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



DANUBE
WATER
PROGRAM

10
YEARS

2023 DANUBE WATER CONFERENCE

NAVIGATING CHANGING WATERS

NEW WAYS TO OVERCOME EMERGING CHALLENGES
OF THE WATER SECTOR IN THE DANUBE REGION

31 May - 2 June 2023
Vienna, Austria

 Federal Ministry
Republic of Austria
Finance

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

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II. SESSION OVERVIEW

Business Meetings	Wednesday, 31 May Venue: World Bank premises, Praterstrasse 31, 1020 Vienna			
	08:30 – 10:00	IAWD Board meeting (Room 1-34 & 1-35)		
	10:00 – 10:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>		
	10:30 – 12:00	IAWD General Assembly (Room 1-34 & 1-35)	IFI and Donors meeting (Room 1-15 WB)	
	12:00 – 13:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>		
	13:00 – 15:00	D-LeaP Committee Council meeting (Room 1-34 & 1-35)	13:00 – 14:30	Regulators meeting (Room 1-15 WB)
	15:00 – 16:00	<i>Transfer to DWC venue</i>		

2023 DWC	Wednesday, 31 May Venue: Federal Academy of Science, Sonnwendgasse 13, 1100 Vienna, Austria	
	15:30	<i>Start of Registration</i>
	16:15 – 17:45	Setting the Scene: The sector's challenges in a time of multiple crisis <i>Format: Plenary Session</i>
18:00	Welcome Reception	

2023 Danube Water Conference	Thursday, 1 June	
	Venue: Federal Academy of Science, Sonnwendgasse 13, 1100 Vienna, Austria	
	08:00	<i>DWC Registration</i>
	09:00 – 10:30	Mission (im)possible: Keeping up sustainable service delivery in an economically turbulent environment <i>Format: Plenary Session</i>
	10:30 – 11:15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
	11:15 – 12:45	The wider perspective: Building a water secure sector in the face of the climate emergency <i>Format: Plenary Session</i>
	12:45 – 14:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>
	14:00 – 15:30	Hidden figures: Attract and retain a diverse and engaged workforce <i>Format: Plenary Session</i>
	15:30 – 16:15	<i>Coffee Break</i>
	16:15 – 17:45	Think outside the box: New ways to overcome emerging challenges in the water sector <i>Format: Roundtable Session</i>
	19:00	Conference Dinner
	Friday, 2 June	
	Venue: Federal Academy of Science, Sonnwendgasse 13, 1100 Vienna, Austria	
	09:00 – 10:00	Poster breakfast <i>Format: Poster Session</i>
10:00 – 11:30	Communication & cooperation: Joining forces for a water secure Danube region <i>Format: Plenary Session</i>	
11:30 – 12:00	Wrap-up and good-bye: 2023 Danube Water Conference closing <i>Format: Plenary Session</i>	

III. 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 487 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

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

The Danube region's water sector is facing several challenges, including consequences of the recent global pandemic, energy and economic crises caused by the war in Ukraine, and the ever-increasing effects of climate change. Water and wastewater utilities are operating in a dynamic environment, where they must maintain high levels of service provision while dealing with rising energy costs and an aging workforce, all while investing in performance improvements.

The Danube Water Conference will focus on both existing and emerging obstacles of the region's water sector. Through sessions exploring best practice examples and interactive discussions aimed at identifying new solutions, the conference will seek to provide valuable insights and innovative strategies to help ensure that the water sector in the Danube region continues to deliver high-quality service provision amidst a constantly changing environment. The conference's objective is to foster cooperation and knowledge exchange to tackle the emerging challenges faced by the Danube region's water sector.

IV. WEDNESDAY, MAY 31ST

Setting the Scene: The sector's challenges in a time of multiple crisis

Date: Wednesday, 31 May 2023

Time: 16:15 – 17:45

Location: Conference Room A and B

Chairs: Mr. Raimund Mair, World Bank and Ms. 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 2023 Danube Water Conference 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
16:15	15'	Introduction	Mr. Raimund Mair , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, DWP Program Leader, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Katerina Schilling , Head of Secretariat, IAWD, Austria
16:30	5'	Welcome words from the Austrian Ministry of Finance	Ms. Verena Hagg , Deputy Director for International Financial Institutions, Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance, Austria
16:35	10'	Welcome words from the World Bank and IAWD	Mr. Ramon Munoz-Raskin , Program Leader for Infrastructure and Sustainable Development, Western Balkans Region, World Bank, Austria and Mr. Walter Kling , President, IAWD, Austria
16:45	25'	Keynote "How to address the water sector's challenges in a time of multiple crisis?"	Mr. Gustavo Saltiel , Lead Water and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, US
17:10	35'	Framing the debate (reactions on the Keynote including electronic voting to engage the audience)	Moderated by Ms. Monika Weber-Fahr , Senior Expert, Austria Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Gustavo Saltiel, Lead Water and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, US - Ms. Vesna Muslic, President, AQUASAN Network, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Mr. Christian Minelli, Head of Secretariat, WAREG, Italy - Ms. Ylberine Baliu, YWP representative, Kosovo
17:45		End of session	

2023 DWC Welcome Reception

Date: Wednesday, 31 May 2023

Time: 18:00 – 20:00

Location: Conference Venue, catering area

Context and objective

The Welcome Reception will provide conference participants excellent networking opportunities among each other as well as with the exhibitors, a selected number of companies working in the water sector in the region, and further encourage the exchange of ideas.

