

**Recommendations
of the Round Table Dedicated to the Problems of Conservation and Sustainable Use
of the Dniester River Basin
Tiraspol, University, June 5, 2026.
Participants - scientists and specialists from both banks of the Dniester River.**

The Dniester River is a vital transboundary water artery for Moldova and Ukraine, the countries of its basin, providing drinking water to millions of people, supporting agriculture, industry, and unique ecosystems. However, the river faces serious environmental challenges: alterations in the hydrological regime, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and the impacts of climate change.

Given the status of both countries as candidates for accession to the European Union, river basin management must strictly comply with the EU Water Framework Directive. In this regard, the participants welcome the efforts of the riparian states to harmonize relevant legislation with European standards and draw attention to the challenge of implementation.

Below are the comprehensive recommendations of the Round Table, which brought together scientists, specialists, and non-governmental organizations, addressed to the governments of the basin countries and the Joint Dniester Commission, established in accordance with the Dniester River Basin Treaty (2012) to improve the ecological status of the Dniester.

I. Recommendations for the Dniester Commission (Joint Actions)

The Dniester Commission should act as the main coordinating center, ensuring a balance of interests and protecting the ecosystem of the entire basin.

Given that both countries have national six-year basin management plans, it is recommended to ensure their complete methodological and chronological synchronization. It is advisable to develop, based on these plans, a unified transboundary Program of Measures for the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive under the auspices of the Dniester Commission. This will allow for the consolidation of monitoring, the pooling of efforts for monitoring and climate change adaptation, and an increase in the efficiency of attracting international investments.

- **Creation of a unified monitoring and data exchange system:**
 - Implement automated water quality and quantity control posts along the entire course of the river with real-time data access for both countries.
 - Unify methodologies for assessing water quality and the ecological status of water bodies in accordance with EU standards.
 - Include, on a permanent basis, the exchange of sanitary and hygienic information regarding the state of the Dniester's water as part of the implementation of Article 13 of the Protocol on Water and Health to the UNECE Water Convention, and integrate relevant specialists into the Dniester Commission's working group on monitoring.
- **Provision and control of the ecological flow:**
 - Develop and strictly control compliance with scientifically grounded regulations for spring ecological flows (floods) from the Dniester Reservoir. This is critically important for fish spawning and for maintaining the floodplain ecosystems of the Lower Dniester.

- Establish strict rules for the temperature regime of discharged waters to prevent "thermal shock" (when cold water from the lower layers of the reservoir destroys warmth-loving flora and fauna downstream).
- **Joint risk management (floods and droughts):**
 - Update the Flood Risk Management Plan and develop a joint Drought Management Plan, taking into account progressive climate change.
 - Create a unified early warning system for emergency situations (discharges of pollutants, industrial accidents).

II. Recommendations for the Government of Ukraine (Upper and Middle Reaches)

The actions of Ukraine, as the upstream country, have a direct impact on the condition of the river throughout its entire length.

- **Modernization of the operation of the Dniester Comprehensive Hydropower Hub:**
 - Revise the operating rules of the hydropower hub, prioritizing ecological safety over the maximization of electricity generation.
- **Pollution control and infrastructure modernization:**
 - Conduct urgent modernization of wastewater treatment plants in the settlements of the Dniester basin (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Chernivtsi, and Vinnytsia oblasts).
 - Strengthen control over discharges from industrial enterprises and livestock complexes.
- **Protection of the catchment area in the Carpathians:**
 - Introduce a strict moratorium on the clear-cutting of forests in the Carpathians, which leads to soil erosion, river siltation, and devastating flash floods, while simultaneously reducing the water-retaining capacity of the territory. Expand reforestation programs and practical actions in this direction.

III. Recommendations for the Government of the Republic of Moldova (Middle and Lower Reaches)

Moldova experiences the consequences of both transboundary impacts and internal environmental problems.

- **Wastewater treatment and reduction of local pollution:**
 - Complete the construction and modernization of wastewater treatment plants in key cities (for example, in Soroca, where untreated sewage has been discharged directly into the river for many years).
 - Rehabilitate small rivers (especially the Bîc River), which carry a colossal anthropogenic load and flow into the Dniester, polluting it.
- **Restoration of floodplains and wetlands:**
 - Expand and fund projects for the restoration of natural floodplains and wetlands (especially in the area of the "Lower Dniester" Ramsar site), which serve as natural filters and water reservoirs during periods of drought.
- **Rational water use in agriculture:**
 - Subsidize the transition of farmers to water-saving technologies (drip irrigation) to avoid the depletion of the river's water resources during the summer months.

- Restrict the plowing of land within riparian protection zones to prevent the runoff of agrochemicals into the river.
- **Enhancing the implementation of the Management Plan for the Moldovan Dniester District on the Left Bank** by transferring experience in the development and implementation of water resource management plans (with an emphasis on small rivers and reservoirs), the water cadastre, and developing joint activities to identify pollution sources and reduce river eutrophication.
 - Consider the possibility and resolve the issue of representing the Transnistrian region within the Moldovan part of the Dniester Commission—at least at the level of a scientific representative or a non-governmental organization—in order to dynamize the resolution of the Dniester's problems.
 - Urgently address the issue of training national personnel in the fields of hydrometeorology, hydrology, aquatic toxicology, and aquatic biomonitoring.

IV. General Recommendations for Both States

- **Cessation of barbaric mineral extraction from the river bed:**
 - Introduce a complete and controlled ban on the extraction of sand and gravel from the riverbed, as this destroys spawning grounds, alters the hydromorphology of the bed, and leads to a lowering of the groundwater table. Within the framework of the Working Group on Agriculture and Ecology between the banks of the Dniester, the issue of stopping sand and gravel extraction by the Left Bank from the minor bed of the Dniester in the area of Podoima village and other sectors should be considered.
- **Expansion of nature conservation zones:**
 - Synchronize the creation of transboundary protected areas (within the Emerald Network). Create a single Ramsar site and a single transboundary UNESCO biosphere reserve in the Lower Dniester.
- **Countering plastic pollution:**
 - Implement strict measures to restrict the use of single-use plastics and create separate waste collection systems in coastal settlements to avoid the appearance of plastic islands in the river.
- **Involvement of civil society:**
 - Ensure transparency in the work of the Dniester Commission by facilitating timely access for civil society representatives to commission meetings and its draft documents.
 - Actively involve local communities, NGOs, and scientific institutes in the decision-making process, including through Basin Councils.

Conclusions:

- The conservation of the Dniester requires a shift from a consumerist attitude toward the river to an ecosystem approach. Success is possible only if Moldova and Ukraine view the Dniester not as a dividing border or a source of resources, but as a shared natural heritage that requires joint responsibility.
- The fact that both basin countries have six-year River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for the Dniester creates an excellent foundation for cooperation, but the existence of two separate national plans requires their competent

integration. For these purposes, we propose requesting substantial funds from the EU, as was intended a few years ago.

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The Round table was organized by the University of Tiraspol and NGO "ECO-TIRAS".

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