

**FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES IN THE DANUBE – CRIS – MURES - TISA EUROREGION (DKMT)**

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**Abstract:** *The Euroregion institutionalizes the relationships which exist on both sides of the border. It is therefore a tool which aims to support the restructuring of border regions and the structuring of cross-border space on which it is based. European Union, through the projects financed, supports the cross - border cooperation between enterprises and institutions in various fields, enabling the elimination of existing disparities, especially in border regions. The objective is to contribute, towards the fishing and aquaculture activities, to the prosperity and harmony in local communities in Euroregion and to mobilize the funds for common development programs, including the Community funding. In addition, we can add the attraction of new investors and accountability of citizens on the importance and the potential of the Danube region (being one of the objectives of the Danube Region Strategy).*

**Key words:** *agricultural potential, cross-border cooperation, European funds, rivers, strategy*

**INTRODUCTION**

Established by the association of three surrounding statistical territorial units (equivalent to NUTS 2) around the nucleus of the old and famous historical province of Banat, it exceeds the area and population of many countries in Europe (Popa, 2006). The DKMT Euroregion is currently made up of three counties in Romania (Arad, Timis and Caras-Severin), two counties in Hungary (Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád) and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in Serbia. The steps of forming the DKMT Euroregion can be seen in figure 1.



**Figure 1. Steps of forming the DKMT Euroregion**

The DKMT Euroregion is a regional transnational institution without legal personality, whose operation is based on voluntary will of the counties.

The aim of DKMT Euroregion is to help, through the cross-border cooperation activities, the prosperity and harmony between local communities in the region and to

mobilize the funds for joint programs of European development, including Community funding.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The authors used as working methods: data collection, processing, analysis of these data and drawing conclusions.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

It is known that Romania, Hungary and Serbia have developed several Euroregions by the model of those established for the first time in Western Europe. Thus, along the Danube, there were born a lot of Euroregions, including the Danube – Cris – Mures - Tisa Euroregion (DKMT). It was established in 1992, as a result of a bilateral agreement between the counties of Timis and Csongrad.

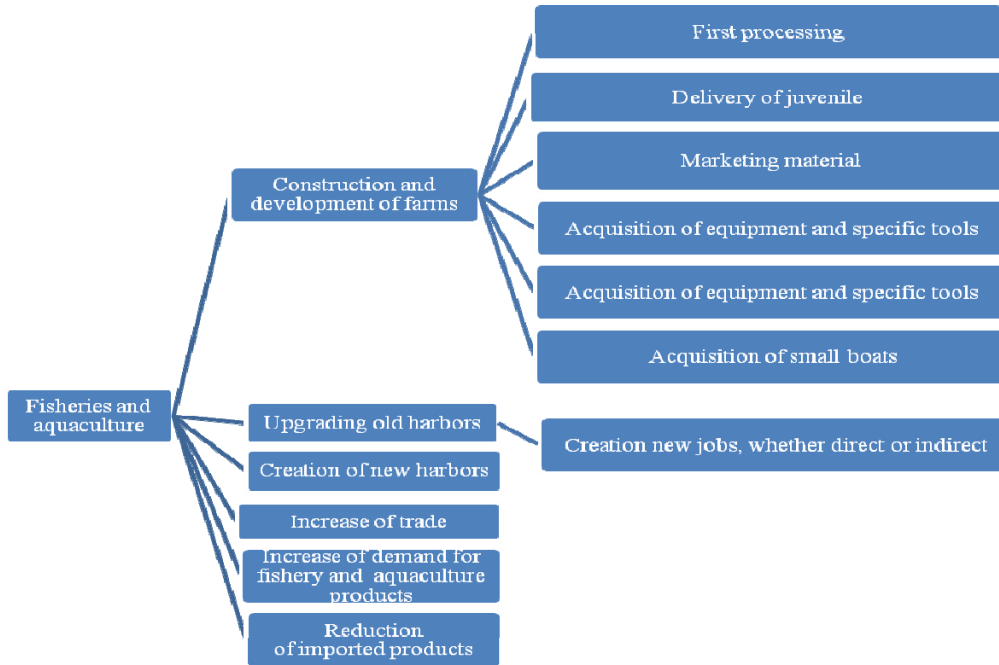
"The territory of the four rivers" (Bioteau et al., 2008) – has developed several types of projects, both agricultural and non-agricultural, but one caught our attention in particular: "*The establishment of a team of intervention for the joint management of the flood challenges*". We mentioned this project because, starting from here, we may reconstruct the wide network of navigation between the four rivers, based on the navigation channels created during the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Within this Euroregion, there aren't known to be achieved, until now, recent arrangements that should allow cross-border navigation, but which, through an intense fruitful cooperation, could bring back to life the ancient trade connections in the historical Banat, but also with the other regions along the Danube.

Starting from the Danube Region Strategy developed by the European Commission (which focuses only on transport, energy, security, environment, research, etc., and not on the development of agriculture), we ask if there are other aspects that could be of interest, such as the development of activities on both sides of the river or even in the retention basins to manage in a better way the problem of floods or the problem of the agricultural areas as excellent buffer areas. Since there is a program for seas and oceans, a question arises: "Why can't we extend this program for European rivers?" In this way, we should redesign the funds and the amounts allocated.

