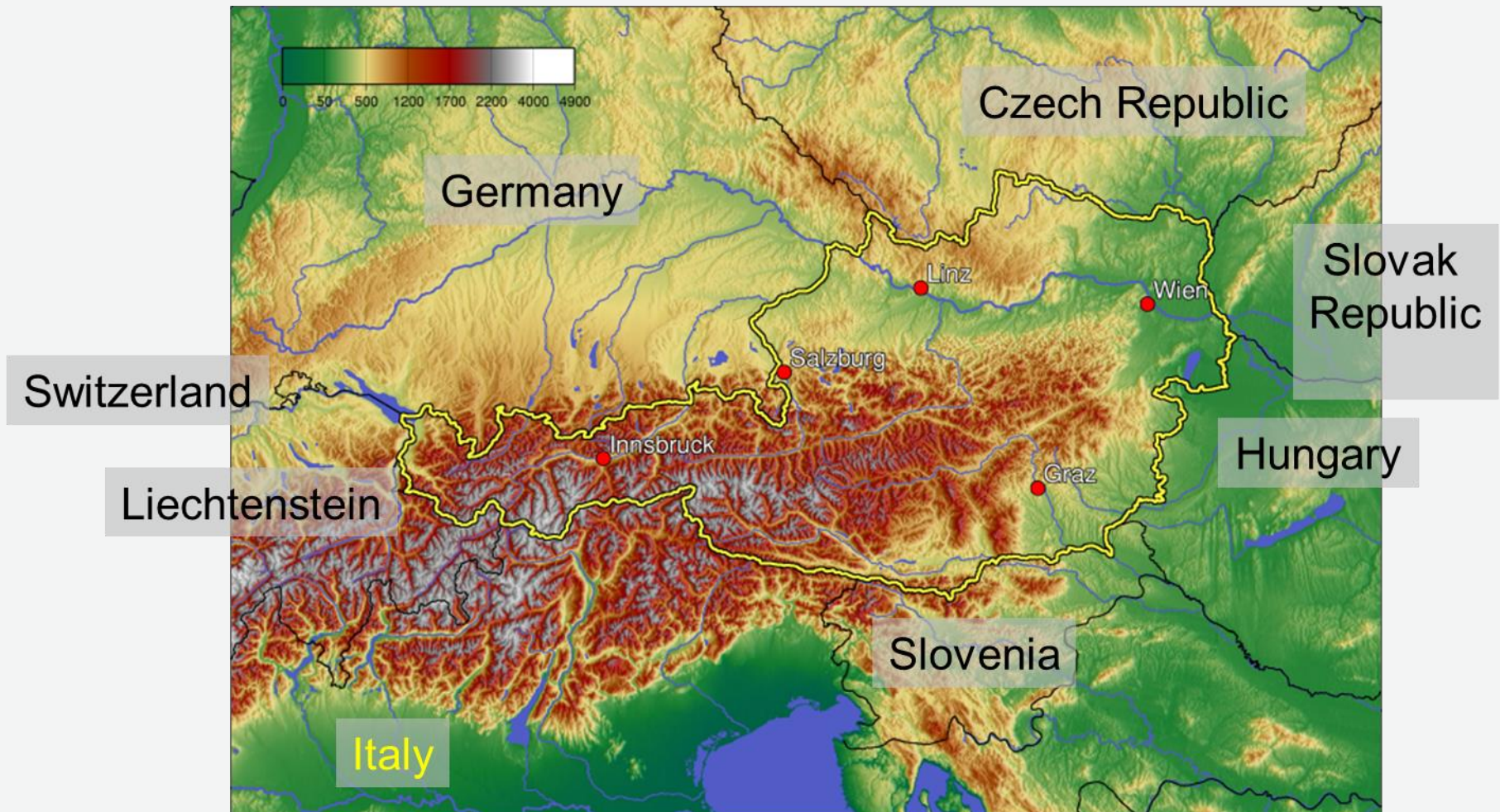
- **Shared ownership**
- **Management plans (MP): based on best info available;**
- **comparable depth of info +comparable ambition of PoM**
- **full transparency + comparability** across borders of Fed. States
- **Cooperation saves resources**,insight into needs of partner at both levels, improves mutual understanding + decision making, **central government:** “red tape” gets directly confronted with practice

AT – „BI + MULTILATERALS“



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transboundary water Commissions in place for all shared waters!
7 countries + Lake Constance (Switzerland, Germany, Austria)



INTERNAT. RIVER BASINS



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- **Austria shares 3 International River basins (Danube, Rhine, Elbe)**
- **AT partner to 3 International Commissions - steered by „water ministries“+ Foreign Offices**
- **Commissions are platforms for coordination of issues of basin wide relevance, but no „RB district authorities“ !**



- **Europ. Union is contracting party**
- **EU WFD obliges MS to set in place RBMP for entire basin**

AT – „BI+ MULTILATERALS“



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- **long tradition: Bilateral Transboundary Water Commissions** (several decades), **Int. River Commissions** (Rhine > 60 yrs, Danube > 20 yrs)
- **Starting point: reduction of pollution and flood defense; now all issues of interest to one partner may be dealt with**
- **Delegates at decision making level ; from central government + Federal State; nominated by central government + appointed by head of state;**
- **No decisions, but „proposals for decisions, resolutions“ to be approved by government (in AT: Council of ministers)**

AT – „BI+ MULTILATERALS“



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Added value to cooperate – same at national + bilateral level:

- **cooperation brings added value („no partner no solution“):** e.g. flood forecasts, emergency plans; joint programs to enhance retention of floods; early warning systems,, , for abatement of pollution; management of water availability
- **Formal Arguments** (comply with EU WFD, UNECE...)

