Agreement between

the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (hereafter "ICPDR")

and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) (hereafter "Ramsar Convention")

on the Observer Status of the Ramsar Convention at the Danube River Protection Convention

NOTING the complementary nature of the goals and basic principles of the Danube River Protection Convention and the Ramsar Convention and the existence of specialized technical and scientific competence within the Ramsar Convention relating to the goals of the Danube River Protection Convention;

RECOGNIZING that most States in the Danube river catchment basin are Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention or are currently in the process of preparation of their adhesion;

ACKNOWLEDGING the role of wetlands in water management, including flood control, nutrient retention and groundwater replenishment, as well as the need to minimize the impacts of land use and development projects on wetland's functions and their biodiversity;

AWARE OF THE NEED TO PROMOTE coordinated approaches to protecting and restoring wetlands and their biodiversity in the context of river basin management, particularly in the case of shared river basins and wetland systems;

NOTING the Ramsar Convention guidelines for "Integrating wetland conservation and wise use into river basin management" adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (Resolution VII.18);

Article 1: Granting of Observer Status

The ICPDR grants Observer Status to the Ramsar Convention for an unlimited period of time for all meetings and activities in the framework of the Danube River Protection Convention, as decided by Steering Group (Head of Delegations) during its fourth meeting in Vienna on 30-31 March 2000.

Article 2: Rights and Duties of Observers

According to ICPDR legal document IC/10 (paragraph 111.6) observers have the following rights and obligations:

- to be informed by the ICPDR Permanent Secretariat of the date, place and agenda of the meetings and of the activities in which they are entitled to participate;
- to have access to the documents of the ICPDR and its bodies in accordance with the decisions of ICPDR;
- to participate in meetings organised in the framework of the Danube River Protection Convention in which they are entitled to participate with the possibility to express their position and views and to have them reflected in the relevant documents;
- to take part in the programmes and contribute to the projects initiated under the auspices of the Danube River Protection Convention in which they are invited to participate or to make any other voluntary contribution;

- to reflect in their practice the principles and goals of the Danube River Protection Convention.

Article 3: General Conditions

In accordance with its legal document IC/20 (paragraph 3), by granting Observer Status to the Ramsar Convention, the ICPDR acknowledges that the Ramsar Convention:

- shares the goals and basic principles of the Danube River Protection Convention;
- includes a structured permanent professional administration in the form of the Ramsar Bureau that has the mandate to speak as an accredited representative of the Conference of the Contracting Parties and the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention;
- constitutes a particularly competent partner within the Danube River Basin, strongly engaged in the Danube protection and water management through its specific activities;
- shows a preference for basin-oriented cooperation and coordination.
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Article 4. Implementation

Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a legal or financial obligation of either party. Any financial or legal commitments that arise from measures taken to implement this Agreement will be made on a case-by-case basis and agreed to by both parties.

This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature by the two parties. It may be reviewed at any time agreed upon by the parties in the development of the work programme and may be amended at any time by mutual agreement.

Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving notice in writing to the other not less that six months in advance.

On behalf of the Ramsar Bureau
Delmar Blasco
Secretary General
Date: 8 November 2000

On behalf of ICPDR
Joachim Bendow
Executive Secretary
Date: 20 Okt. 2000

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