



International Association
of Water Service Companies
in the Danube River
Catchment Area



**DANUBE
WATER
PROGRAM**

2024 DANUBE WATER FORUM

RIDING THE WAVE

Water Sector Innovations
for a new Climate Reality

29 – 30 May 2024
Braşov, Romania

Supported by:

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Finance

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Agriculture, Forestry, Regions
and Water Management

Co-organized by:



Hosted by:



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I. SESSION OVERVIEW

Business Meetings	Tuesday 28 May			
	09:00 – 10:30	IWA Board Meeting <i>IWA Hotel</i>	UBP Danube Hub Workshop <i>Room P. Drucker</i>	
	10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>		
	11:00 – 12:30	IWA Board Meeting <i>IWA Hotel</i>	UBP Danube Hub Workshop <i>Room P. Drucker</i>	
	12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
	13:30 – 15:00	IWA Board Meeting <i>IWA Hotel</i>	UBP Danube Hub Workshop <i>Room P. Drucker</i>	
	15:00 – 15:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>		
	15:30 – 17:00	IWA Board Meeting <i>IWA Hotel</i>	UBP Danube Hub Workshop <i>Room P. Drucker</i>	
	19:00	Joint Dinner (by invitation only)		
	Wednesday 29 May			
	09:00 – 12:00	IWA Board Meeting <i>IWA Hotel</i>	D-LeaP Committee Council Meeting <i>Room P. Drucker</i>	UBP Danube Hub Workshop <i>Field visit</i>
	12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
	13:00 – 14:30	Donors and IFI Roundtable <i>Room Al. Ries</i> Start: 12:45	IAWD General Assembly <i>Room P. Drucker</i>	Regulators Roundtable <i>Room P. Kotler</i>

2024 Danube Water Forum	Wednesday, 29 May		
	13:00	<i>DWF Registration</i>	
	15:00 – 16:30	2024 Danube Water Forum Opening Session <i>Ceremonies I</i>	
	16:30 – 18:00	Networking and Poster Session <i>Lobby/Exhibition Area</i>	
	19:00	<i>Conference Dinner</i> <i>Restaurant Belvedere, Brasov</i>	
	Thursday 30 May		
	08:00	<i>DWF Registration</i>	
	09:00 – 10:30	Setting the Scene: The sector's challenges in a new climate reality <i>Ceremonies I</i>	
	10:30 – 11:15	<i>Networking Coffee in Lobby/Exhibition Area</i>	
	11:15 – 12:15	Circling the drain – Trends in wastewater treatment, water reuse and circular economy (Pt. 1) <i>Ceremonies I</i>	Be prepared - Proactive management of water resources in a changing climate <i>Ceremonies II</i>
	12:15 – 13:15	Circling the drain – Trends in wastewater treatment, water reuse and circular economy (Pt. 2) <i>Ceremonies I</i>	Maximizing revenue, minimizing loss – Strategies for climate resilient water service delivery <i>Ceremonies II</i>
	13:15 – 14:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
	14:00 – 14:45	<i>Networking Coffee in Lobby/Exhibition Area</i>	
	14:45 – 15:45	Why work with water – Creative ways to engage and grow talent <i>Ceremonies I</i>	Back to the future - New approaches and technologies for sustainable utility management <i>Ceremonies II</i>
	15:45 – 16:45	Walk the talk - Enhancing water services through effective communication <i>Ceremonies I</i>	

II. ABOUT THE DWP

World Bank / IAWD Danube Water Program

The World Bank / IAWD Danube Water Program supports **smart policies, strong utilities and sustainable water and wastewater services** in the Danube region by partnering with regional, national and local stakeholders, promoting an informed policy dialogue around the sector's challenges and strengthening the technical and managerial capacity of the sector's utilities and institutions.

Governments and water professionals in the Danube region face a double challenge of meeting their citizens' demand for universal, good quality, efficient, and financially sound or - in one word - sustainable water and wastewater services, while catching up to the environmental requirements of the European Union *acquis communautaire*. To address this double challenge, the World Bank and the International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD) have partnered in the frame of the Danube Water Program, with financing from the Government of Austria.

The Danube Water Program was formally launched in May 2013 in partnership with line ministries, regulators, waterworks associations, and local government representatives of more than a dozen countries in South-East Europe. Since the launch of the Program, knowledge exchanges among more than a thousand sector professionals and policy makers in the region and beyond has taken place. In 2015 a State of the Sector report was launched (SoS 2015), and updated in 2018 (SoS 2018), which are flagship products of the Danube Water Program, next to additional analytical pieces exploring status and trends in wastewater management, rural water supply and sanitation, agglomeration of utilities and broader water security aspects. Capacity building programs benefiting over 500 utilities have been undertaken under the region wide Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) involving cooperation with all the national water utility associations. Numerous local initiatives worth more than € 1,000,000 through competitive grants have been supported.

www.iawd.at

www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water

www.danube-water-program.org

Danube Water Conference and Danube Water Forum

Since its start, the Danube Water Program has been working on the establishment of an international network of water sector institutions and experts, becoming a well-known resource for vitally needed capacity building, knowledge sharing, analytical and advisory services. In that context, the bi-annual Danube Water Conference (DWC) and Danube Water Forum (DWF) have become signature events for the Program and the Danube region and rotate on a yearly basis. While the DWC is hosted in Vienna (Austria), the DWF is organised in the region with the support of a strong partner. Both events serve as an international platform convening sector professionals from the Danube region and beyond to discuss the latest challenges and opportunities in the Danube region water sector.

Context and objective

Water and climate change are inextricably linked. Extreme weather events are making water more scarce, more unpredictable, more polluted or all three. These impacts throughout the water cycle threaten sustainable development, biodiversity, and people's access to water and sanitation. Water and wastewater utilities in the Danube region suffer from high energy costs, an aging workforce, a constant under investment into the sector, all while adapting to a new climate reality.

The Danube Water Forum will focus on the impact of a changing climate on the region's water sector with sessions exploring recent developments and their effects on utilities and highlighting best practice examples how to face them. The conference's objective is to foster cooperation and knowledge exchange to tackle the emerging challenges faced by the Danube region's water sector.

III. WEDNESDAY, MAY 29TH

2024 Danube Water Forum Opening Session

Date: Wednesday, 29 May 2024

Time: 15:00 – 16:30

Location: Ceremonies I

Chairs: Mr. Raimund Mair, World Bank and Dr. Katerina Schilling, IAWD

Context and objective

The opening and keynote session will feature welcoming words from senior representatives of the various institutions organizing, hosting and supporting the 2024 Danube Water Forum and provide an overview of the event's structure. It will be followed by a keynote speech and a panel discussion on the subject.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
15:00	10'	Introduction	Mr. Raimund Mair , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, DWP Program Leader, World Bank, Austria and Dr. Katerina Schilling , Head of Secretariat, IAWD, Austria
15:10	3'	Welcome words from the Austrian Ministry of Finance	Dr. Elisabeth Gruber , Director for International Financial Institutions, Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance, Austria
15:13	6'	Welcome words from the World Bank and IAWD	Dr. Winston Yu , Practice Manager, Water, Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, Austria and Mr. Walter Kling , President, IAWD, Austria
15:19	6'	Welcome words from the DWF hosts	Dr. Ilie Vlaicu , President, Romanian Water Association, Romania and Mr. Teodor Popa , Financial Manager, APA Brasov, Romania
15:25	9'	Welcome words from the romanian government and local authorities	Mr. Adrian-Ioan Vestea , Minister, Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration, Romania (tbc), Mr. Serban Todorica-Constantin , President, Brasov County Council, Romania and Mr. Allen Coliban , Mayor, Municipality of Brasov, Romania (tbc)
15:34	3'	Welcome words from the International Water Association	Mr. Tom Mollenkopf AO , Director and Independent Advisor, President and Board Member, International Water Association, UK
15:37	23'	Keynote: Water Sector Innovations for a new Climate Reality	Dr. Kala Vairavamoorthy , CEO, International Water Association, UK
16:00	25'	Framing the debate	moderated by Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr , Senior Expert, Austria