V. THURSDAY, JUNE 1ST

Mission (im)possible: Keeping up sustainable service delivery in an economically turbulent environment

Date: Thursday, 1 June 2023

Time: 09:00 – 10:30

Location: Conference Room A and B

Chair: Mr. Stjepan, World Bank and Ms. Amela Basic, AQUASAN Network

Context and objective

Water and wastewater utilities are operating in a dynamic environment, where they must maintain high levels of service provision while dealing with rising energy costs and an aging workforce, all while investing in performance improvements. This session will explore best practice examples to ensure that the water sector in the Danube region continues to deliver high-quality service provision amidst a constantly changing environment.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
09:00	5'	Introduction	Mr. Stjepan Gabric , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Amela Basic , Engineer, AQUASAN Network, Bosnia and Herzegovina
09:05	15'	Financial sustainability of a utility in a changing environment	Mr. Teodor Popa , CFO, Compania APA Brasov, Romania
09:20	15'	Adapting to the changing conditions: Leveraging AI in the Operation of Wastewater Treatment Facilities	Ms. Erika Varga , Project Manager, Purecontrol, France
09:35	15'	Introduction of the “Utility of the Future Centre of Excellence”	Mr. Camilo Lombana , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, US
09:50	15'	Reforms and developments of the Portugal water sector	Mr. Diogo Faria de Oliveira , President, Portugal Water Strategy, Portugal
10:05	25'	Engagement with the audience including Q&A	Mr. Stjepan Gabric , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Amela Basic , Engineer, AQUASAN Network, Bosnia and Herzegovina
10:30		End of session	

The wider perspective: Building a water secure sector in the face of the climate emergency

Date: Thursday, 1 June 2023

Time: 11:15 – 12:45

Location: Conference Room A and B

Chairs: Mr. Raimund Mair, World Bank and Ms. Eszter Nagy, Budapest University of Technology and Economics

Context and objective

While there is general agreement that the impacts of climate change will be channeled primarily through the water cycle, managing these changes remains a challenge, even to the most advanced countries in the world. Traditional approaches to development that take water security for granted will need to adapt to manage this dynamic future, mitigating water-related risks and harnessing opportunities.

Regional assessments of water security are valuable to identify areas where water security is a concern, to guide investment and institutional reform, and to inform high-level dialogue on water issues and the actions needed to address them. Recognizing this fact, a Regional Water Security Diagnostics for the Danube region has been funded with the goal to identify the key challenges in the Danube region and develop recommendations to address them. The methodology applied under the initiative follows different levels of assessments including a Danube Regional assessment, and in-depth country level assessments in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

This session will be kicked off by taking a sneak peek at the on-going water security diagnostics, review progress and lessons learned, and discuss next steps. The session will then zoom in to take a closer look at the effects of climate change on the water services sector. Water scarcity and droughts are amongst the most tangible and devastating consequences of the climate crisis. The second part of the session will review the impacts of water scarcity and droughts on water services delivery, upcoming risks in the context of climate change, and identify actions to mitigate impacts and increase resilience. The final part will examine the role of non-revenue water in climate adaptation and examine lessons learned from an ongoing technical assistance project in Croatia financed by the European Commission and implemented by the World Bank.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
11:15	5'	Introduction	Mr. Raimund Mair , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, DWP Program Leader, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Eszter Nagy , Assistant Professor, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Hungary
11:20	20'	Water security diagnostics for the Danube Region	Mr. Camilo Lombana , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, US Ms. Barbara Willaarts , Scientific Project Manager, Water Security Research Group, International Institute for Applied System Analysis, Austria Mr. Flauers Shoshi (tbc) , Deputy Director, National Agency for Water Supply and Sewerage and Waste Infrastructure (AKUM), Albania

Time		Content	Speaker
11:40	15'	Drought risk assessment for water utilities	Ms. Olivia Becher , Researcher, University of Oxford, UK
11:55	15'	Croatia Water Loss Reduction Project	Ms. Vesna Grizelj Simic , Deputy Director, Hidroprojekt-Ing d.o.o., Croatia
12:10	35'	Engagement with the audience including Q&A	Mr. Raimund Mair , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, DWP Program Leader, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Eszter Nagy , Assistant Professor, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Hungary
12:45		End of session	

Hidden figures: Attract and retain a diverse and engaged workforce

Date: Thursday, 1 June 2023

Time: 14:00 – 15:30

Location: Conference Room A and B

Chair: Ms. Elisabeta Poci, IAWD and Ms. Elsa Belba, AKUM

Context and objective

Many water utilities are facing human resources shortfalls, but the challenge to retain experienced staff is equally significant. Many leave to take higher paid jobs in other sectors, but the loss of skills and knowledge due to retirement without suitably qualified replacements is a serious issue faced by utilities worldwide. Simultaneously, the level of expertise required for operation and maintenance keeps increasing as water technologies become more complex and the industry turns to more automated processes. How is the water sector in the Danube region affected by brain drain and what actions are needed to ensure a workforce with the appropriate skills and experience? The objective of the session is to increase the understanding and knowledge around the workforce situation in the Danube region and to share best-practice examples how to manage the situation.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
14:00	5'	Introduction	Ms. Elisabeta Poci , Association Development Manager, IAWD, Austria and Ms. Elsa Belba , Engineer, AKUM, Albania
14:05	15'	The future of water jobs	Mr. Josh Newton , Independent Consultant and Founder, US
14:20	15'	Equal Aqua - A Framework for Creating and Sustaining Diverse Water Institutions in the Danube region	Ms. Sarah Keener , Global Thematic Lead, Social Inclusion in Water Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank, US
14:35	15'	Recognizing and addressing the workforce issues: the perspective of a water utility	Mr. Elton Kacidhja , General Director, Tirana Water and Wastewater Utility, Albania Ms. Evis Gjebrea , Deputy General Director, Tirana Water and Wastewater Utility, Albania
14:50	15'	Engaging and empowering youth - the Young Water Professionals Chapter in Kosovo	Ms. Diellza Muriqi , Communications Officer Kosovo YWP, Kosovo
15:05	25'	Engagement with the audience including Q&A	Moderated by Ms. Elisabeta Poci , Association Development Manager, IAWD, Austria
15:30		End of session	

Think outside the box: New ways to overcome emerging challenges in the water sector

Date: Thursday, 1 June 2023

Time: 16:15 – 17:45

Location: Conference Room A and B

Chairs: Ms. Kathia Havens, World Bank and Ms. Ana Badhofer, World Bank

Context and objective

The Danube region's water sector is facing several challenges, including consequences of the recent global pandemic, energy and economic crises caused by the war in Ukraine, and the ever-increasing effects of climate change. Water and wastewater utilities are operating in a dynamic environment, where they must maintain high levels of service provision while dealing with rising energy costs and an aging workforce, all while investing in performance improvements.

