United Nations
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Hungary

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POSITION OF HUNGARY REGARDING WATER FLOW CRISES WORLDWIDE



General information

The most important rivers in Hungary are the Danube (Duna), originating in the Alps, and the Tisza, originating in the Carpathian Mountains, along with their tributaries. The former is the longest river in the EU, flowing through eleven countries, making it the most international river in the world. It is also a significant shipping lane, especially since its connection with the Rhine was created, and it provides cooling water for the country's only nuclear power plant, which is responsible for nearly 50% of domestic electricity production. Tisza is essential for agriculture in the central and eastern parts of the country. Water use for irrigation has led to significant wetland loss and a drop in the water table. Hungary is now the most drought exposed country in Europe, and ranks 16th globally, however ¼ of the country is situated on floodplanes and is at high flood risk.

Position on the matter

Hungary is heavily dependent on its neighbours for its water supply, which has led to conflict, particularly with Romania (2000 Baia Mare cyanide spill, poisoned Tisza) and Slovakia (Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dam, diverting the Danube), the latter of which is still ongoing. Additionally, while the country can become water resilient, it would require a comprehensive project and large investment.

Proposed solutions

Hungary is likely to focus on water retention and nature-based solutions (such as reconnecting floodplains and reflooding degraded forests). It could also offer its expertise on water in exchange for more international funding of projects promoting more responsible water use. Transboundary cooperation is also a key issue.

Potential Blocks

The country's new relations are not yet clear following the fall of Orbán, but it is likely to remain at least neutral with Russia as it is a key energy supplier (natural gas, nuclear). It has good relations with the US, China and Germany, the latter of which are big investors in industry and/or infrastructure. Slovakia and Serbia are ideological partners, though differences on water persist with the former, as well as with Romania.

Read More

Hungary - Encyclopedia Britannica
Danube - Wikipedia
Danube Transport Axis - Viadonau
Hungary Water Situation - The Hill
Climate Change in Hungary - Portfolio
Paks to Return to Regular Operation
Hungary Water Diplomacy - OECD
Hungary Transboundary Cooperation
Hungary Environment - European Commission
Solution to the Water Crisis Hungary
Hungary Water Retention - WWF

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