Taking into account that the Euroregion is surrounded by the Danube, Cris, Mures and Tisa, we would not neglect the development of two types of agricultural activities, such as: the fisheries and aquaculture. These, by the arrangement of aquaculture farms, could play an important role in economical structuring of DKMT Euroregion and, further, would develop and give the desired results in the whole Danube region. Those two activities could represent, through the newly created harbours, the main economical activity, leading to the creation of new jobs, whether direct or indirect

Through the development of fishery and aquaculture activities we could increase the trade between the regions located on both sides of the Danube, the growing demand for fish products, reduction of imported products, etc. The developing strategy for the fisheries and aquaculture activities is described in figure 2.



**Figure 2. Fisheries and aquaculture activities strategy**

The main orientations to be investigated are: the establishment of the harbours and the setting up of the local clusters involving the processes of production, processing and marketing of the resulted products, the creation of a policy to support the restructuring of supply and strengthening of SMEs in this sector, the use in a sustainable way of available resources in the Euroregion.

**Discussions:** First of all, it is very important and also necessary for this Euroregion to be institutionalized, to have juridical personality, to be transformed into a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) because only this way the Euroregion could easier submit European development projects and handle calls on new projects, but it could also be able to reach certain funds and allocated amounts for the joint development.

After discussing with some officials from Brussels, including Mr. Achim Irimescu (Counselor Minister at the Representation of Romania to the EU), we found useful the expanding or developing of a program for rivers of Europe similar to the program for the seas and oceans. In this case, the allocated amounts and funds granted by the European Union must be redesigned

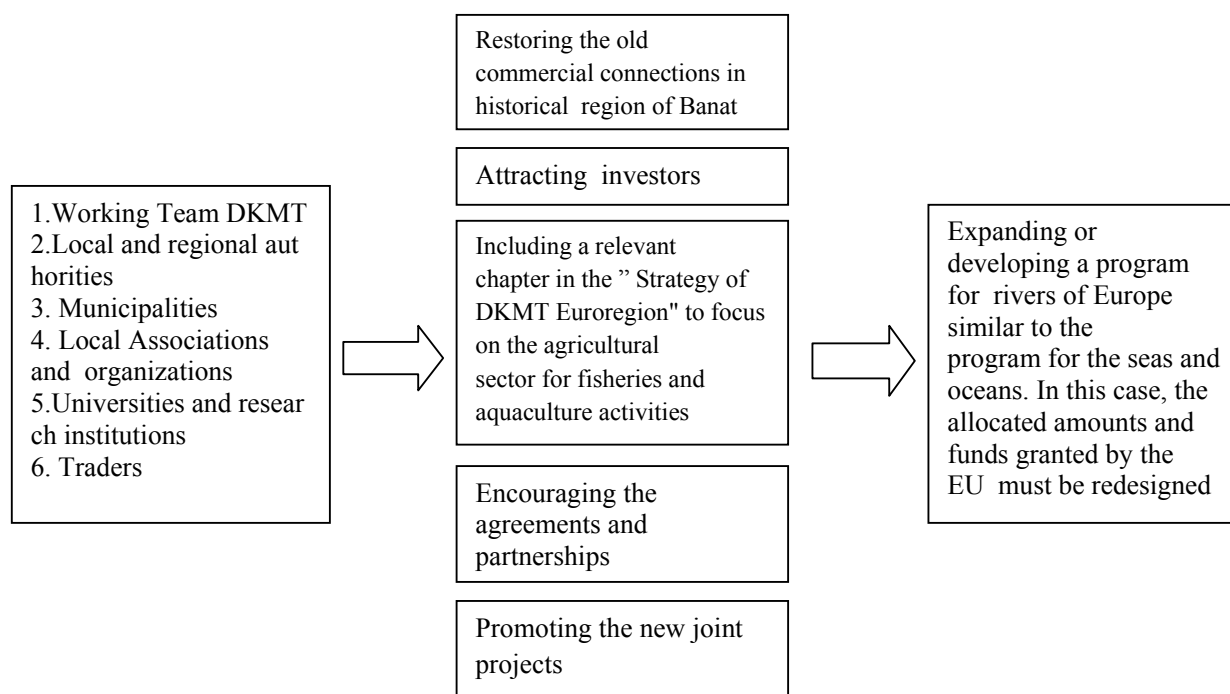
Including a relevant chapter in the "Strategy of DKMT Euroregion" [1] to focus on the agricultural sector for fisheries and aquaculture activities

The involvement and responsibility of citizens on the importance and potential in the Euroregion DKMT, regarding the two activities.

Promoting and facilitating agreements and partnerships through new projects between municipalities and local, regional and Euroregional authorities, international associations and organizations, universities and research institutions but also by encouraging and attracting new investors.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the DKMT Euroregion, there are several working groups, including a working group for agriculture. This group should check if the fisheries and aquaculture activities could lead to a better economical development, but in order to become possible, the persons that take part of the group should be effectively involved in the two fields, interface and collaborate with local, regional authorities, with municipalities, private authorities, various NGOs and even universities and research institutions to evaluate the relevance of these activities and their impact, observed and expected, on the development of agricultural sector in Euroregion.



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