Time		Content	Speaker
			Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Kala Vairavamoorthy, CEO, International Water Association, UK - Dr. Winston Yu, Practice Manager, Water, Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, Austria - Mr. Gheorghe Constantin, Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests, Romania - Ms. Vera Eiro, Vice President, WAREG, Italy - Ms. Elsa Belba, YWP, Albania
16:25	5'	Launch of Waterwise EU campaign	Mr. Emil Andersen , Head of Unit, European Commission/ DG Environment, Belgium
16:30		End of session	

Networking and Poster Session

Date: Wednesday, 29 May 2024

Time: 16:30 – 18:00

Location: Lobby/Exhibition Area

Chair: Ms. Antonia Püspök, IAWD and Mr. Vasilije Matijasevic, YWP

Context and objective

For the second time the Danube Water Program Team has decided to open the Annual Regional Event to an even broader audience and encourage the submission of an outline paper for presentation. This session will highlight those submissions selected for poster presentations with short pitches by the presenters. There will be enough time to explore all posters, to engage with the presenters and network, while enjoying drinks.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
16:30	5'	Introduction	Ms. Antonia Püspök , Community Manager, IAWD and Vasilije Matijasevic , YWP, Serbia
16:35	25'	Poster Pitching	2 Minute Pitch for each Poster Presenters
17:00	60'	Drinks & Poster Networking	Individual exchange and networking with Poster Presenters
18:00		End of session	

Conference Dinner

Date: Wednesday, 29 May 2024

Time: 19:00-23:00

Location: Belvedere Restaurant: Brasov, Str. Stejerisului nr.11

[Restaurant Belvedere](#)

Logistics:

Shuttle buses are organized to leave from the Hotel Kronwell starting at 18:15 to take participants directly to the Belvedere Restaurant. The bus will make an additional stop in the city center to pick up guests staying in hotels located in the city center. For details about the location, please go to the Logistical Guidelines in the back of the brochure.

Context and objective

Next to interesting presentations and professional networking, the Danube Water Forum also includes opportunities for participants to enjoy themselves and socialize with fellow “water people” in a nice atmosphere. The Gala Dinner of the 2024 DWF will be hosted at the Belvedere Restaurant, a prime location, situated on the hills with wonderful views of the city of Brasov.

IV. THURSDAY, MAY 30TH

Setting the Scene: The Sector's challenges in a new climate reality

Date: Thursday, 30 May 2024

Time: 09:00 – 10:30

Location: Ceremonies I

Chair: Dr. Winston Yu, World Bank and Dr. Ula Rozman, YWP

Context and objective

The water sector faces unprecedented challenges as the impacts of climate change become increasingly evident. Extreme weather events, such as floods and droughts, are putting pressure and disrupt water services, threatening the sustainability of water resources, and exacerbating vulnerabilities in communities. The "Setting the Scene: The sector's challenges in a new climate reality" session at the Danube Water Forum will provide latest information on climate change related research and policy developments, aiming to deepen the understanding of the sector's challenges and explore adaptive strategies to ensure the resilience of water systems in the face of a changing climate.

Session structure

Time	Content	Speaker
09:00	5' Introduction	Dr. Winston Yu , Practice Manager, Water, Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, Austria and Dr. Ula Rozman , YWP, Slovenia
09:05	10' Climate change and droughts in the Danube region	Dr. Taher Kahil , Leader Water Security Research Group, International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA), Austria
09:15	15' Climate resilience in EU water service directives	Mr. Michel Sponar , Deputy Head of Unit, Marine Environment & Clean Water Services, Directorate General for the Environment, European Commission, Brussels
09:30	10' Role of regulation to strengthen climate resilient water services	Dr. Ivaylo Kastchiev , Director for Water and Sanitation Services, Energy and Water Regulatory Commission, Bulgaria
09:40	10' Moldova: Challenges in the Water Services Sector and EU Accession	Mr. Sergiu Tabacaru , Head of the Directorate for WSS policies, Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Moldova
09:50	10' Agile policy and institutional analysis and innovative regulatory models to boost sector reform	Mr. Camilo Lombana Cordoba & Regional Regulator , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, U.S.

Time		Content	Speaker
10:00	30'	Q&A	moderated by Dr. Winston Yu , Practice Manager, Water, Europe and Central Asia, World Bank, Austria and Dr. Ula Rozman , YWP, Slovenia
10:30		End of session	

Circling the drain – Trends in wastewater treatment, water reuse and circular economy

Date: Thursday, 30 May 2024

Time: 11:15 – 13:15

Location: Ceremonies I

Chairs: Dr. Enkelejda Gjinali, Polytechnic University of Tirana and Ms. Elsa Belba, YWP

Context and objective

Circular economy principles offer an opportunity to recognize and capture the full value of water as a service, an input to processes, a source of energy and a carrier of nutrients and other materials. Rethinking urban water through the circular economy and resilience lenses offers an opportunity to tackle emerging challenges by providing a systemic and transformative approach to delivering water supply and sanitation services in a more sustainable, inclusive, efficient, and resilient way. The session will highlight a new framework for water in a circular economy, introduce good practice examples and tackle challenging topics such as treatment of micropollutants and sludge management.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
11:15	5'	Introduction	Dr. Enkelejda Gjinali , Lecturer, Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania and Ms. Elsa Belba , YWP, Albania
11:20	15'	Water in a Circular Economy and Resilience (WICER) Framework	Dr. Diego Juan Rodriguez , Lead Economist, World Bank
11:35	15'	Turning wastewater into a resource – the example of Skopje	Ms. Lindita Shakiri , Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, North Macedonia
11:50	15'	Flowing with Nature: Sustainable Wastewater Solutions for small settlements	Ms. Alenka Zalaznik , Project Manager, Limnos, Slovenia
12:05	10'	Q&A	Dr. Enkelejda Gjinali , Lecturer, Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania and Ms. Elsa Belba , YWP, Albania
12:15	15'	Swiss experience quaternary treatment of wastewater	Mr. Simon Bitterwolf , Environmental Engineer, EAWAG, Switzerland
12:30	15'	Water reuse contributing to urban service water - the case of Madinaty WWTP	Mr. Erwin Moetz , CEO, WABAG Water Services SRL, Romania
12:45	15'	Feasibility study in support of future policy developments of the Sewage Sludge Directive	Dr. Lukas Egle , Project officer, Joint Research Center, Spain

Time	Content	Speaker
13:00	Q&A	Dr. Enkelejda Gjinali , Lecturer, Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania and Ms. Elsa Belba , YWP, Albania
13:15	End of Session	

Be prepared – Proactive management of water resources in a changing climate

Date: Thursday, 30 May 2024

Time: 11:15-12:15

Location: Ceremonies II

Chair: Ms. Kathia Havens, World Bank and Mr. Jakub Sochor, YWP

Context and objective

The impacts of climate change on water resources demand a shift towards proactive and adaptive management strategies. As climate patterns shift, the frequency and intensity of hydrological events are altering the landscape of water resource management, necessitating a forward-thinking approach to mitigate risks and embrace opportunities. The "Be Prepared: Proactive management of water resources in a changing climate" session at the Danube Water Forum will confront these challenges head-on. Participants will engage with insights on climate-related risks to water resources and deliberate on adaptation options, setting the stage for a more resilient and sustainable management paradigm to ensure water services delivery.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
11:15	5'	Introduction	Ms. Kathia Havens , Program Analyst, Danube Water Program, World Bank, Austria and Mr. Jakub Sochor , YWP, Czech Republic
11:20	15'	Romanian Drought Risk Assessment	Ms. Elena Daniela Ghita , Water Resources Management Specialist, World Bank, Romania
11:35	15'	Innovative managing of water resources from a supply perspective - the example of REWAG	Mr. Robert Greb , Chairman of the Board Regensburger Energie- und Wasserversorgung AG & Co KG (REWAG), Germany
11:50	15'	What the Future Has in Store: A New Paradigm for Water Storage	Ms. Eileen Burke , Lead Water Resources Management Specialist, World Bank, U.S.
12:05	10'	Q&A	moderated by Ms. Kathia Havens , Program Analyst, Danube Water Program, World Bank, Austria and Mr. Jakub Sochor , YWP, Czech Republic
12:15		End of session	

Maximizing revenue – Minimizing loss – Strategies for climate resilient water service delivery