The Danube Water Conference will focus on both existing and emerging obstacles of the region's water sector. Three Panel sessions will explore (i) Sustainable service delivery in an economically turbulent environment; (ii) Building a water secure sector in the face of the climate emergency; and (iii) Attracting and retaining a diverse and engaged workforce.

The Roundtable Session will give participants the opportunity to reflect upon and further discuss these topics as well as brainstorm new ideas on what is needed to manage the current situation and to overcome ongoing and upcoming challenges.

Logistics: How it will work

- ▶ Groups will be pre-selected to ensure a diverse set of stakeholders for each group.
- ▶ Your Group Number will be provided at Registration and can be found on your nametag.
- ▶ Groups will have the opportunity to discuss each of the three topics with guided questions, a moderator, and note-taker.
- ▶ Group discussions will be followed by a brief wrap up and outputs will be considered by the Danube Water Program team in the Conference report and in further workplan discussions.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
16:15	15'	Introduction	Ms. Kathia Havens , Program Analyst, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Ana Badhofer , Consultant, World Bank, Austria
16:30	20'	Group Discussion – Round 1	
16:50	20'	Group Discussion – Round 2	
17:10	20'	Group Discussion – Round 3	
17:30	15'	Wrap Up	Ms. Kathia Havens , Program Analyst, World Bank, Austria and Ms. Ana Badhofer , Consultant, World Bank, Austria
17:45		End of session	

Joint Conference Dinner

Date: Thursday, 1 June 2023

Time: 19:00-23:00

Location: Ship, boarding: Franz-Josef Kai 2, 1010 Wien

Context and objective

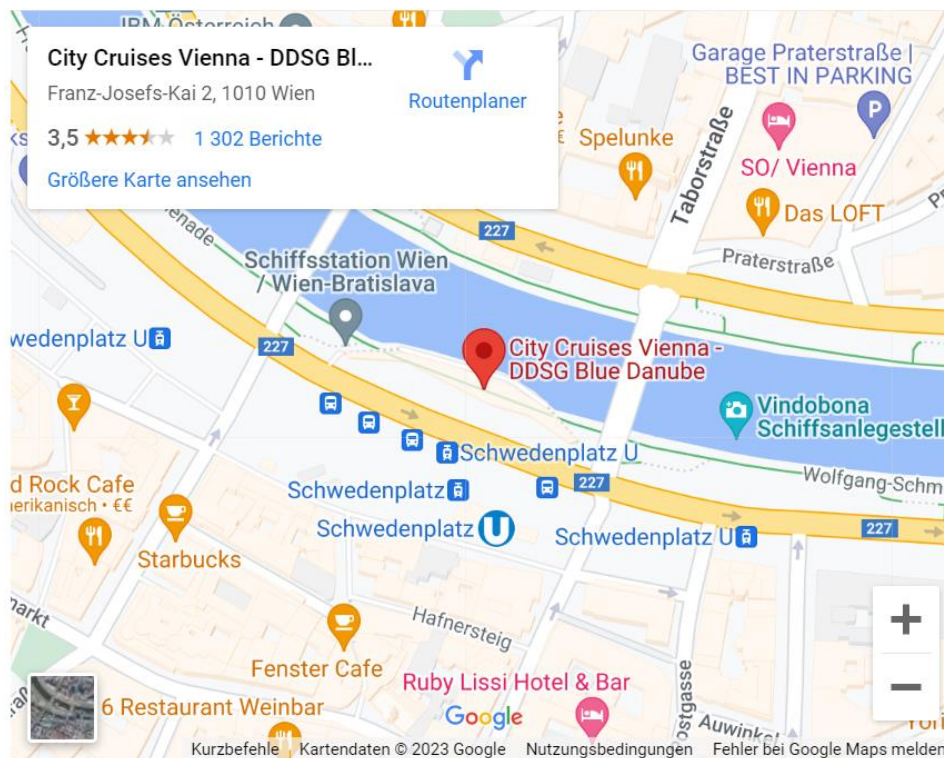
Next to interesting presentations and professional networking, the Danube Water Conference will also include opportunities for participants to enjoy themselves and socialize with fellow “water people” in a nice atmosphere.

Considering that two important anniversaries are to be celebrated, 10 years of the Danube Water Program and 30 years of IAWD, the Gala Dinner of the 2023 DWC will be special: On June 1st participants are invited to join a Danube River cruise. Starting at 7pm, the conference will shift its location onto the water to take a roundtrip on Danube River and canal, including drinks, dinner and wonderful views of the city of Vienna.

The boarding will take place at Franz-Josef Kai 2, 1010 Wien at 7pm. Please arrive on time!

