

# NATURA 2000



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**Das Land  
Steiermark**

International Symposium „Drava River Vision“ 23. – 25. September 2008, Maribor Slovenia  
Dr. Reinhold Turk, State Office of the Government of Styria, Department for Nature Conservation, Graz, Austria

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## Natura 2000 obligations and their implementation in the Drava River Basin including a European overview

Maribor, 23. -25. September 2008



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## Overview

**What is NATURA 2000**

**Implementation at national level**

**Implementation in the Drava River Basin**

**Case studies:**

**LIFE III**

**INTERREG III a**

**Management Plan – Purpose,  
implementation of activities**

**Future prospects**

## What is Natura 2000 ?

- Centrepiece of EU nature & biodiversity policy
- EU-wide network of nature conservation areas established under the 1992 **Habitats Directive**
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) designated by Member States
- Long-term survival of Europe's most rare and threatened animal and plant species and habitats (**favourable conservation status**)  
(over 1000 species and 200 habitat types across the 27 Member States)
- **Habitats Directive**
- **Birds Directive**

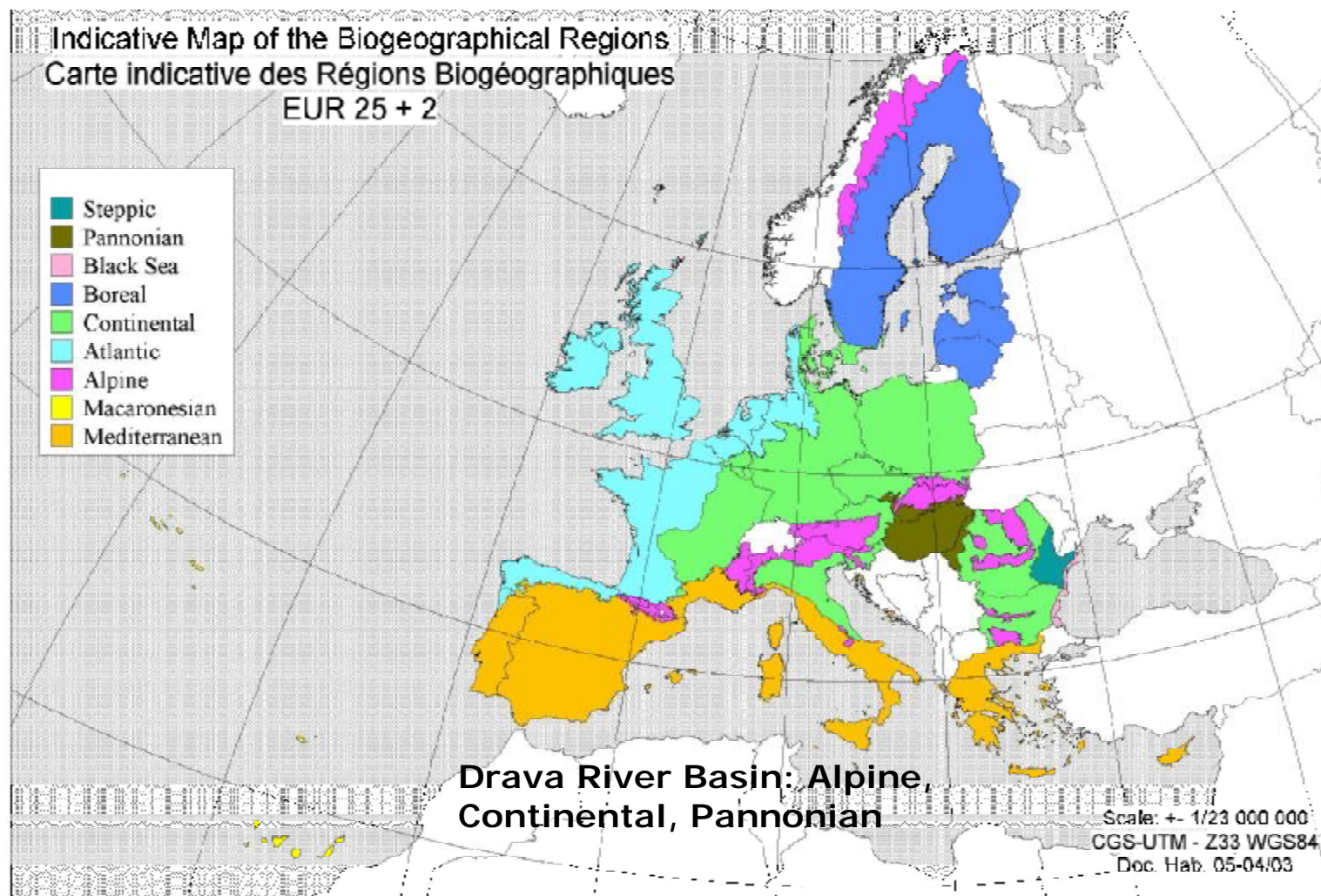
## What is the favourable conservation status ?