Date: Thursday, 30 May 2024

Time: 12:15-13:15

Location: Ceremonies II

Chairs: Mr. Stjepan Gabric, World Bank and Ms. Klaudia Negyesi, YWP

Context and objective

Addressing the challenges of Non-Revenue Water (NRW) presents a significant opportunity for water utilities. At the upcoming Danube Water Forum, the session titled "Maximizing Revenue, Minimizing Loss: Strategies for Tackling Non-Revenue Water" will explore how reducing NRW not only mitigates financial losses but also strengthens the climate resilience of water systems. Through case studies and discussions, attendees will uncover innovative strategies and best practices aimed at minimizing water loss, optimizing infrastructure, and maximizing revenue. This session provides a platform to delve into one of the most pressing challenges faced by water utilities, offering insights into sustainable solutions for a more resilient water future.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
12:15	5'	Introduction	Mr. Stjepan Gabric , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Klaudia Negyesi , YWP, Hungary
12:20	10'	Utility Drought Risk Assessment	Ms. Olivia Becher , Researcher, University of Oxford, UK
12:30	10'	Challenges and Opportunities to tackle Non-Revenue Water in Bulgaria	Mr. Ivan Ivanov , President Bulgarian Water Association, Bulgaria
12:40	10'	Navigating Water Loss & Enhancing Resilience in Croatia	Ms. Vesna Grizelj Simic , Deputy Director, Hidroprojekt-Ing d.o.o., Croatia
12:50	10'	Performance Based Contracting as a tool to improve service efficiency	Ms. Ana Rita Santos , Coordinator of the Water Services Engineering Sector, AGS Water Solutions RAJA S.A., Portugal
13:00	15'	Q&A	moderated by Mr. Stjepan Gabric , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Klaudia Negyesi , YWP, Hungary
13:15		End of session	

Why work with water – Creative ways to engage and grow talent

Date: Thursday, 30 May 2024

Time: 14:45– 15:45

Location: Ceremonies 1

Chairs: Elisabeta Poci, IAWD and Ms. Monika Sabic Runjavec, YWP

Context and objective

This session is centered around the intersection of youth and water. It aims to highlight the obstacles faced by young individuals, especially young women, when pursuing careers in the water sector. Moreover, it will showcase approaches to fostering an inclusive environment that empowers young professionals to thrive in the water sector, emphasizing the significance and benefits of cultivating a diverse workforce.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
14:45	5'	Introduction	Ms. Elisabeta Poci , Association Development Manager, IAWD and Ms. Monika Sabic Runjavec , YWP
14:50	10'	Exploring options & strategies to attract young talents into water sector	Mr. Camilo Lombana Cordoba , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, U.S.
15:00	10'	Personal reflections on navigating the water sector workforce as a young female engineer	Ms. Fjolla Lasku , Head of Waste Water Treatment Plant, KRU "Gjakova" SH.A, Kosovo
15:10	10'	Attracting and retaining young talent – the example of APA Brasov	Mr. Teodor Popa , Financial Manager, APA Brasov, Romania
15:20	10'	Women in Water Project – How to support everyone's contribution	Ms. Arlinda Ibrahimllari , Representative of the IWA "Sustainability in the Water Sector" Specialist Group, Canada
15:30	15'	Q&A	moderated by Ms. Elisabeta Poci , Association Development Manager, IAWD and Ms. Monika Sabic Runjavec , YWP
15:45		End of session	

Back to the future – New approaches and technologies for sustainable utility management

Date: Thursday, 30 May

Time: 14:45 – 15:45

Location: Ceremonies II

Chair: Mr. Radoslav Russev, Wadata and Mr. Christian Gradwohl, YWP

Context and objective

Water utilities face increasing challenges due to climate change, rising cost, aging workforce, all while improving performance and aligning with the EU acquis. To achieve sustainable and resilient water services, they need to embrace innovative technologies and strategies to tackle water loss, reduce energy consumption, increase billing and collection and improve overall service delivery. The session will feature presentations from the Utility of the Future – Center of Excellence, utility managers and other experts followed by a Q&A session with the audience.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
14:45	5'	Introduction	Mr. Radoslav Russev , UMT Coordinator, Wadata, Bulgaria and Mr. Christian Gradwohl , YWP, Austria
14:50	10'	Utility of the Future: Igniting processes, transformation and behavioral change in water and sanitation utilities to accelerate universal access	Mr. Federico Perez Penalosa , Senior Water and Sanitation Consultant, World Bank, Albania
15:00	10'	UMT Graduation Project: Remote measurement of water consumption by end users based on the LoRaWAN standard	Ms. Ivana Torbica , Investment, Development and Project Engineer, PU Vodovod Gradiska, Bosnia and Herzegovina
15:10	10'	The seeds of innovation in Sofiyska Voda, part of Veolia	Mr. Lyubomir Filipov , Strategic partnerships and regulation Director, Sofia Water, Bulgaria
15:20	10'	Development of Aqua Monitor – a digitalisation project driven by YWP-K	Mr. Veprim Jasharaj , Senior Software Developer, YWP-K, Kosovo
15:30	15'	Q&A	moderated by Mr. Radoslav Russev , UMT Coordinator, Bulgaria and Mr. Christian Gradwohl , YWP, Austria
15:45		End of session	

Walk the talk – Enhancing water services through effective communication & 2024 Danube Water Forum Closing

Date: Thursday 30 May 2024

Time: 15:45 – 16:45

Location: Ceremonies I

Chairs: Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr

Context and objective

This session focuses on communication as important tool to guarantee sustainable water services. It will also summarize the key messages delivered from a young perspective and finally conclude the 2024 Danube Water Forum.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
15:45	5'	Introduction	Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr , Senior Expert, Austria
15:50	15'	Improving Service Delivery: The role of Communications Professionals	Ms. Ana Badhofer , Partnership and Engagement Officer, IAWD, Austria
16:05	15'	GWP CEE Summer school – a good practice example of youth engagement and cooperation	Mr. Ionut Procop , President, GWP Romania, Romania
16:20	15'	The young perspective – voices of the YWP co-moderators	moderated by Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr , Senior Expert, Austria
16:35	5'	Farewell by the hosts	Dr. Ilie Vlaicu , President, Romanian Water Association, Romania, and Mr. Teodor Popa , Financial Manager, APA Brasov, Romania
16:40	5'	Closing of the 2024 Danube Water Forum	Dr. Katerina Schilling , Head of Secretariat, IAWD, Austria and Ms. Kathia Havens , Program Analyst, World Bank, Austria
16:45		End of session	

V. SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

- ▶ **Ms. Ana Badhofer** joined IAWD in 2024 as part of the collaboration with the New International Benchmarking Network (NewIBNET). She supports IAWD's external relations to benchmarking activities, such as the Utility Benchmarking Program. As the Partnership & Engagement officer she is creating awareness of data services and makes joining NewIBNET an attractive value proposition. In her position, Ana ensures an easy flow of information and learnings across the community and overall strengthening of relations between partners. Before joining IAWD, Ana worked as a Consultant for the World Bank Group. In this position she has been supporting the Danube Water Program since July 2022, and the Climate Support Facility since October 2023. She holds a Master's degree in Environmental Technologies and International Affairs at the Technical University and the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, and a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the Vienna University of Economics and Business.

- ▶ **Mr. Dan Barbulescu** is the director and founding member of the Văcărești Natural Park Association. From this position, he coordinated the establishment of the first natural park located in an urban environment in Romania, at Văcărești. He holds a Bachelor's degree in History, a Master's degree in Public Policy, and is currently a Ph.D. student at the Faculty of Biology, University of Bucharest. Since 2021, he has been a member of the Romanian Advisory Council for Sustainable Development.

- ▶ **Ms. Olivia Becher** is currently completing her Ph.D. at the University of Oxford. She specializes in water management and climate adaptation. Her academic research is focused on quantifying the risks that climate extremes (droughts, floods and cyclones) under baseline and climate change conditions, and that pose to water service providers in order to prioritize climate adaptation strategies in the potable water sector. Other projects include conducting climate risk assessments to critical infrastructure services, accounting for associated welfare impacts, and estimating adaptation investment needs in water and wastewater sectors.