(Metro station “Schwedenplatz” line U1, red and U4, green – from conference venue, take U1/red direction Leopoldau and exit “Schwedenplatz”) after that walking distance

U1, U4 (Schwedenplatz), approx. 1 minute walk



VI. FRIDAY, JUNE 2ND

Poster breakfast

Date: Friday, 2 June 2023

Time: 09:00-10:00

Location: Catering Area

Chairs: Ms. Emilija Milunovic, IAWD and Ms. Antonia Püspök, IAWD

Context and objective

For the first time the Danube Water Program Team has decided to open the Danube Water Conference 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 by short pitches by the presenters. There will be enough time to explore all posters, to engage with the presenters and network, all while enjoying coffee and breakfast together.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
09:00	5'	Introduction	Ms. Emilija Milunovic , Project Officer, IAWD, Austria and Ms. Antonia Püspök , Assistant, IAWD, Austria
09:05	10'	Poster pitching	1 Minute Pitch for each poster presenter
09:15	45'	Poster breakfast networking	Individual exchange and networking with poster presenters
10:00		End of session	

Communication & cooperation: Joining forces for a water secure Danube region

Date: Friday, 2 June 2023

Time: 10:00 – 11:30

Location: Conference Room A and B

Chair: Ms. Jelena Janevska, NALAS and Mr. Jakub Sochor, YWP Czech Republic

Context and objective

Water is life. It is as simple as that. In the face of the climate crisis, which threatens both the quality and quantity of water as a resource, the careful use of water and the functionality of water infrastructure is more important than ever. Yet, the value of water as a resource and the access to functional water services is often either not recognized or underestimated by the public. This session will introduce various examples how to communicate the importance of water and water services to the different stakeholders in the water sector, in order to create awareness and join forces for a water secure Danube region.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
10:00	5'	Introduction	Ms. Jelena Janevska , Program Director, NALAS, North Macedonia and Mr. Jakub Sochor , Co-chair, YWP chapter, Czech Republic
10:05	10'	Communication and Outreach in the Danube region – Activities of the ICPDR	Ms. Helene Masliah-Gilkarov , Technical Expert, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), Austria
10:15	15'	Examples of Awareness Raising Campaigns to strengthen water and sanitation services	Ms. Emilija Milunovic , Program Officer, IAWD, Austria and Mr. Zvonko Naumoski , GIZ, North Macedonia
10:30	10'	Communicating with your Consumers – the example of Vienna Water	Ms. Astrid Rompolt , Head of Public Relation and Communication Department, Vienna Water, Austria
10:40	10'	Communicating with and for your members – the example of Aqua Publica Europea	Mr. Milo Fiasconaro , Executive Director, Aqua Publica Europea, Belgium
10:50	10'	The NewIBNET partnership: helping utilities take action on their performance	Mr. Marco Antonio Aguero , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, US
11:00	30'	Engagement with the audience including Q&A	Ms. Jelena Janevska , Program Director, NALAS, North Macedonia and Mr. Jakub Sochor , Co-chair, YWP chapter, Czech Republic
11:30		End of session	

Wrap-up and good-bye: 2023 Danube Water Conference closing

Date: Friday, 2 June 2023

Time: 11:30-12:00

Location: Conference Room A and B

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

Context and objective

This session aims to look back on the main messages and ideas coming from the various sessions and to jointly reflect on the Conference with the audience. In addition, there will be a presentation about the Utility of the Future Center of Excellence (UoF-CoE). As part of the World Bank's Utility of the Future program and, supported by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, the UoF-CoE is intended to complement existing capacity development efforts in the region. The session will conclude the 2023 Danube Water Conference.

Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
11:30	5'	Introduction	Mr. Raimund Mair , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, DWP Program Leader, World Bank, Austria, and Ms. Katerina Schilling , Head of Secretariat, IAWD, Austria
11:35	10'	Conference wrap-up	Mr. Walter Kling , IAWD President, Austria
11:45	10'	Discussion with the audience	Mr. Raimund Mair , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, DWP Program Leader, World Bank, Austria, and Ms. Katerina Schilling , Head of Secretariat, IAWD, Austria
11:55	5'	Fare-well and Good-Bye	Mr. Raimund Mair , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, DWP Program Leader, World Bank, Austria, and Ms. Katerina Schilling , Head of Secretariat, IAWD, Austria
12:00		End of session	

VII. SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

- ▶ **Mr. Marco Antonio Aguero**, joined the World Bank Water Global Practice in September 2013. In his position as Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, he has led the preparation and supervision of investments projects and technical assistances related to water supply, utility financing and farmer led irrigation in Latin America, the Caribbean and East Africa regions. More recently coordinating the redesign of the International Benchmarking for Water and Sanitation Utilities (IBNET) now NewIBNET or IBNET 2.0. In his previous occupations he has worked in projects regarding water supply and sanitation sector reform, utility turnaround, for different NGOs and IFIs in the LAC region. Marco holds a master's degree in finance from the Central American Technological University, and Engineering Degree in Agriculture and Agribusiness from the Pan-American Agricultural University of Zamorano, Honduras.

- ▶ **Ms. Ana Badhofer** works as a Consultant for the World Bank Group. In her position she has been supporting the Danube Water Program since July 2022. She holds a degree in economics from the Vienna University of Economics and Business. She currently finishes her studies of Environmental Technologies and International Affairs at the Technical University and the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna and is in the final stages of completing her thesis, which explores the ecological and economic implications of a renewed Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive on EU candidate countries.

- ▶ **Ms. Amela Basic** joined the Aquasan Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 2021. She holds a diploma in Chemical Engineering and Technology from the University of Tuzla, Faculty of Technology. She gains her professional experience principally in development of projects and studies in the fields of water supply, wastewater treatment technologies and processing data on groundwater and surface water quality. Her interest also includes climate change issues as well as environmental sustainability challenges.

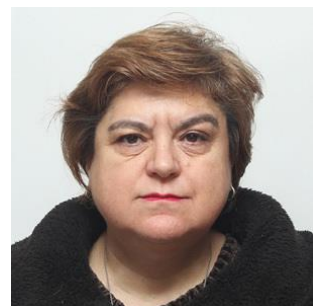
- ▶ **Ms. Ylberine Baliu** joined Young Water Professionals of Kosovo in 2019 and became the secretary of the group in 2021. In her position as secretary, she was involved in the process of group consolidation, as well as leading different activities of the group together with the other steering committee members. Additionally, for several years Ms. Baliu worked as a wastewater technologist for Yuniko Environmental Services and now she has the position of managing director of the company. Ms. Baliu holds diplomas in Food Engineering and Technology from University "Isa Boletini" and "Hasan Prishtina" in Kosovo, and a semester in Environmental Sciences at the University of Applied Sciences Van Hall Larenstein, the Netherlands.