- For a ***natural habitat***:
  - its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing
  - the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future
  - favourable conservation status of its typical species
- For a ***species***:
  - It can maintain itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats
  - the natural range of the species is secured for the foreseeable future
  - a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis is secured.

## Implementation at national level

- Incorporation into national legislation
- Selection of suitable sites with EC
- Consideration of **biogeographical regions**
- National list of Natura 2000 sites
- Designation of SACs
- Provision of management plans and their implementation
- **Reporting** to EC about conservation status of habitats and species (Art. 16 Habitats Directive)
- **Monitoring** of conservation status of habitats and species (Art. 11 Habitats Directive)

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## Europe:

- more than 25 000 sites by end of 2008
- covering around 20 % of the total land area of the EU — around 800 000 km<sup>2</sup> — plus 100 000 km<sup>2</sup> of marine environment.
  
- Slovenia: 36% land coverage
- Hungary: 21% land coverage
- Italy: 20% land coverage

## Situation in Austria

- **Austria**: 218 sites = ca. 14,7% of land surface ( June 2008)
- **Styria**:
  - Ø 41 sites = ca. 16% land surface (June 2008)
  - Ø 84% of land surface in existing protected areas
  - Ø 17 sites featuring rivers or streams
  - Ø 6 sites within Drava River catchment area

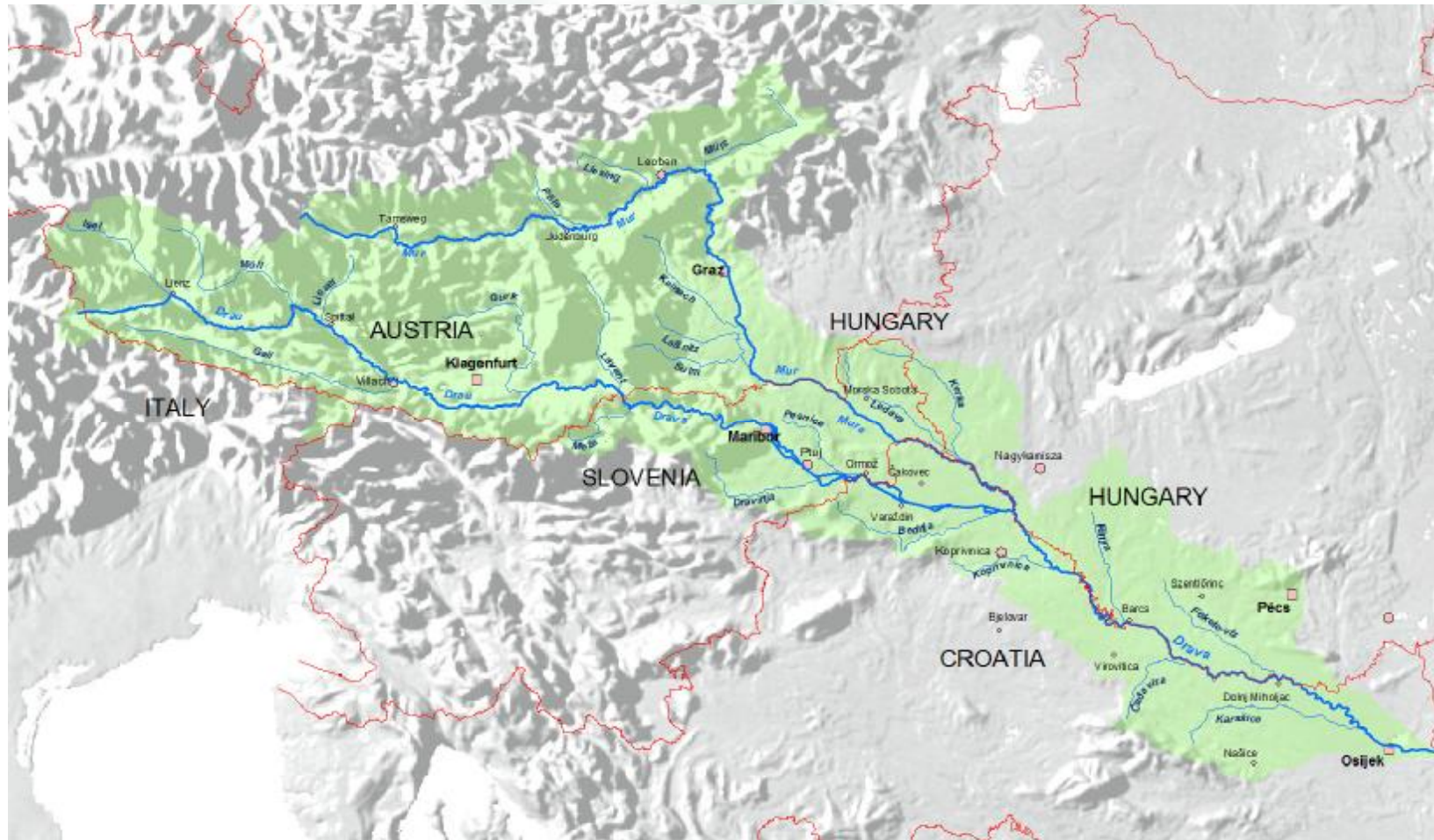
**Legal status**: **decree** based on nature conservation acts  
(Europaschutzgebiet, Natura 2000 Gebiet)