- ▶ **Ms. Elsa Belba** is a hydrotechnical engineer with two years of experience working at the Tirana Water and Wastewater Utility, followed by three years now at the National Agency of Water Supply, Wastewater and Waste Infrastructure (AKUM) where she is currently employed. Ms. Belba is also a representative of AKUM in the Supervisory Council of Elbasan Regional Water and Wastewater Company, after the very important reform in Water Sector led by AKUM. She recognizes the importance of the shortfalls issue of human resources in the water industry, particularly among young professionals. Recently, she joined the Albanian Young Water Professionals group, aiming to establish a strong structure that attracts and supports young professionals in the water sector and ensures a sustainable future for water management. Ms. Belba holds diplomas in Hydrotechnical Engineering from the Polytechnic University of Tirana and in Water Supply Engineering from the Epoka University.



- ▶ **Mr. Simon Bitterwolf** pursued his studies in environmental engineering in Stuttgart, Germany, with a specialization in wastewater treatment. He gained seven years of experience planning wastewater treatment plants for an engineering office in St. Gallen, Switzerland. His focus was the treatment of organic micropollutants in municipal wastewater. In 2024, he joined the Platform Process Engineering for Micropollutants of the Swiss Water Association (VSA). Since the beginning of the upgrading of Swiss wastewater treatment, they advance and transfer knowledge and facilitate collaboration among stakeholders (research, WWTP operators, and public authorities). They run their own research projects and accompany many more. Always keeping up to date on new processes and the status of Swiss wastewater treatment.
- ▶ **Mr. Madalin Bratu** stands out as a seasoned professional in the cybersecurity domain, with a robust background that bridges cybersecurity, IT service management, process enhancement, as well as maintenance of cutting-edge hardware and software solutions. With over a decade of pivotal roles at IBM, Atos / Eviden, Madalin has contributed to some of the most advanced service initiatives globally and in Central and Eastern Europe, demonstrating a profound capacity for technical innovation and strategic foresight. He spearheads transformative global cybersecurity managed security services projects. Madalin's expertise extends deeply into the regulatory aspects of cybersecurity. His hands-on experience as both an auditor and a consultant has positioned him uniquely to navigate the complexities of the NIS Directive. He provided and provides cybersecurity consulting services for ones of the largest water operators in Romania. With his strategic insights and practical experience, Madalin is poised to offer valuable perspectives on managing and maintaining long-term compliance with the NIS2 Directive, overcoming related challenges, ensuring third-party and supply chain adherence, and implementing best practices in cybersecurity strategies.
- ▶ **Ms. Eileen Burke** is the Global Lead for the Water Resources at the World Bank. She has led Bank transboundary waters initiatives in the Mekong and Nile Basins. In addition, she has worked on national level water resources programs in Africa, South Asia, and East Asia. Eileen co-led the global study on *What the Future Has in Store: A New Paradigm for Water Storage*. She also leads the Bank's Global Solutions Group for Water Resources Management, including working with World Bank teams globally to improve the impact of water resources activities in the Bank's \$24 billion investment portfolio. Prior to joining the World Bank, Eileen worked at the Millennium Challenge Corporation and in Public Finance on Wall Street. Eileen holds a master's degree in international Affairs from Princeton University and received her Bachelor of Arts from Yale University. Eileen was also a proud resident of the Danube basin from 2001-2003.



- ▶ **Dr. Mariana Damova** is the CEO of Mozaika, a company providing research and solutions in the field of data science, natural interfaces, and human insight that specializes in building semantic information infrastructures in different verticals, such as business information delivery, human resources management, cultural heritage, earth observation, water resources management, and sells data as a service, intelligence as a service and research and development. Her background is in natural language processing, Semantic Web Technologies and AI, with strong academic and industrial record in North America and Europe, as C-level executive. She has taught graduate courses, conducted research at several universities in Europe and North America, lead international interdisciplinary teams with projects on various facets of knowledge management that carried technological risk, such as Virtual Customer Service Representative, Speech to speech machine translation, Search engine based on linguistic principles, Voice enabled emotion recognition, Expert system supporting child protection services also there, and acquired the ability to leverage marketing requirements with knowledge intense technological solutions. At Mozaika she drives the strategy and the projects from management and engineering stand point, and has acquired customers such as the European Space Agency, the European Commission, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia Municipality, Rittal GmbH, the German-Bulgarian Chamber of Industry and Commerce and partners from a large range of European academic institutions and private sector companies to execute innovative projects with disruptive edge. Dr. Damova holds a PhD from the University of Stuttgart, Germany, and a mini MBA from McGill University, Canada.



- ▶ **Dr. Lukas Egle** joined the Joint Research Center of the EU Commission in Seville September 2021. In his position as Project officer he is involved in addressing aspects related circular economy of solid wastes but also sewage sludge. In his previous occupations at the Technical University of Vienna and the City of Vienna (Waste management Department), he was working among other things on the topic of sewage sludge management and the implementation of full-scale phosphorus recovery from the sewage sludge ashes of the City of Vienna. Mr. Egle holds a master diploma in Environmental Engineering from the University of Applied Life Sciences Vienna and a PhD in Environmental Engineering from the Technical University Vienna.



- ▶ **Ms. Vera Eiro** is a Public Law and Regulatory Expert in Portugal. She was executive Board Member at ERSAR and is now the President of the Board of Directors of ERSAR. She is a Public Law Professor since 2012 and her research and teaching areas in the academia cover Regulation, Administrative Law, Public Procurement and Planning Law. Until November 2020, she was a Counsel and Head of Public Law and Regulatory in the Finance department at Linklaters LLP (Lisbon office) having also worked at Linklaters LLP Paris office (2004). Her practice focused on public procurement and administrative, environmental, energy and planning laws. As a legal practitioner, she has over 15 years of experience in providing legal advice in regulatory and public law issues relevant to project finance, litigation and M&A transactions, in highly regulated sectors.



- ▶ **Mr. Lyubomir Filipov** serves as a Board member and a Vice-president of the International association of water service companies in the Danube river catchment area (IAWD). In parallel, he is Strategic partnerships and regulation Director at Sofiyska voda, part of Veolia where he is responsible for the public and regulatory affairs, innovations and the overall management of the company's Concession contract. Sofiyska voda JSC provides water supply, sewerage and waste water treatment services to the capital city of Bulgaria - Sofia with a population of 1.5 million people. Previously, Mr. Filipov was part of the Bulgarian State administration with the Ministry of finance and Council of ministers where he was dealing with EU funding, financial engineering instruments and public-private partnerships.
- ▶ **Mr. Stjepan Gabric** holds an MSc in wastewater engineering from IHE Delft (The Netherlands). For 25 years, out of which 18 years in the World Bank, he has been involved in a design, implementation and planning of a wide range of water and wastewater projects in Europe and Central Asia, and analytical studies mainly in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. He is core member of World Bank Danube Water Program (DWP) team since 2014 and is currently involved in preparation and implementation of World Bank water operations in Belarus, Russian Federation and the Western Balkans.
- ▶ **Ms. Elena Daniela Ghita** is a Water Resources Management Specialist working for the World Bank since 2019, with over 15 years of experience in water resource management, primarily focused on hydraulic modeling and implementing the European Floods Directive. Under the World Bank programs umbrella, she was involved in projects related to drought risk assessment, integration of flood risk management into urban and spatial planning, development of an economic mechanism for sustainable financing of water infrastructure for National Administration „Romanian Waters” etc. She holds a master degree in Hydropower and Technical Hydraulics and in Analysis and Expertise of Environmental Risks.
- ▶ **Dr. Enkelejda Gjinali** joined the Department of Environmental Engineering and Hydrotechnics at the Polytechnic University of Tirana as lecturer in the same year of her graduation, 1992. With 31 years of experience, Prof. Gjinali has played a pivotal role in advancing the water sector in Albania and the Western Balkans. She has provided expertise at various water sectors, research, and governance levels throughout her career, contributing to, legal, financial, scientific and technical reforms. Prof. Gjinali is the Lead National Expert on the transposition and implementation of EU Water Directives under Chapter 27, "Environment and climate change," capacity building in Integrated Water Resources Management and transboundary cooperations in Albania and is the Godfather of SHUKALB. Prof. Gjinali holds diplomas in Hydrotechnic Engineering from the Polytechnic University of Tirana, Albania (1992) and Environmental Engineering from École Nationale Supérieure D'ingénieurs de Poitiers, France (1995).



