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Sustainable Sediment solutions for
the Danube - Black Sea system

Press Article



Horizon Europe project 'SUNDANSE' unites six nations to tackle critical Danube sediment crisis

The research vessel REXDAN completed a month-long regional mission, raising awareness about sustainable sediment management

Galați, Romania [August 27, 2025] - From July 14 to August 10, the research vessel REXDAN, navigated a significant portion of the Danube, making strategic stops in Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Austria, raising awareness about sustainable sediment management and fostering international collaboration.

Part of the Horizon Europe SUNDANSE project, the REXDAN completed a month-long regional mission, spanned from Galați, Romania, to Vienna, Austria, and back, establishing the vessel as a mobile platform for science and policy, linking experts and stakeholders in a unified effort to protect Europe's most vital waterway.



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"For too long, the Danube's health has been seen as a national issue, but the river doesn't recognize borders. The regional REXDAN mission has demonstrated that a problem in one country affects the entire ecosystem downstream. By bringing scientists, citizens and government officials together on the water, we have built a new level of trust and shared understanding. This is a powerful step towards a truly unified strategy for the Danube's future", said Lucian Georgescu, Project Director of REXDAN, Professor at "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati and Project Coordinator for SUNDANSE.

The REXDAN vessel made a series of stops along the Danube. In Ruse, Bulgaria, the SUNDANSE project's partners welcomed participants from the Executive Agency for "Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River" to a public event that drew crowds from academia, the private sector, and the media. In Belgrade and Novi Sad, Serbia, the mission served as a vital link between scientific research and policymaking. The Serbian partners, including the Faculty of Sciences and the Faculty of Technical Sciences from the University of Novi Sad, along with the public water management company Vode Vojvodine, welcomed visitors and engaged with representatives from universities, government ministries, and the media.

Further upriver in Budapest, Hungary, and Bratislava, Slovakia, discussions broadened to include industry experts, non-governmental organizations, and key stakeholders from other related EU projects, emphasizing the critical need to balance the river's economic and ecological needs.

The REXDAN vessel concluded its outward journey with a high-level session in Vienna, Austria, hosted in partnership with the University of Vienna. The event assembled a distinguished group of diplomatic, governmental, and academic leaders from across the region, including representatives from various embassies, the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Vienna City Council.



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This regional mission, organised by the SUNDANSE project sends a powerful message: the Danube's health is a shared responsibility, and its protection cannot be confined by national borders.

In the nine laboratories on board the REXDAN boat, the team of experienced researchers conducted in-depth analyses of the Danube ecosystem, focusing on the quality of water, air, and sediments, together with essential bathymetric determinations. Maxim Arseni, a researcher from "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, explains that the team is "not just collecting data, but are giving a voice to the Danube, showing precisely how disrupted sediment flow is starving ecosystems and changing the river's character."

Following its successful regional journey, the REXDAN vessel is now conducting an intensive research campaign in Romania. The current mission, which began on August 23 and will run through September 10, is gathering precise data along a specific stretch of the Danube, from Turnu Magurele to Corabia. While this expedition is closed to the public, the data collected will be vital for refining the project's hydrological and sediment transport models.

The project is also preparing to launch its first Open Call, offering up to €100,000 in funding in Winter 2025/26. This significant opportunity will allow local and regional authorities in Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, and Slovakia to develop innovative sedimentation solutions, inspired by the demonstrator sites.

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About SUNDANSE Project: The SUNDANSE (Innovative sediment management framework for a SUstainNable DANube black SEa system) project is a multi-national, multi-stakeholder initiative funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme. It aims to develop and demonstrate a new framework for sediment management to improve the environmental resilience of the Danube River and Black Sea system.

About the REXDAN Research Vessel: The REXDAN research vessel, operated by "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, is a state-of-the-art floating laboratory designed for complex environmental monitoring and research in the Danube River basin.

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