## Financial mechanisms for implementation

- **EU-funded projects (LIFE, INTERREG, ETC):**  
often in co-operation with public agencies (state and ministerial level), NGOs, private stakeholders
- **Nationally funded projects:**  
often in co-operation with river management authorities and NGOs
- **Projects carried out and funded by individual nature conservation authorities only:**  
Contracts with private stakeholders
- **Privately funded projects:**  
e.g. NGOs

## River Drava catchment area



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## EU-LIFE-Project

### (Upper reaches of River Mura)

River restoration

Management plan for riverine forest restoration

Management plan for amphibians

Management plan for fishes



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## EU-LIFE-Project (Upper reaches of River Mura)

### Migration aid for *Hucho hucho* (Danube Salmon)



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## EU-LIFE-Project (Upper reaches of River Mura)



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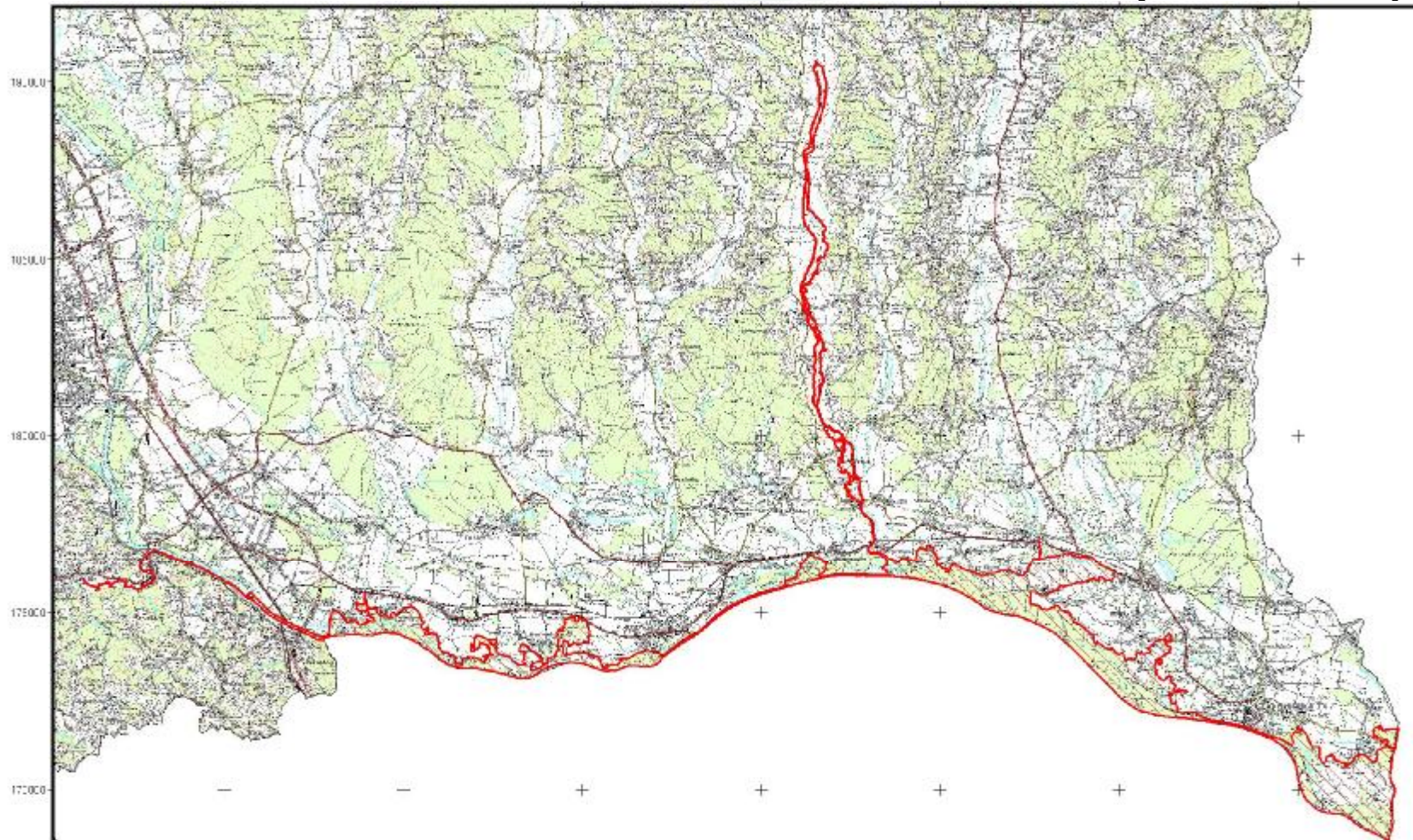
## „Steirische Grenzmaur mit Gamlitzbach und Gnasbach“

West→Ost from Spielfeld to Bad Radkersburg

Ca. 2.238 ha, altitude: 200m-278m



## Steirische Grenzmur mit Gamlitzbach und Gnasbach (ca.2.238 ha)



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15 municipalities in  
3 political districts



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## „Steirische Grenzmauer mit Gamlitzbach und Gnasbach“ - creation of a Natura 2000 site (1)

1981: protected landscape – aim: preservation of typical cultural riverine landscape

1995: EU accession  
not included in first set of site nominations  
insufficient designation of pSCI and SPA - IBA status known

1995-1998: first efforts by WWF and government of Styria to nominate fail – massive resistance from local population  
nomination procedure stopped

## „Steirische Grenzmur mit Gamlitzbach und Gnasbach“ - creation of a Natura 2000 site (2)

### Conflicts with stakeholders (fears):

Management restrictions

Expropriation of land

Tourist development restrictions

Spatial development restrictions

Industrial development restrictions (gravel  
extraction)

## „Steirische Grenzmur mit Gamlitzbach und Gnasbach“ - creation of a Natura 2000 site (3)

2000: 1. seminar for Continental Region – deficit in site nominations for an number of habitats and species with significant occurrence along and in the River Mura (fish!)