- ▶ **Mr. Christian Gradwohl** studied Journalism and Media Management 2008-2011 at the FH Wien and Water Management and Environmental Engineering 2014-2021 at the BOKU Wien - University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences. Specializing in drinking water technologies Mr. Gradwohl worked on Building Information Modeling in water supply systems, activated carbon in water treatment and well water collection. Since 2016 Mr. Gradwohl has been working for civil engineering companies and public organizations in the whole project cycle of water supply, wastewater management and rain water management.



- ▶ **Dr. Robert Greb** has been CEO of REWAG Regensburger Energie- und Wasserversorgung AG und Co KG since April 2023. He studied industrial engineering in Berlin and has worked for companies including Mannheim-based MVV Energie AG, Freiburg-based badenova GmbH & Co KG and as Managing Director of Stadtwerke Delitzsch. REWAG supplies over 200,000 customers in and around Regensburg with electricity, natural gas, heat and drinking water. Since 2023 Mr. Greb is a member of the IAWD Board.



- ▶ **Ms. Vesna Grizelj Simic** has over 20 years of experience in the public and private sectors related to water management. Her main specialist fields include expertise in implementation of the EU water acquis, extensive experience in the preparation of national water management programs and projects which provide requirements for the use of financial support for the implementation of projects through EU funds. She has extensive experience in the implementation of infrastructure projects financed by IFIs as well as expertise in the affordability assessments at national and project levels and good insight into national policy in bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. Ms. Grizelj Simic is currently working as Deputy Director at Hidroprojekt-Ing Ltds in Croatia.



- ▶ **Dr. Elisabeth Gruber** is Director of the Department of International Financial Institutions at the Austrian Ministry of Finance in Vienna since 2017. Previously, she was Senior Advisor at the same department responsible for the World Bank Group portfolio and working on issues related to multilateral development finance. From 2008 to 2010 she served as Alternate Executive Director at the Inter-American Development Bank in Washington, DC. Prior to this, she was dealing with policy issues of the Asian and the Inter-American Development Bank and was responsible for multilateral debt relief at the Ministry of Finance in Vienna. Before joining the Ministry of Finance, she worked for nine years as University Assistant at the Department of Economic Development at the University of Economics in Vienna. She graduated in Business Administration and holds a Doctoral Degree in Development Economics from the University of Economics in Vienna. She also earned a Diploma of International Relations from the Johns Hopkins University in Bologna, Italy.



- ▶ **Ms. Kathia Havens** joined the World Bank in 2015 and the Danube Water Program in October 2019, supporting the roll out of Water Security analytical and advisory activities and overall program administration. Prior to joining the Program, Ms. Havens served as a technical specialist to the Global Water Partnership (GWP, 2018-2019) and the World Bank Water Global Practice (2015-2018). At GWP, Ms. Havens supported the transboundary water program: working on regional capacity building workshops on international water law and governance and the development of the organizations' programmatic approach to transboundary water management. Prior experience at the World Bank includes technical and programmatic support in the fields of transboundary water management, global water security, nature-based solutions, and agricultural water productivity. Ms. Havens holds a Masters in International Environmental Policy from the Fletcher School of Law in Diplomacy.

- ▶ **Ms. Arlinda Ibrahimllari** is a member of the Management Committee of the International Water Association's Specialist Group on Sustainability in the Water Sector, as well as an International Water Association Fellow. She has worked in the water and sanitation industry both as an employee (with a management role in operations) and as a professional consultant. Her focus is on best workforce management practices, as well as empowering women in the water sector and increasing opportunities for Young Water Professionals.

- ▶ **Mr. Dimitar Ivanov** is an entrepreneur with a focus on the utilities sector and, more specifically, water supply and sanitation. In recent years he is the conceptualiser behind the Utility Digital Innovation Hub - an EU-backed competence center supporting the digitalization of utilities. Alongside digitalization Dimitar is experienced in management, turnaround situations and commercial strengthening of water utilities.

- ▶ **Mr. Ivan Ivanov** has over 20 years of professional experience in the Water Supply and Sewerage sector, and over the years he has held expert and management positions in international (Procurator of "Sofiiska Voda" AD) and national commercial companies (Member of the Board of Directors of "Bulgarian VK Holding EAD") and non-governmental organizations (Executive Director of the Association "Industrial Cluster Underground Infrastructure" (ICPI)). Leads and participates in international projects related to the protection of the environment and, in particular, water, the last of which is Danube Hazard m3c, related to the prevention of pollution of the Danube River with dangerous substances. He graduated from the French High School in the capital and the Chemical Technology and Metallurgical University (CTMU). He holds a master's degree in business administration from the Francophone Institute of Administration and Management (IFAG) in Sofia and from the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG). He specialized at the Higher National Institute of Chemical Technology (ENSIGC) in Toulouse, France. He currently combines his commitments to BWA with managing a family business, participating in the Board of Trustees of the Chemical Technology and Metallurgical University -



Sofia and the Water Sector Development Foundation.

- ▶ **Mr. Veprim Jasharaj** joined the YWPK association in October 2022. Recently Mr. Jasharaj participated in the YWPK project, in which they developed software to gather data from water sources and treatment plants, a water quality database, generating reports and analytics for the first time in Kosovo - AQUA MONITOR. Mr. Jasharaj has a diploma in software engineering from Riinvest College in Prishtina. His career in software engineering began in 2016, and over the next four years, he worked on some of the most innovative and significant water utility projects. Today, Mr. Jasharaj is employed by the Swiss-based Horizonte Group with focus on the energy sector and mostly in the German market.



- ▶ **Dr. Taher Kahil** is the group leader of the Water Security Research Group at IIASA. His research interests are in the areas of integrated biophysical economic modeling for basin-scale water policy analysis, the economics of water allocation and water quality, and evaluation of adaptation policy interventions to global changes in water and agriculture. Dr. Kahil leads several international research projects on water-food-energy nexus management, upscaling of sustainable intensification practices, and assessment of water security. He has published over 50 publications including peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and policy briefs. Dr. Kahil is a topic editor at International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health (MDPI), associate editor at Frontiers in Water (Frontiers) and guest editor for a special issue at Water Economics and Policy (World Scientific). Dr. Kahil served in 2021-2022 as alternate governor and chair of the global change task force at the World Water Council.



- ▶ **Dr. Ivaylo Kastchiev** holds PhD in Economics and Management in Sofia University, Bulgaria, MBA in City University of Seattle, USA, and others. He works in the Water and sanitation sector since 2003. Between 2003 and 2013 Mr. Kastchiev worked in Sofiyska Voda – the biggest water and sanitation operator in Bulgaria and only example of PPP, where he was responsible for strategic investment planning, life-cycle asset management, network operations and maintenance, non-revenue water reduction, business plan preparation and various aspects of WS management. Since 2013 Mr. Kastchiev works in the Energy and Water Regulatory Commission of Bulgaria, where he started as department manager and later on became Water and Sanitation Services Director. He is responsible for preparation and execution of all aspects of national regulation of quality and prices of water and sanitation services. Mr. Kastchiev is Board member and Vice-president in WAREG (European Water Regulators Network); previous chair and currently board member of “Institutional Governance and Regulation” specialist group in IWA; works with the World Bank in projects related to the WS sector with countries in Europe and Central Asia; and is author of several scientific publications in the area of WS asset management and sector governance.

