sundanse
Sustainable Sediment solutions for the Danube - Black Sea system

Press Article

Countdown to launch: Europe's most advanced research vessel set for International Danube Mission

Join us in Novi Sad, Budapest, Bratislava or Vienna

With final preparations now underway, the SUNDANSE project is set to launch a landmark scientific expedition next month. **Aboard the REXDAN, Europe's newest and most sophisticated freshwater research vessel, an international team of researchers will navigate the Danube from Romania to Austria and back between 4 and 29 June 2026.** This high-stakes mission aims to tackle one of the river's most pressing environmental challenges: the disruption of its natural sediment balance and the resulting impact on the Danube River-Black Sea system.

The mission, part of the EU-funded **SUNDANSE project**, represents a collaborative effort to restore the ecological health of the Danube River-Black Sea system. Decades of human intervention and the escalating effects of climate change have significantly altered the river's natural flow, increasing flood risks and causing critical habitat loss.

By leveraging the REXDAN's state-of-the-art mobile laboratories, an international research team will conduct real-time assessments across four countries to address these challenges. These findings will contribute to the creation of a Danube Sediment Management Handbook, a vital tool for policymakers and environmental agencies across Europe.

The primary objectives of this mission include:

- **On-site research**: Scientists will perform high-resolution analyses of the Danube ecosystem, focusing on water, air, and sediment quality. This includes advanced bathymetric mapping to provide a precise physical profile of the riverbed.
- **Stakeholder collaboration**: The expedition serves as a platform for engagement, actively connecting with regional stakeholders and potential partners to synchronise research efforts and foster long-term cooperation along the Danube.
- **Knowledge sharing**: The team will present the SUNDANSE project's findings to academic institutions and international organisations, ensuring that data-driven insights contribute to the broader scientific and policy-making community in the Danube region.

As the REXDAN traverses the river, it will transform into a mobile campus, hosting visiting days for stakeholders, local authorities, and academic communities in key cities:

- **Novi Sad, Serbia (11–12 June)**
- **Budapest, Hungary (15-16 June)**
- **Bratislava, Slovakia (18 June)**
- **Vienna, Austria (19–20 June)**

"The REXDAN vessel allows us to take high-level science directly to the source of the problem", says the SUNDANSE project coordination team. "By inviting regional partners and stakeholders on board, we are ensuring that the solutions we develop for sediment management are collaborative, sustainable, and ready to be implemented across the entire Danube basin."

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The SUNDANSE mission supports the EU's "Restore our Ocean and Waters" goal, aiming to protect freshwater ecosystems and foster a climate-neutral blue economy by 2030.

Those interested in participating in the on-board activities are kindly requested to communicate their intention to: Madalina.Calmuc@ugal.ro, Maxim.Arseni@ugal.ro, and adrian.presura@ugal.ro.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

About SUNDANSE
The SUNDANSE project is a Horizon Europe initiative involving 19 partners from 10 countries. It focuses on innovative sediment management to ensure a sustainable future for the Danube-Black Sea system.

Website: www.sundanseproject.eu
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/sundanse/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/sundanseproject/
Zenodo: https://zenodo.org/communities/sundanse/records

About REXDAN
Owned and operated by the "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, the REXDAN is a 44-metre-long research vessel equipped with 9 specialised laboratories, making it the most advanced platform for environmental monitoring on European inland waters.

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