- ▶ **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 who has 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 working. Ms. Belba is also a representative member 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 ensure 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.

- ▶ **Ms. 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.



- ▶ **Mr. Diogo Faria de Oliveira**, is the Founder and Executive Director of Defining Future Options, Lda. He has 27 years of experience in the water sector. At the Portuguese Ministry of Environment, Diogo is the President of the Water and Sanitation National Strategy Plan 2020. He is also Member of the National Water Council. He is President of the International Specialist Centre of Excellence on PPPs in Water and Sanitation, a UNECE and the GoP partnership. Previously, Diogo worked at the state-owned company, AdP - Águas de Portugal, SGPS, S.A. and was Executive Director of AQUAPOR. He was also Chairman of ten AQUAPOR's utilities. Diogo has a degree in Civil Engineering and courses in "Improving the Efficiency and Reliability in Water Distribution Systems", Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo, Spain; "Executive Management Program", Stanford University, USA, "Business and Sustainability Programme", University of Cambridge, UK, among others.

- ▶ **Mr. Milo Fiasconaro** has been the Executive Director of Aqua Publica Europea – the European Association of Public Water Operators – since 2012. Prior to that, he worked for local public authorities, especially in the field of innovation, local development, and environmental policies. He has an extensive knowledge of EU policies and of their implication for local governance. He holds a research master's degree in Human Geography from Durham University (UK) and a degree in Political Science from Florence University (Italy).

- ▶ **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. Evis Gjebrea** joined the Tirana Water and Wastewater Utility in March 2016. In her position as Deputy General Director she is involved in addressing aspects related to sales and finance policy, as well as representing the Utility to third parties and International institutions. Before joining, the Water Utility Ms. Gjebrea worked at the Municipality of Tirana, Ministry of Finance, European University of Tirana, University of New York Tirana and World Bank in D.C and Tirana. Ms. Gjebrea holds the title PhD in Economic sciences from European University of Tirana, master in banking and finance for development from Bocconi University in Milan-Italy, Bachelor and Master in Economy from Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest-Romania. In 2007 Ms. Gjebrea was enrolled in a one-year Advanced Studies Program for Visiting Scholars at the George Washington University in Washington D.C through a scholarship funded by USAID studying Public Administration and Policy.



- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **Ms. Verena Hagg** is the Deputy Director for International Financial Institutions in the Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance where she oversees several Trust Funds and acts as the main desk officer in relation to the Asian Development Bank and as Deputy to the Asian Development Fund. She was part of the Austrian negotiation team preparing accession to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Until 2014 she worked in Brussels at the Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU, being mainly responsible for the negotiations on the Multi Annual Financial Framework of the EU, participating in the Economic and Financial Affairs Council, the General Affairs Council and being part of the technical delegation of the Austrian Prime Minister for the European Council. From 2007 - 2009 she worked as senior expert in the EU- Coordination unit of the Ministry of Finance of Austria and from 2009 - 2011 as advisor at the Board of the African Development Bank. Her work experience enabled her to collect in depth knowledge and an overview not only about the different EU initiatives with regards to sustainable development, green transport and connectivity but as well about transcontinental connectivity initiatives and challenges.
- ▶ **Ms. Jelena Janevska** is a development worker with over 20 years of professional experience in international development, regional cooperation, programme and project development and management. She works as a Programme Director of the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS). In the past she has worked for various international organisations, in the areas of decentralisation, good governance, local development, civil society development and rule of law. Ms. Janevska is also a university lecturer, teaching Project Management, Crisis Communication, Public Relations and Business Communication. She has extensive consultant and training providing experience, with hundreds of missions across Europe. She holds a MSc in Local Development from the University of Trento, Italy and a BA in Journalism and Communications from Skopje University.
- ▶ **Mr. Elton Kacidhja** is the General Director of Tirana Water and Sewerage Company since 2020. Under his leadership, this institution has taken important steps to achieve the primary objective for "Tirana 24h Water". The Company is currently in the process of implementing several important projects towards achieving the objective of 24 hour water supply, with a direct impact in the lives of the citizens of Tirana. Mr. Kacidhja has over 12 years of experience in leadership roles in various utility sectors. He has directed the Directorate of Roads and Public Lighting of the Municipality of Tirana for 4 years where he implemented important projects such as "Addition of bicycle lanes", "Addition of LED



lighting”, “New LED traffic lights” etc. In addition, he has extensive experience in leading civil society organizations. Mr. Kacidhja graduated from the University of Tirana, Faculty of Social Sciences, on “Political Science”.

- ▶ **Ms. Sarah Keener** serves as the global thematic lead on social inclusion in the World Bank Water Global Practice and in this role leads a team to embed gender, citizen engagement and broader inclusion into World Bank supported operations. She has worked for over 25 years with the World Bank Group in the Middle East and North Africa, in Latin American and Caribbean, and in the Africa Region. She pioneered innovative approaches to inclusion in water, including leading a stakeholder engagement project among the riparians of the Nile Basin, undertaking analytical work on water provision to the urban poor in Africa, managing technical assistance focused on infrastructure regulation and citizen engagement, and developing innovative approaches to peri-urban water provision in Peru, Mozambique, Angola, Lesotho, Zambia and elsewhere. Ms. Keener, an American national, holds a Master’s Degree in Public Policy from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.



- ▶ **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.



- ▶ **Mr. Marko Lazic** has been working at the Sewerage Department of PUC Belgrade Waterworks and Sewerage for more than 20 years. During his career he has had several roles, such as Civil Engineer in the Department of Repairing Defects and Reconstruction, Chief of Maintenance Department, Manager of Sewerage Network and currently Coordinator of the Sewerage System Analyses and Improvement. Marko is a graduate of the Faculty of Civil Engineering at the University of Belgrade.