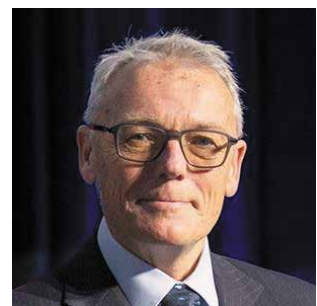


- ▶ **Mr. Walter Kling** worked for the City of Vienna, Vienna Waterworks until his retirement in early 2023. In 2011 he was appointed as Deputy Managing Director of Vienna Waterworks. He serves as IAWD Secretary General since 1993 and currently also as IAWD president since 2017. Walter Kling joined the work of the Austrian Water Association and in 1993, when he was delegated to represent Vienna within IWSA. Since the launch of IWA in 2000, Walter Kling supported the development of the new association in the region of Eastern Europe by organizing a number of events. Maintaining an excellent network of contacts, he applied to organize the IWA – World Water Congress 2008 in Vienna. Starting from 2003, the Congress President Walter Kling served with great commitment to secure best circumstances for IWA, IAWD and the City of Vienna to run a successful conference. In September 2010 he was elected IWA – Vice-President, re-elected in Busan 2012 and served in this position until 2014. In 2010 he initiated the development of the Danube Water Program, which was launched jointly by the World Bank and IAWD in 2012.
- ▶ **Mr. Jan Kwiatkowski** is the Vice President for Water Authorities within the Water Resources and Mining Global Business Unit in DHI. He has over 25 years of experience in many areas of water-related consulting and business development including water resources management, flood management, environmental impact assessment, and process optimization. He has advised key national water institutions, worked with large industrial clients, and served water operators in major cities. He has worked in different roles in several major water-oriented organizations: DHI, Nalco, Kemira and the World Bank. His professional goal is to make a positive impact by helping to solve complex water issues.
- ▶ **Ms. Fjolla Lasku** is the head of UWWTP in RWC Gjakova. She joined RWC Gjakova in 2021 as a UWWTP Process Engineer before transitioning into the current position. In her previous occupation as a Wastewater Technologist at YUNIKO BV, she participated for two years in the YEP Programmes as a Young Water Expert. She is also a member of the Young Water Professionals of Kosovo. Ms. Lasku holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Engineering Chemistry from the University of Prishtina Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Sciences and a Master’s Degree in Environmental Protection Engineering from the University of Mitrovica Faculty of Food Technology. She also studied Environmental Sciences for a semester at the University of Applied Sciences “Van Hall Larenstein” in the Netherlands.
- ▶ **Mr. Camilo Lombana** is a Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist working for the World Bank who focuses on water sector reform and utility strengthening and turnaround. Camilo has worked on the water sector for more than 18 years and has relevant experience in policy making, water sector regulation and financing, and utility operations. Camilo has worked with the Bank for over 9 years and is currently responsible for the implementation of water projects and initiatives in the Europe and Central Asia region as well as other global programs supported by the Water Global Practice, like the Utility of the Future initiative. Before joining the World Bank Camilo worked for the water utility of Bogota and the Vice Ministry of Water and Sanitation in Colombia. Camilo holds a BSc in Civil Engineering and Master’s degree in Water Resources Management, Economic Regulation of Public Utilities, and Public Policy and



Management.

- ▶ **Mr. Raimund Mair** joined the World Bank Group Water Global Practice in January 2019. In his position as Senior Water Resource Management Specialist he is involved in addressing aspects related to Water Security in the Europe and Central Asia region, as well as leading the 3rd Phase of the Danube Water Program. In his previous occupations at the European Commission and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, he was working on the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and transboundary cooperation. Mr. Mair holds diplomas in Engineering from the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna and Water Policy from Cranfield University, United Kingdom.
- ▶ **Mr. Vasilije Matijasevic** is a Ph.D. student at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade, in the Department of Environmental Engineering. He completed his master studies in University of Chemistry and Technology in Prague, programme Sustainability and Environmental Engineering, at the Faculty of Environmental Technology. For the achievements during his master studies he was awarded Diploma with honours (*“red diploma”*). His master thesis topic was *“Characterisation of Emission from the Combustion of Solid Biofuels in the Residential Heating Appliances”* at the Department of Gaseous and Solid Fuels and Air protection. He finished graduate studies at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade with the topic *“Influence of Concentration of Arylazo-Pyridone Dyes of Dipolar Structure on Efficiency of Catalytic Decolouration”*.
- ▶ **Mr. Erwin Moetz** embarked on his journey with WABAG in 2008, marking the inception of a remarkable career in the water treatment industry. Over four decades, he has held diverse roles, actively shaping the landscape of water and wastewater treatment. During his professional journey, he has made a significant contribution to numerous projects that combine technical innovation and environmental sustainability in different parts of the world. He is an advocate of WABAG statement *“Cleaner Solutions for a Greener World”*, being involved in projects that change the lives of local communities, for the future generations. He spearheads innovation in his field, encourages teamwork, and guides teams to achieve success. Mr. Moetz is a graduate of TGM Vienna, holding a diploma in Mechanical Engineering and Business Administration.
- ▶ **Mr. Tom Mollenkopf AO** took up the Presidency of the International Water Association in April 2021, having been a Senior Vice-President and a Board Member for seven years. He is an advisor on water sector strategy, policy and governance; a Senior Associate with the Aither consultancy; and a Member of the Australian Water Partnership Expert Review Panel. Over the past 25 years, Tom has worked extensively in the water sector. He was CEO of the Peter Cullen Water and Environment Trust up until February 2021 and prior to that was CEO of the Australian Water Association. He served as Deputy Executive Director of IWA in London for two years after undertaking a series of Executive Management roles at South East Water in Melbourne. Tom’s professional career started in law, first in private practice and then as corporate counsel. His advisory work has covered utilities and water authorities, research centres, industry bodies and government agencies. He has worked



extensively across water sector infrastructure, regulation, policy and governance. In January 2023, the Australian Government honoured Tom, appointing him an Officer in the Order of Australia (AO) for his distinguished service to business, particularly through the essential services industry, and to the community.

- ▶ **Mr. Ciprian Nanu** is an Innovation expert with more than 30 years' experience in countries in Eastern Europe. He is a graduate of the Polytechnic Institute of Bucharest and a partner and a Senior Consultant in Business Development Group SRL, a local consultancy. His professional experience relevant for the current project is connected with the leading of various pilot projects concerning the transfer of new and innovative technologies in the environmental and energy sectors in Romania and other markets in Europe (Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and Czech Republic). As part of various international consultancy projects teams, Ciprian Nanu is currently responsible for the project management and coordination of technical project local activities on-site in Romania.

- ▶ **Ms. Klaudia Négyesi** received her Infrastructural Engineering degree at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Faculty of Civil Engineering in 2022. Currently, she is in her second year of doctoral studies at the Department of Hydraulic and Water Resources Engineering. The title of her research topic is Rainfall-runoff modeling of small watersheds in Hungary.

- ▶ **Mr. Federica Perez Penalosa** is a Senior Water and Sanitation Consultant in the World Bank, where he currently implements the Bank's global Utility of the Future Global Program and coordinates the Utility of the Future Center of Excellence. He has over fifteen years of experience in business strategy, change management, innovation and business transformation in water utilities and energy companies, in the public sector, private sector, and multi-lateral development agencies. Federico has experience in process optimization and transformation/change management with water and sanitation utilities in multiple countries around the globe.

- ▶ **Ms. Elisabeta Poci** has joined IAWD in the role of an Association Development Manager on a part-time basis at the end of 2022. In addition, she is the Executive Director of the Water Supply and Sewerage Association of Albania (SHUKALB) since 2013. She has been working with SHUKALB for over fifteen years, playing a significant role in building up the professional image of SHUKALB among the stakeholders in the water sector in Albania and the region, as well as in the growth of SHUKALB as a sustainable organization. She is a Member of the Board of Directors of IWA and a member of the Management Committee of EWA. Ms. Poci holds a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from the Polytechnic University of Tirana and a Master of Science Degree in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin, USA, under a Fulbright Scholarship.



- ▶ **Mr. Teodor Popa** is the Financial Manager of Compania Apa Brasov in Romania since 2001. He is also a passionate member of various water associations to include the Romanian Water Association (ARA), the International Association of Water Utilities in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD), and the International Water Association (IWA), where he serves as Treasurer. In addition, he is the Vice Chair of the IWA Specialist Group on Statistics and Economics and IWA Fellow since 2016. Mr. Popa has been involved since the 90s in the water sector reform and the company regionalization and restructuring processes. He has been a moderator, presenter, and panel member for various conferences across the globe on tariffs and finance, benchmarking, circular economy, aggregation and institutional arrangements, water sector workforce readiness and regulations. Mr. Popa is author of several papers presented across the globe and a World Bank (WB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) expert for various international projects regarding water sector strategies, institutional transformation, and EU Water Directive compliance. Mr. Popa holds MSc. Degree in Engineering (1991) and Economics (1997).

- ▶ **Mr. Ionut Procop** joined Asociația Parteneriatul Global al Apei din România/ Global Water Partnership - GWP-Romania in 2020 as President of the organization. In his position he developed technical solutions for plastic collection from rivers, has implemented two permaculture projects with NBS and was the Director for one comprehensive study on microplastic pollution on the Danube river. In his previous position as Senior Manager and Project Director in electronics engineering and sustainable energy (ground source heat pumps) he has been working with the industry for over 7 years. Mr. Procop holds a MSc. diploma in Energy and Environmental Engineering from Napier University, Edinburgh, UK. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD in materials engineering using nanotechnology for improving human impact on the environment.