Start of infringement procedures

Fresh start of information campaign including stakeholder organisation (chamber of agriculture)

Start of discussions with stakeholders on delimitation – without NGO's

2001: Agreement on delimitation – designation as pSCI and SPA

2005: decree secures status as SAC

## „Steirische Grenzmur mit Gamlitzbach und Gnasbach“ - creation of a Natura 2000 site (4)

### Implementation measures

Project to maintain oak corridors

Project to encourage creation and maintenance of meadows

EU-Rural Development Fund

Co-operation with Dept. for Flood Management  
(INTERREG IIIa)

Cadastral-sharp demarcation

### Management plan

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## INTERREG IIIa – Integrated Management Plan



Co-operation  
between  
stakeholders  
(Nature  
Conservation, Flood  
management, local  
authorities,  
landowners)

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## Starting point

- Great number of significant habitats and species
- Conservation status not sufficiently known
- Assumption: Future status threatened by passed and future developments
- **ACTION NEEDED!**

## Management plan goals

- Assessment of conservation status for habitats and species
- Steering towards a favourable development of the NATURA 2000 site
- Cross-cutting orientation of planning activities  
(nature conservation, agriculture, forestry, spatial planning, land resources etc.)
- Periodical assessment and adaptation (Monitoring)

## Implementation concept

### Implementation groupings

- Rivers and streams
- Forestry measures
- Agricultural measures
- Species recovery
- Steering system for visitors

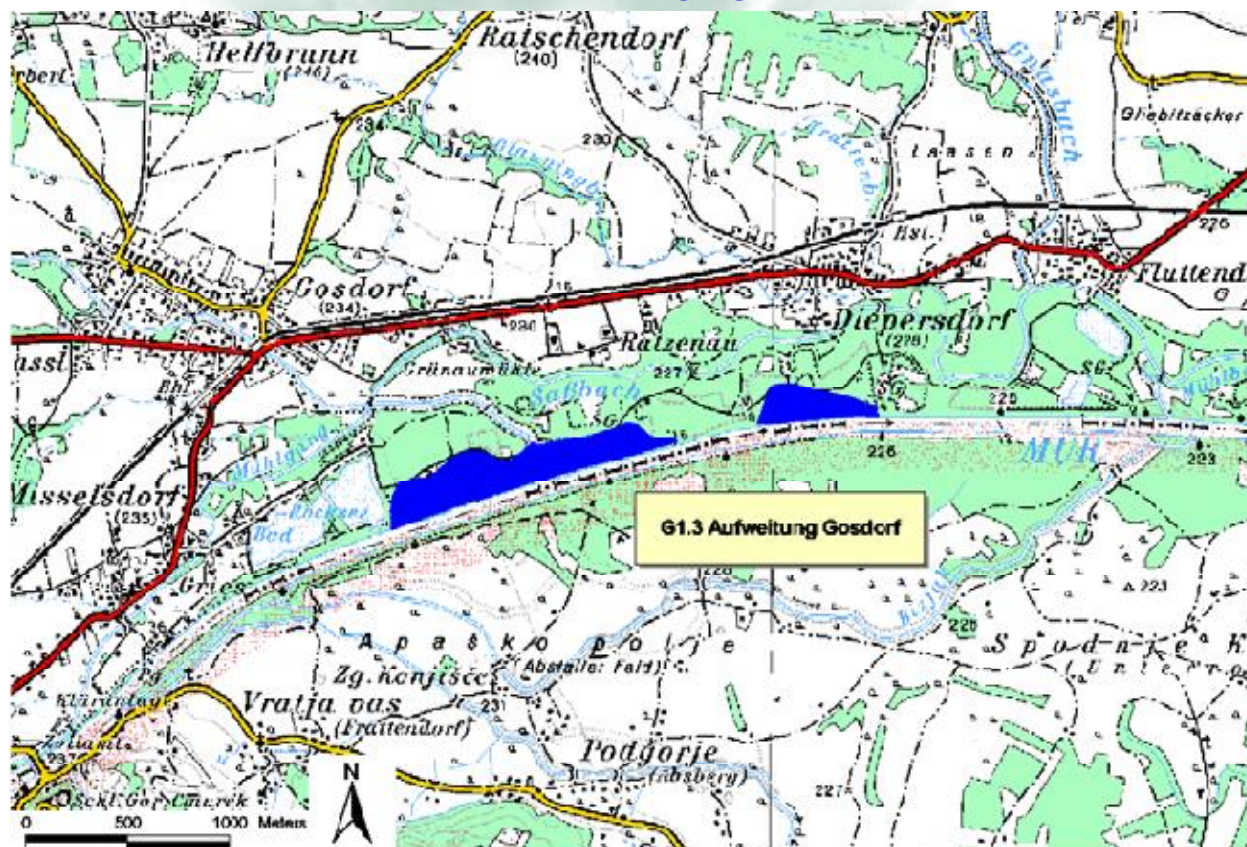
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## Examples of implementation measures