- ▶ **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.



- ▶ **Ms. Helene Masliah-Gilkarov** has been contributing her expertise to the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) as a Technical Expert for Public Participation and Communication since September 2016. As part of the ICPDR Secretariat, she plays a key role in coordinating public participation initiatives and managing communication activities. Hélène's involvement supports the ICPDR in its mission to protect the Danube River. She works diligently to facilitate effective public participation and ensures that communication efforts are aligned with the organization's goals. Through her contributions, Hélène assists the ICPDR in fostering dialogue and engagement with stakeholders. With a background in political science and international relations, Hélène brings a wealth of knowledge to her role. Her academic training from reputable institutions in France, the US, and Israel has equipped her with a strong foundation in these fields. Hélène's passion for public participation and her dedication to serving others guide her work with the ICPDR.



- ▶ **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.



- ▶ **Ms. Emilija Milunovic** joined the IAWD team in April 2020 as Program Assistant supporting capacity building activities for water supply and sanitation utilities in the Danube Region. Since September 2021, she oversees IAWD activities in the frame of the Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) project. Prior to joining IAWD, Ms. Milunovic interned with GIZ, supporting two projects on rural development in the Western Balkans, based in Skopje and Belgrade (2016 – 2017). She also worked with Kommunalkredit Public Consulting in Vienna, providing technical assistance to the development of grants for environmental projects in Austria (2012-2015). Originally from Belgrade, Serbia, Emilija is based in Vienna and holds a BSc in Environment and Bio-Resources Management, from the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna.



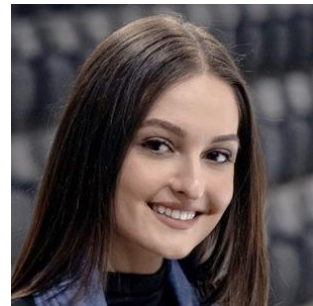
- ▶ **Mr. Christian Minelli** works as Official at the Italian Regulatory Authority for Energy, Networks and Environment (ARERA) since 2010, where he has been developing European and International institutional relations on energy and water utility services regulation, at multilateral and bilateral level, and assisting ARERA's Board Members. ARERA representative in the OECD Network of Economic Regulators, the OECD Water Governance Initiative, the International Water Association, the Council of European Energy Regulators. Since 2014 he is Head of Secretariat of WAREG the first European association of national and regional agencies with tariff-setting and supervisory powers on drinking water and wastewater services. Before serving in ARERA, he was policy officer in the Cabinet of the President of the Italian Parliament in Rome and Secretary General in Fondazione A. Durini in Milan. Graduated in Diplomacy and International Relations (University of Trieste), he holds MAs in European Studies at the College of Europe (Bruges, Belgium) and International Relations at ISPI (Milan, Italy), and a MBA from SDA Bocconi School of Management (Milan, Italy).



- ▶ **Mr. Ramon Munoz-Raskin** is Program Leader for Infrastructure and Sustainable Development for the Western Balkans Region with the World Bank, currently based in Vienna. Ramon has more than 20 years of operational and policy experience in infrastructure and sustainable development, with an initial career trajectory on transport systems and their nexus with inclusion and the environment. At the World Bank, he has worked with subnational and national governments' agendas in Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Central Asia. Ramon currently contributes to infrastructure and sustainable development business development and sector dialogues consistent with the Western Balkans green transitions agenda and other corporate priorities. Ramon held positions with institutions including the Inter-American Development Bank, the U.S. Department of Transportation, European Commission, Universidad Politecnica de Madrid, the private sector, and the World Resources Institute. He holds an M.Sc. in Urban Planning from Columbia University, New York City, and a Civil Engineering degree from Universidad Politecnica de Madrid.



- ▶ **Ms. Diellza Muriqi** is a recent graduate of Colorado College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in economics. Throughout her undergraduate studies, she actively participated in various water research projects in Colorado, including a literature review for the Colorado Water Conservation Board and research on Water Management in Castle Rock for the State of the Rockies at Colorado College. She has since been involved with Young Water Professionals in Kosovo, where she has helped with the membership process to IWA, grant proposals, and social media efforts. Additionally, she is an associate with Colorado WaterWise, where she primarily manages the update to the Guidebook of Best Practices for Municipal Water Conservation in Colorado. Diellza will start her graduate studies in Agricultural Economics at Colorado State University in the fall, where she plans to focus on water management.
- ▶ **Ms. Vesna Muslic** is the President of Association for Water and Environmental Protection Sector "Aquasan Network in BiH". She graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Sarajevo, Department for Mathematics. Ms. Muslic works on developing and implementing programs and measures aimed at improving the organisation, provision and development of sustainable water supply and wastewater services in Bosnia and Herzegovina and South-East Europe and advocates the enabling legal environment and strengthening of individual, organisational and intuitional capacities of water utilities and local governments. Before joining Aquasan Network in BiH, Ms. Muslic worked for the Human Dimension Department within the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).
- ▶ **Ms. Eszter Nagy** joined the world of academia in 2019. Her PhD studies were related to small catchment hydrology and holds a diploma in infrastructural civil engineering. She was mainly involved in projects related to catchment hydrology and water balance assessment, but lately, she got more involved in research concerning the Danube Basin regarding both quality and quantity aspects. She joined the Hungarian Water Association in 2018 in order to embrace collaboration between young water professionals. She also promotes the importance of water-related studies and encourages the students to join the water sector whenever possible.
- ▶ **Mr. Zvonko Naumoski** works for GIZ RCDN as Advisor for Capacity Development since April 2021 and has recently been appointed to work as an officer responsible for monitoring and evaluation. He coordinates the design and delivery activities of the RCDN Wastewater Capacity development Programme, ensuring that the knowledge transfer is realized in close cooperation with partners and stakeholder. Previously he has worked as a Community Development Specialist, focusing on local and regional development and the institutional development of local authorities and the Civic Sector. Zvonko Naumoski has a Master's degree in Social Sciences from the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, N. Macedonia.