- ▶ **Ms. Antonia Püspök** started working for IAWD in April 2022 as an assistant in charge of administrative and financial association business and communication and has been promoted to IAWD's Community Manager in 2024. Before joining IAWD, Antonia spent several years at home with her four kids. During that time, she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Geography from the University of Vienna specializing in the field of urban planning and regional development.

- ▶ **Dr. Diego Juan Rodriguez** is a Lead Water Economist for Eastern and Southern Africa, based in Pretoria, focusing on climate change, resilience, and urban water security. Previously, he was a Senior Water Resources Management Specialist in Mexico City, overseeing lending operations and sectoral studies. Globally, he leads the water in the circular economy and resilience initiative (WICER) and a team applying the decision tree framework to water resource planning and investment projects, considering resilience and uncertainties. Before the World Bank, he worked at the Inter-American Development Bank and the Danish Hydraulic Institute. With a PhD in Economics (Water), an MA in Applied Economics, and a BS in Economics, he has over 30 years of experience in economic project analysis, non-market valuation, hydro economic analysis,



and integrating water into macroeconomic frameworks.

- ▶ **Dr. Ula Rozman** completed her Bachelor's and Master's degree in Chemical Engineering at the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 2017 and 2019, respectively. Due to her main interest in environmental engineering, she enrolled in the interdisciplinary PhD program in Environmental Protection (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) in 2019 and successfully defended her PhD degree in 2023. Her main research interest is finding solutions to various environmental problems, with a focus on the aquatic environment. Since 2019, she was working as a Teaching Assistant and Researcher at the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology, University of Ljubljana. After defending her PhD, she has started working as Post-doctoral Researcher and also became an Assistant Professor in 2024.

- ▶ **Mr. Radoslav Russev** holds an MBA from Warwick Business School and an ACCA diploma. For ten years Rado has been involved in expert and management roles in water operators in Bulgaria – Sofia and Dobrich Water. His experience has been focused on operations, commercial and change management in general including a mandate of a general manager for Dobrich Water. In 2014 and 2015 Radoslav joined the Bulgarian government in the roles of deputy minister and then as an advisor in steering the water reform in the country. Since then he has held multiple consulting roles in South-East Europe and Middle East for World Bank, EBRD and other institutions including IAWD within the process for structuring and roll-out of D-LeaP. Since 2016 Mr. Russev has been also active in founding and developing Hydrolia – a local operator of industrial water assets headquartered in Bulgaria.

- ▶ **Ms. Monika Sabic Runjavec** is a senior assistant and research associate at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Chemical Engineering and Technology. Her field of research is the application of bioremediation in the field of environmental protection in chemical engineering. She has participated in professional projects with the pharmaceutical industry dealing with the improvement of biological processes in wastewater treatment. She has been awarded with international and national awards and prizes for the scientific and professional contribution of young scientists. With her active involvement in the organisation of international conferences for young scientists and professionals especially in water domain, she aims to contribute to the knowledge dissemination.

- ▶ **Ms. Lindita Shakiri** is a Technology-Metallurgy Engineer with 27 years in the water and wastewater sector in Water Utility -Skopje as well in environmental sector in North Macedonia. As a Technical Director in Water Utility -Skopje and Head of a PIU for implementation of the biggest environmental project in North Macedonia, she spearheaded the design and construction of innovative wastewater treatment facilities, having a pivotal role with her team in enhancing public health and environmental sustainability. After transition into Environmental and physical planning Ministry she becomes specialist advisor for project coordination in the cabinet of the Minister. This role allows her to contribute significantly to projects aimed at sustainable development and environmental, economic and social aspects of the life-cycle of the Project's resources. Her long experience in a



water and wastewater sector, Ms. Shakiri is using as a Trainer for building capacity in water and wastewater sector in Public Utilities. She is author of many Policy Papers and Strategies for improvement of Public Sector in North Macedonia.

- ▶ **Ms. Ana Rita Santos** is currently the Head of Engineering at AGS, assuming the responsibility for projects in the following areas: water and wastewater systems efficiency, Operation & Maintenance contracts, asset management and software implementation. Over 19 years of experience in providing engineering technical support of municipal water and wastewater utilities. This experience has been related to project management of investment plans of water and wastewater infrastructural assets, urban water supply and wastewater network efficient management, KPI monitoring. Simultaneously, I have contributed to the dissemination of the knowledge created within AGS' projects in several water utilities and internal developments. This was done by participating as an oral speaker in national and international events and congresses over the last 15 years and having published more than 30 papers in conference proceedings and in peer review journals.



- ▶ **Dr. Katerina Schilling** Katerina joined IAWD in 2016 in the role of the Knowledge Management and Capacity Building Coordinator. Since then she has worked in several positions in the association and was strongly involved in the implementation of D-LeaP as well as the Knowledge Sharing and Outreach activities. Since December 2022 Katerina is the Head of the IAWD Secretariat. She has earned a Master's degree in Biology with a specialization in freshwater ecology from the University of Vienna and obtained her PhD within the framework of "The Vienna Doctoral Program on Water Resource Systems" awarded by the Vienna University of Technology, where she was employed more than ten years at the Institute for Water Quality, Resources and Waste Management as a Research Assistant. Since 2006 she has also been actively involved in the national and international activities of the International Water Association (IWA) and was appointed an IWA Fellow in 2016. She is co-founder of the Austrian Young Water Professionals Chapter and Member of the IWA Strategic Council.



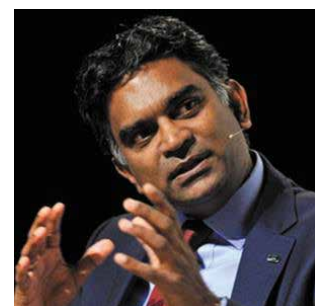
- ▶ **Mr. Jakub Sochor** is vice-chairman of Young Water Professionals Czech Republic (as a part of Czech Water Association) and his professional focus is on small water supply systems (mostly of the village type supplying only the lower hundreds or only tens of inhabitants), their safety (addressed in Water Safety Plans) and supporting the education of new water professionals (and even the training of existing water workers, including mayors and local government representatives). He is also looking at the impact of climate and societal change on the quality of raw water for treatment to drinking water, as well as technology proposals for improving water treatment technologies. He is a student of nuclear chemistry with a specialization in radioanalytics and transactinides separation at the Faculty of Nuclear Sciences and Physical Engineering of the Czech Technical University in Prague.



- ▶ **Mr. Michel Sponar** is working since December 2015 as Deputy Head of Unit at the European Commission, Directorate General for the Environment. He is co-leading a team of 22 persons dealing with Marine Environment and Clean Water Services. His team is involved in several files such as the revision of the Drinking Water Directive, the review of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive and of the Bathing Water directive but also the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Before joining the water Unit, he was involved in the preparation of the package on Circular Economy with a focus on the review of the targets of the Landfill, the Packaging and the Waste Framework Directives. <http://be.linkedin.com/pub/michel-sponar/6/38b/68b> From 2002 to 2007, he was Member of the team in charge of the preparation, adoption and follow up of the Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution. Between 1991 and 2002, he was <http://be.linkedin.com/pub/michel-sponar/6/38b/68b> Deputy Head of the Minister' Cabinet for the Environment at the Brussels Region – in charge of municipal waste management, wastewater management, air and climate, environmental permitting and inspection. He also worked during 3 years in the Seychelles and Madagascar in development projects related with rural development and environment. His background is Bio Engineer with a complement in Business Management.

- ▶ **Ms. Ivana Torbica** is working for public utility "Vodovod" Gradiška as an investment, development, and project engineer. Since she joined the company in 2017, she has worked on investment and capital projects and several projects regarding Asset Management (water and sewerage), NRW reduction, Benchmarking and MEG project. She has a Bachelor with Honors in Civil Engineering degree from the University of Novi Sad, Serbia.

