



## To the International Commission for the Protection of the Odra River against Pollution (ICPO), and the Water Directors of Czech Republic, Germany and Poland

### Cover letter for submission to the consultation of the international Oder RBMP

31 August, 2021

Dear Mr. Daniel Pokorný

Dear Mr. Przemysław Gruszecki

Dear Mr. Thomas Stratenwerth

Dear Mr. Lukáš Záruba

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) welcomes the opportunity to provide comments in the consultation for the draft River Basin Management Plan for the Oder river basin.

***The EEB supports comments submitted by our members and partners on this public consultation e.g. Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), FrankBold, RT-ON, Polish Ecological Club, ClientEarth, Save The Rivers Coalition.***

2021 is an important year for Europe's rivers, lakes and groundwater and the opportunity provided by the ongoing updates of the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) should be fully used to reach the 2027 objective of the Water Framework Directive to bring Europe's waters back to ecological health. This is the third chance to do so, but an NGO assessment of 13 draft RBMPs published in June by the Living Rivers Europe Coalition showed that, unless the plans are sufficiently improved, many EU countries are set to miss this goal.<sup>1</sup>

The Oder river basin plan was one of the river basins where a number of improvements is needed. In the draft RBMP it is estimated that only 22% of the surface water bodies in the Oder river basin will achieve good ecological status or good ecological potential by 2027 as a result of the programs of measures. Today, with our colleagues from Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), Save the Rivers Coalition and RT-ON, we are submitting the joint assessment as part of the consultation for the draft international RBMP for the Oder and **we are asking you for more ambition in the RBMP** before its adoption in December.

The 2019 fitness check of the Water Framework Directive pointed out inter alia insufficient funding as a key constraint for the preservation and restoration of Europe's water bodies. The Oder draft RBMP fails to implement the polluters pay principle and recover environmental and resource costs from economic sectors such as lignite mining, energy and agriculture. This limits the revenues that could be collected and used to implement necessary prevention and mitigation measures. As a

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<sup>1</sup> Living Rivers Europe, [The final sprint for Europe's rivers](#) (June 2021)



recent special report by the European Court of Auditors points out, far too often the public have to bear the cost that polluters should have paid.<sup>2</sup>

People and the environment in the Oder river basin feel the pressures from such economic interests, not least from the coal industry and the modification plans for enabling navigation of the Oder. We, therefore, urge you to take action on the concerns and demands expressed by environmental associations, scientists, social movements and political parties as expressed in:

- the **joint NGO letter** calling the ICPO to take the necessary measures to protect the river basin from the disruptive impacts of lignite mining<sup>3</sup>
- the **joint declaration** to STOP labeling expansion for economic interests as "flood protection", STOP measures that actually deteriorate flood protection and infringe EU Environmental Law; STOP the expansion of the River Oder!<sup>4</sup>
- the **Oder factsheet** from the NGO assessment of the international Oder RBMP<sup>5</sup>
- the report **Mind the Gap** that maps the lack of cost recovery for the lignite sector in Poland, Germany and Czech Republic and recommendations to address it<sup>6</sup>

Thank you in advance for defending the interests of better water protection.

Kind regards,  
European Environmental Bureau

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<sup>2</sup>European Court of Auditors, [Special Report 12/2021: The Polluter Pays Principle: Inconsistent application across EU environmental policies and actions](#) (July 2021)

<sup>3</sup> Joint NGO open letter, [Open letter to the ICPO on coal mining and combustion](#) (June 2021)

<sup>4</sup> Joint NGO statement, [STOP the expansion of the River Oder](#) (March 2021)

<sup>5</sup> LRE, [Factsheet Oder international RBMP](#)

<sup>6</sup> EEB, [Mind the Gap](#) (December 2020)