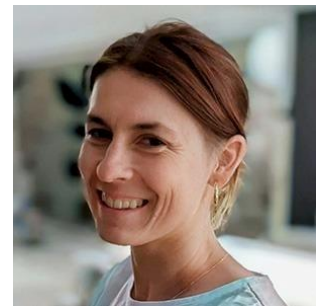


- ▶ **Mr. Josh Newton** is the founder of Josh’s Water Jobs, connecting young professionals with job opportunities and promoting career development. Josh is also an independent consultant and expert in global water governance and political processes, and stakeholder engagement, and utilizes his knowledge of the international water and sanitation communities to help institutions develop their institutional strategies and drive political processes related to water. He holds both a Master’s and PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

- ▶ **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. 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 CFO at the Brasov Water Company in Romania since 2001, President of the Romanian Water Association (RWA) Specialist Group on Economics, Vice-president of the International Water Association (IWA) Specialist Group on Statistics and Economics and IWA Fellow since 2016. Mr. Popa has been involved since 1995 in projects financed by EU and other international donors, has participated in the Romanian water sector reform: the company regionalization and restructuring process: institutional transformation, tariff strategy and concession contact implementation. In addition, he is author of various papers presented across the globe and expert for European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and World Bank international projects regarding water sector reform, tariff policy, utility management and utilities aggregation etc. Mr. Popa holds MSc. Degree in Engineering (1991) and Economics (1997).

- ▶ **Ms. Antonia Püspök** started working for IAWD in April 2022 as an assistant in charge of administrative and financial association business and communication. 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.



- ▶ **Mr. George Radu** is an expert in Urban Water with a background in designing urban networks and with experience in assignments related to integrated water management in urban areas, urban networks modelling and mapping, climate change adaptation and flood mitigation. Since his graduation of the Technical University of Civil Engineering from Bucharest as hydrotechnical engineer, and his Masters studies in Hydraulic Engineering and Environmental Protection, George acquires skills related to urban networks issues management with which can help utility companies better understand and manage the behavior of their networks. Recently George Radu has conducted a bidimensional flood modelling activity for the World Bank project, RO-Floods for implementation of the second Cycle of The Flood Directive in Romania. He is currently working as technical lead for creation of a flood management plan for Sibiu city drainage system, in Romania, but also in international projects such as urban networks modelling for Bielsko-Biala and Katowice municipalities, from Poland, with the purpose of identifying flood mitigation methods through hydraulic and hydrological modeling.



- ▶ **Ms. Astrid Rompolt** completed a technical Highschool Mödling in construction and environmental engineering. From 1996 to 2001 she was in charge of communications for Vienna Water. In 2001 Rompolt became head of staff unit Public Relations & Communications there. In addition, since 2005 she acts as head of the committee for public relations at the Austrian Gas and Water Industry Association. 2015 she got her master's degree in political management from FH Campus Vienna.



- ▶ **Mr. Albert Salltakaj** joined RWC "Hidroregjioni Jugor" JSC in 2017. Albert played a pivotal role in spearheading the establishment of a waste water and water network database within the organization, including the Maintenance Management System. By continuously monitoring and updating the system, he effectively contributed to the optimization of waste water and water management processes within RWC. His current position in the company is Head of the Projects Section within the Technical Department. He is also involved in other working groups, such as being a coordinator in benchmarking, coordinator of the asset management. Mr. Salltakaj is actively involved in the water sector in Kosovo and strives to make a contribution as the chairperson of the Young Water Professionals Kosovo, where his goal is to advance the younger generations in the field of water management. Mr. Salltakaj holds diplomas in Water Engineering from University of Prishtina in Kosovo. He also successfully completed the Utility Management Training program organized by IAWD and the World Bank.



- ▶ **Mr. Gustavo Saltiel** is the Global Lead for Water Supply and Sanitation of the Water Global Practice at the World Bank. As such, he coordinates global knowledge activities and operational support to World Bank teams across regions. He also oversees global work on water and sanitation utilities, policies, institutions and regulation, circular economy, water secure cities and city-wide inclusive sanitation. He joined the World Bank in 2003 as Senior Water Engineer in the Latin America Region, he was then appointed as Sector Leader for Sustainable Development in Mexico, Program Manager of International Waters in the Africa Region, and Lead Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist in Peru, to lead lending



operations and analytical work in the southern cone of Latin America. Before joining the World Bank, he held Senior level positions in Argentina, including as General Manager of Aguas Bonaerenses, the State-Owned Water Utility in the Province of Buenos Aires, Head of Planning and Regulatory Affairs of the private concessionaire Azurix, and Manager at the Buenos Aires Water and Sewerage Services Regulatory Agency (ETOSS).

- ▶ **Ms. 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 Vice-Chair of the IWA Fellows Steering Committee.



- ▶ **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.



- ▶ **Ms. Sophia Steinbacher** is a PhD student in the research group of Univ.-Prof. Andreas Farnleitner, working at the Karl Landsteiner University of Life Science in Krems. She is part of the ICC Water & Health and performs her doctoral studies at the TU Vienna, where she also got her Bachelor and Masters degree, all in the studies of *Technical Chemistry*. She is working in the field of water-quality and health, applying novel molecular-biological methods and statistical models in translational projects e.g. dealing with faecal pollution of the River Danube and the assessment of the impact from ships or analysing the microbial community of drinking water wells affected by biofouling. Since 2023 Sophia is the chair of the Austrian Young Water Professional (YWP) chapter, trying to connect young people in the water sector. She really likes sports, especially being in the mountains as well as being in and under clean water!