- ▶ **Dr. Kala Vairavamoorthy** is an internationally recognised water resource management expert, with particular expertise in urban water issues. He combines a strong engineering background with practical international experience. He has published extensively and has a strong international profile working closely with the World Bank, UN-Habitat, UNESCO, GWP, SIWI and the EU. This includes leading several urban water management projects for the World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank and DFID. Prior to joining the International Water Association, he was the Deputy Director General for Research at the International Water Management Institute. Kala was also the Founding Dean of the Patel College of Global Sustainability and a tenured Professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, at the University of South Florida (USA). Prior to that he was a full professor and Chair of Water Engineering at the University of Birmingham (UK), and Professor and Head of Core of Sustainable Urban Water Infrastructure Systems at UNESCO-IHE (Netherlands). He is currently Professor (adjunct) at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IITM). Kala has a PhD and MSc in Environmental Engineering from Imperial College, University of London, UK and a BSc (Hons) from King's College, London.



- ▶ **Dr. Ilie Vlaicu** is the President of the Romanian Water Association and the General Director of Aquatim Timisoara Water Company. With over 25 years of experience in water management, Mr. Vlaicu has an overall perspective on the water sector in Romania and the necessary expertise to implement the ambitious program he envisaged for RWA - "*The Water Industry as a country project for Romania*". Under his leadership, Aquatim Water Company has applied for and obtained European funds in amount of over 450 million Euro within the last 20 years, offering the citizens from small towns and villages in Timis County the opportunity to connect to water and sewerage systems. In the future, Aquatim is aiming to implement projects that allow the use of more sustainable green energy in its technological processes. Aside from his managing activity, Mr. Vlaicu, who holds a PhD in wastewater treatment methods, is also an Associate Professor to the Polytechnic University of Timisoara and to West University of Timisoara and has published over 130 scientific articles and papers.



- ▶ **Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr** is Senior Advisor at the World Bank. Monika supports the World Bank's Water Global Solutions Group in building and sustaining partnerships and alliances and learning from results. Previously, Monika served as CEO & Executive Secretary of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), a globally operating multi-stakeholder partnership and action network that supports countries in managing their water resources equitably and sustainably. Prior to that, Monika was Chief Operating Officer at Sustainable Energy for All, an international multi-stakeholder partnership that promotes access to clean, affordable, and modern energy. With an academic background as an economist, Monika has worked for over 25 years in development finance and business advisory, including with the World Bank where she built communities and partnerships around knowledge and collaboration across multiple roles related to sustainable development and education. For the International Finance Corporation (IFC), Monika built the Global Business Line for Sustainable Business Advisory, working with the private sector to pursue "people-planet-profit" opportunities, including on water efficiency and new clean water technologies. Monika holds a PhD in Business Economics, an MSc in Economics, a Diploma in International Relations, and a Diploma in Corporate Governance.



- ▶ **Dr. Winston Yu** is the Water Practice Manager for the Europe and Central Asia Region at the World Bank. He has extensive experience working on technical and institutional challenges in the water sector and has carried out several investment projects in a variety of developing countries (e.g. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Poland). Prior to joining the World Bank, he was a Senior Researcher at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) working on water and climate change modeling studies for river basins in China and California. He also served as a Science Officer at the US Department of State where he worked on water issues in the Middle East. He is currently serving as a technical member of the Water and Society Committee of the American Geophysical Union and serving on the Technical Committee of the Global Water Partnership. He is currently also an Adjunct Professor at the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at Johns Hopkins University where he teaches a course on international water issues in development and on the water-energy-food nexus. He holds a PhD and MS in environmental science and



engineering from Harvard University.

- ▶ **Ms. Alenka Mubi Zalaznik** communicates nature based solutions for Limnos Company for applied ecology from Slovenia, where she is a project manager for the last 10 years, coordinating environmental projects for improvement protection for regions and municipalities. She obtained a Master's degree in Policy Analysis from University of Ljubljana. She started her career around innovation and entrepreneurship at various national institutions for economic development, innovation and start-up support. Lately she focuses on stakeholder coordination and customer relations for development and application of nature-based solutions in wastewater management, standing water body protection and pollution mitigation. She manages EU and research projects of the company. She is a deputy president of Global Water Partnership of Slovenia and a former coordinator of consortia of environmental companies in Slovenia for Western Balkans.



VI. BUSINESS MEETINGS (WEDNESDAY, MAY 29TH)

D-LeaP Committee Council Meeting

Note: This meeting is open for members of the D-LeaP Committee Council.

Date: Wednesday, 29 May

Time: 09:00 – 12:00

Location: Hotel Kronwell, Meeting room P. Drucker, 2nd floor

Chair: Ms. Maja Medenica, UTVSI

IAWD General Assembly

Note: This meeting is open for IAWD members.

Date: Wednesday, 29 May

Time: 13:00 – 14:30

Location: Hotel Kronwell, Meeting room P. Drucker, 2nd floor

Chair: Mr. Walter Kling, IAWD

Donors and IFI Roundtable

Note: This meeting is by invitation only.

Date: Wednesday, 29 May

Time: 12:45 – 14:30

Location: Hotel Kronwell, Meeting room Al. Ries, 2nd floor

Chair: Ms. Sonja Hofbauer, IAWD

Regulators Roundtable

Note: This meeting is by invitation only.

Date: Wednesday, 29 May

Time: 13:00 – 14:30

Location: Hotel Kronwell, Meeting room P. Kotler 2nd floor

Chair: Mr. Stjepan Gabric, World Bank

VII. CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

The organization of the 2024 Danube Water Forum has been made possible through institutional support from:

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Finance

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Agriculture, Forestry, Regions
and Water Management

We thank our corporate partners for providing additional support:

Premium Partner:



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VIII. LOGISTICAL DETAILS

Registration

A registration desk, where you can register and receive your welcome folder and name tag, will be open at the Conference venue (first floor) on:

- ▶ **Wednesday, 29 May** from 13:00 – 18:00
- ▶ **Thursday, 30 May** from 08:00 – 14:00

Meals

All meals and coffee breaks at the conference venue are included.

2024 DWF Group Photo

The Group Photo will be taken before the lunch break on Thursday, 30 May, 13:15 in the big conference room Ceremonies I. The Group Photo and all other official photos of the Conference will be available at the Danube Water Program (www.danube-water-program.org) and IAWD website (www.iawd.at) after the conference.

Internet Access

Internet Access will be available in the conference rooms at no cost.

Wireless network name: Kronwell / Kronwell Guest
No user and password name are needed.

Electronic Voting and Questions

During most of the Conference sessions an electronic voting system will be in place. Anyone with access to internet (mobile or WIFI), either through a laptop, a tablet or a smartphone, can participate. You are encouraged to make use of this opportunity. To connect to the electronic voting system simply type in your browser:

- ▶ <https://pollev.com/2024dwf020>



Conference Dinner

The Conference Dinner will be held on Wednesday, 29 May. The location of the Gala dinner is the Belvedere Restaurant in Brasov Belvedere Restaurant: Brasov, Str. Stejerisului nr.11 [Restaurant Belvedere](#). Shuttle service from the Forum to the Dinner Venue will be provided and will depart starting at 18:15 in front of the Hotel Kronwell with a pick-up in the city at the Bus Station “Livada Postei”.



GDPR Disclaimer

The event will be fully recorded, and pictures will be taken throughout the event. We reserve the right to use the recording as well as the pictures for publication on our websites (iawd.at, danube-water-program.org, d-leap.org, worldbank.org), and social media channels. By participating in the event, you agree to the disclaimer above.

For further information, please download the data privacy statement of IAWD on our website: www.iawd.at

IX. CONFERENCE VENUE

Hotel Kronwell

7 Garii BVD, Brasov, 500203, Romania

www.kronwell.com

office@kronwell.com

Travel to city center:

The old town of Brasov is located roughly 2 km away from the Conference Hotel. On foot, the walk can be made in about 25 minutes. Other options are taking public transport – several bus lines operate between the Hotel / Trainstation to the city center or taking a taxi to the center. By car or bus you will arrive in the old town in 5-10 minutes.

Contacts

In case of any problem or question with the logistics of your participation, please contact the organizers at the conference venue or through email:

- ▶ IAWD: Antonia Püspök (puespoek@iawd.at)



International Association
of Water Service Companies
in the Danube River
Catchment Area



**DANUBE
WATER
PROGRAM**

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