

River Danube water protection

Name of Supreme Audit Institution

Österreichischer Rechnungshof (Austrian Court of Audit)

Title of summary report on audit findings

Supplement to the Annual Report concerning the year 2000

Description of the Audit

The aim of the audit was to investigate and evaluate the economic and efficient use of invested funds, if another type of granting system would be more sensible, if the execution (e.g. control mechanisms) is efficient and if there is a contribution to improve to the environmental situation.

The audit was undertaken by the Austrian Court of Audit on its own initiative, was conducted in May 2001 and covered the period between 1993 and 2000.

Scope of audit

determination of objectives and their achievement

co-operation of concerned authorities

financing

legal standards

water quality of the river Danube

Audited units

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management

Audit Participants

Department 19 of the Austrian Court of Audit (Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management)

Summary of the audit findings and evaluation of the audited activities

Most of the costs for establishing the Permanent Secretariat were borne by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The future work of the Expert Groups was endangered due to financing problems and therefore priorities in this matter should be established in the following years.

Regulations as provided for in the Danube River Protection Convention existed in Austria even before the Convention entered into force. The Austrian monitoring system is denser than the Danube Transnational Monitoring Network (Danube-TNMN). 81 % of the waters of the catchment area of the Danube River showed a biological water quality II or higher and in Austrian most of the 90 chemical parameters assessing the ground water quality were better than required by law. Investments in the waste water treatment and cleaning during the last years were one of the reasons for this situation.

The Austrian Court of Audit recommended to harmonize the monitoring and assessment methods criteria for the analysis and evaluation of the chemical condition of the ground waters. Furthermore the Austrian Court of Audit saw a potential to improve the communication between the Contracting Parties in particular the warning and alarm systems in the case of sudden water pollution should be developed. It recommends to create uniform criteria for the analysis and evaluation of the chemical condition of the ground waters.

Addressees of the summary report on audit findings

The report was forwarded to the National Council (federal legislation).

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