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**Implementation grouping: Rivers and streams**  
**Example: widening of a straightened stretch of River Mura**



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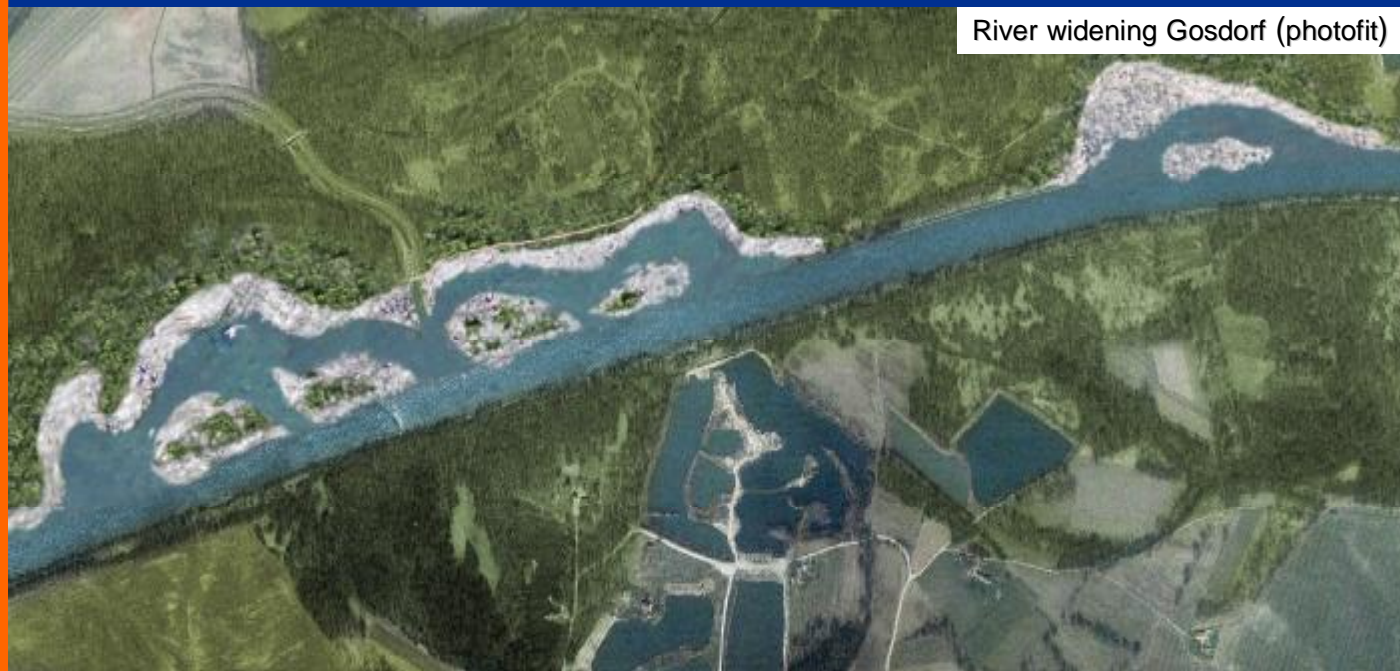
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INTERREG III A Maßnahmen Unteres Murtal

[www.unteresmurtal.steiermark.at](http://www.unteresmurtal.steiermark.at)

## Implementation grouping: Rivers and streams Example: widening of a straightened stretch of River Mura



River widening Gosdorf (photofit)

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River widening Gosdorf



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INTERREG III A **Maßnahmen Unteres Murtal**



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## Implementation grouping: Rivers and streams Example: Improvement of oxbow lakes

Oxbow lake at Mühlbach Mureck



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## Implementation grouping: Rivers and streams

### Example: Improvement of temporary water flow



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INTERREG III A **Maßnahmen Unteres Murtal**

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## Implementation grouping: Rivers and streams Which species benefit?