- ▶ **Ms. Erika Varga** is working at Purecontrol, a French greentech company specializing in AI-based process optimization. Since she joined the company as an R&D project manager in early 2022, her major focus is on the optimisation of nutrient removal and the reduction of direct greenhouse gas emissions. In her prior occupations, Ms. Varga worked as a process engineer at Dynamita, modeling wastewater treatment processes. Following her work in contributing to modeling biological phosphorus removal, she continued working in research and pursued a PhD at INSA Toulouse examining the interactions between biological and physical-chemical phosphorus removal. She graduated from the Budapest University of Technology and Economics as a civil engineer (BSc) and completed an international master program at BOKU, Vienna and CULS, Prague in Natural Resources Management and Ecological Engineering.

- ▶ **Ms. 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.

- ▶ **Ms. Barbara Willaarts**, (PhD) is an environmental scientist working in the Water Security Research Group from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). She has over 16 years of professional experience, and her research covers a broad range of topics relevant to water-food-energy nexus governance and sustainability transitions. It also benefits from an international reach through geographical settings ranging from Europe to Latin America, and more recently Africa and Asia. Her work is driven by two main principles. One is collaborative and interdisciplinary research to explore complex problems and find joint and sustainable solutions. Two, impact-oriented research in and beyond academia to enhance the social and policy relevance of science. In addition to her work as an academic, she is also an independent consultant, and benefit from a wide experience working with different regional and international organizations. Much of this work is geared towards making accessible scientific knowledge to all relevant stakeholders, including the policymakers to support informed decision-making.



- ▶ **Mr. Sokol Xhafa** has joined RWC Pristina in December 2013 as an engineer for supervision of international projects. In March 2016, he has been promoted to a Technical Director, a position which he is still holding. In the period April 2020 to October 2022, he was the Acting CEO of the company. Since 2016 he has been working partially as a lecturer at the University of Business and Technology in Pristina. Sokol was chair of the YWP Group in Kosovo for three years, and currently he is head of the board of directors of SHUKOS. In 2006 he started his career as an engineer, working in private sector mainly as a contractor of international donors in Kosovo. In addition, he has been delivering many trainings with SHUKOS and SHUKALB including Water Safety Planning, Non-Revenue Water and energy Efficiency.



VIII. BUSINESS MEETINGS (WEDNESDAY, MAY 31ST)

IAWD Board Meeting

Note: This meeting is by invitation only.

Date: Wednesday, 31 May

Time: 08:30 - 10:00

Location: World Bank Vienna office, Praterstrae 31, floor 1, Room 1-34 & 1-35 and online

Chair: Mr. Walter Kling, IAWD

IAWD General Assembly

Note: This meeting is open for IAWD members.

Date: Wednesday, 31 May

Time: 10:30 – 12:00

Location: World Bank Vienna office, Praterstraße 31, floor 1, Room 1-34 & 1-35 and online

Chair: Mr. Walter Kling, IAWD

D-LeaP Committee Council meeting

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

Date: Wednesday, 31 May

Time: 13:00 – 15:00

Location: World Bank Vienna office, Praterstraße 31, floor 1, Room 1-34 & 1-35 and online

Chair: Ms. Vesna Muslic, AQUASAN Network

IFI and Donors meeting

Note: This meeting is by invitation only.

Date: Wednesday, 31 May

Time: 10:30 – 12:00

Location: World Bank Vienna office, Praterstraße 31, floor 1, Room 1-15 and online

Chair: Mr. Raimund Mair, World Bank

Regulators meeting

Note: This meeting is by invitation only.

Date: Wednesday, 31 May

Time: 13:00 – 14:30

Location: World Bank Vienna office, Praterstraße 31, floor 1, Room 1-15 and online

Chair: Mr. Stjepan Gabric, World Bank

IX. CONFERENCE SUPPORTERS

The organization of the 2023 Danube Water Conference has been made possible through institutional support from:

 Federal Ministry
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and Water Management

We thank our exhibitors for providing additional support:


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X. 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, 31 May** from 15:30 – 16:15
- ▶ **Thursday, 1 June** from 08:00 – 12:00

Meals

All meals at the conference venue are included.

DWC 2023 Group Photo

This will be taken before the lunch break on Thursday, 1 June at 12:45 directly at the Conference location. 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: besucher, no passcode

No user and password name are needed, but the Terms of Conditions need to be accepted.

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/2023dwc515>

Conference Dinner

The Conference Dinner will be held on 1 June. For the conference dinner, a ship cruise on the Danube canal and Danube river has been organized. Boarding of the ship will start at 19h, departure is at 19h30. The cruise and dinner will end at 23h at the same location it set off. Please be on time at the following adress to join the dinner: Schiffstation Wien / City, Franz-Josefs Kai 2, 1010 Wien (Metro station "Schwedenplatz" line U1, red and U4, green)

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

XI. CONFERENCE VENUE

Federal Academy of Finance

Sonnwendgasse 13,
1100 Vienna, Austria

<https://english.bmf.gv.at/ministry/federal-academy-finance.html>

Directions from the airport

- ▶ **Taxi:** Follow the taxi signs at the arrival hall. A one-way trip to the hotel should cost around 40 Euros.
- ▶ **Bus:** Vienna Airport Lines: Vienna Airport Lines (line VAL 1) buses stop directly opposite the arrival hall's exit and will drop you off at the Vienna train main station, which is very close to all hotels recommended in the logistical guidelines as well as the conference venue. See <https://www.viennaairportlines.at/de/>
- ▶ **Train:** The ÖBB railjet departs every 30 minutes directly to the Vienna train main station (duration 15 minutes)

Directions to City Center

The conference venue is located on the U1 Metro Line (red line, station "Südtirolerplatz/Hauptbahnhof").

All IAWD Business meetings will be at the World Bank premises, Praterstraße 31, 1020 Wien. The building is directly at the U1 Metro Station "Nestroyplatz". For the transfer from World Bank office to Conference venue, take U1 in direction "Oberlaa", exit at "Südtirolerplatz/Hauptbahnhof"

To get to the City Center, take the U1 in "Leopoldau" direction and exit at "Stephansplatz" station.

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)



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