Prerequisites for fruitful cooperations:

- **Mutual confidence + trust, shared interests / benefits,**
- **competent + motivated partners** as honest brokers ...
- **Enabling frame** (political commitment, legal basis, shared data – „EEA“, regular joint meetings, budgets ...)

AUSTRIA – „BILATERALS“



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Inspiring example: „Lake Constance Commission“

Major results:

International Lake Constance Commission

Restoration of lake quality by advanced waste water treatment in entire catchment

- All waste water treated appropriately; all agglomerations including small ones with appropriate treatment
- Pollution no major issue for waters
- Lakes in bathing water quality
- Lake Constance provides drinking water for Stuttgart



e.g. Lake Constance – conc. P



AT - MULTILATERALS



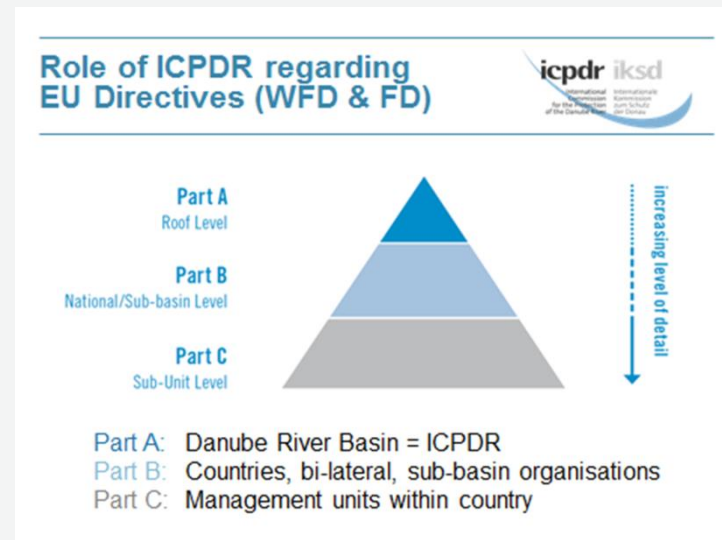
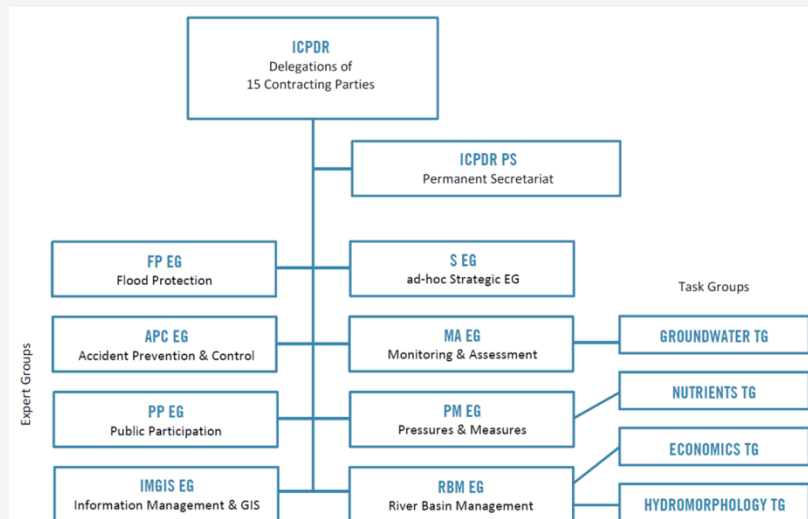
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International Cooperation provides

a. access to pool of expertise

- **ICPR- frontrunner** for chemicals, fish migration
- **ICPDR: frontrunner** for agreements across sectors; Joint Statement Navigation and Environment; Guiding Principles on Sustainable Hydropowergeneration...)

b. frame for national management plan + action



Int. cooperation – Intrastate Cooperation RBM plans; messages:

- **Roof part: covers entire basin, focuses on limited number of issues of basin wide relevance; elaborated in a joint effort**
- **Roof part- concept introduced by Austria in line with AT approach; contracting parties adopt; ministerial conference endorses + paves way**
- **Convene on long term vision to be put in place step by step**
- **Tailor level of detail to plan (focus of roof part on provision of general direction; all supporting details in plans of states /federal states)**
- **Added value: Plan at national level /federal state level can be drafted within frame of roof part without excessive coordination**
- **Reduce complexities, make contents „digestible“ for general public**
- **Speed delivers! Do not wait for final perfection; revolving cycle of revision is an opportunity to amend / improve**

Messages AT in a nutshell:

- **Clear need to cooperate** across sectors + administrative borders;
- **Many examples for benefits of having competent partners („no partner – no solution“)**
- **Inspiring examples of fruitful cooperation in place – to be developed with caution and tailored to situation in place**
- **Prerequisites: shared interests + benefits, enabling environment**
- **Central government: key to create enabling environment for cooperation** across sectors and administrative borders

MANAGING RESOURCES



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