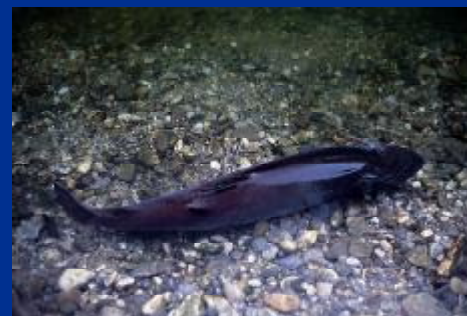
Yellow-bellied toad



Great crested newt



Huchen - Danube salmon



## Implementation grouping: visitors goals:

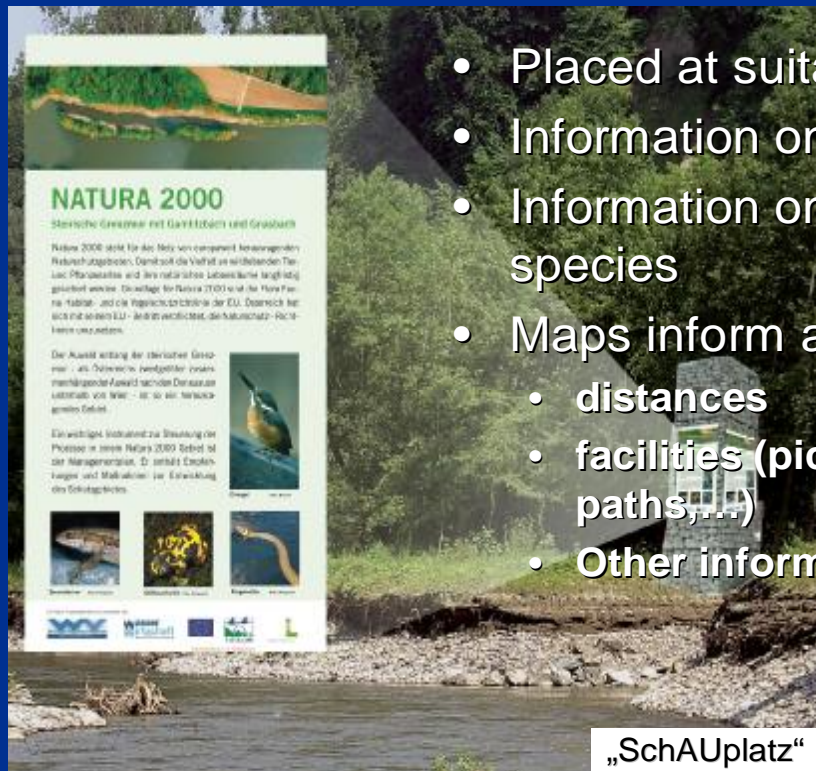
- Offer space for recreation
- Experience „nature“ at suitable sites
- Information for visitors
- Keep sensitive areas free from disturbances

## Implementation grouping: Visitors

### Concept for steering visitors:

- One main axis (bicycle track along River Mura)
- Focal points
  - Water experience
  - Boat jetty
  - Barbecue site
  - Observation tower
  - Information points (SchAUplätze)
  - Information material
  - Guides and excursions

## Implementation grouping: Visitors Example: Information Point



- Placed at suitable central points
- Information on the actual location
- Information on relevant habitats and species
- Maps inform about:
  - distances
  - facilities (picnic tables, educational paths,...)
  - Other information points

„SchAUplatz“

## Future prospects

**Continuation of management plan implementation**

**Continuation of EU co-funded projects**

**LIFE+ project in preparation for upper reaches of River Mura**

**ETC project in preparation for the River Mura stretch along the Slovenian border**

## Future hopes

**Increased co-operation with Slovenian nature conservation and river management authorities**

**Cross-border synchronisation of long term goals and management activities**

**Co-operation between all catchment countries in securing biodiversity of a unique river system**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION !**

