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Appropriate Assessment of the Impact of Changes in the Integrated Infrastructure Operational Programme (Version 6.0) for the Natura 2000 Sites

Appendix 2: Evaluation of the Strategy Paper

3 June 2019

Processor

Appropriate Assessment of the Impact of Changes in the Integrated Infrastructure Operational Programme (Version 6.0) for the Natura 2000 Sites processed by Mgr. Rastislav Rybanič.

N.B to the adviser

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. PROCEDURE FOR PROCESSING AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT	5
2.1. <i>Affected Natura 2000 sites</i>	5
2.2. <i>Protected subject matter affected</i>	5
2.3. <i>Analysis of the impacts on protected subject matter affected</i>	6
2.4. <i>Impact assessment</i>	6
3. PLAN INFORMATION	9
3.1. <i>Priority Axis 4 - Water transport infrastructure (TEN-T CORE)</i>	9
3.1.1. Changing the name of Specific Objective 4.1 including adapting and expanding its content	9
3.1.2. Additions to the Komárno public port financed from OPII funds	9
3.1.3. Change in eligible beneficiaries	10
3.1.4. Changing the name of "A" including adapting and expanding its content	10
3.1.5. Changing the name of "B" including adapting and expanding its content	10
3.1.6. Broadening the focus of "C. <i>Introducing modern technology into the management of maritime and port operations</i> "	12
3.1.7. Adding a new eligible activity "D. <i>Introducing regular passenger navigation on the Danube (Dunajbus)</i> "	12
3.2. <i>Priority Axis 5 - Railway infrastructure and upgrading of rolling stock</i>	13
3.2.1. Changing the name of Priority Axis 5 and adding a new specific objective 5.3	13
3.2.2. Adding a new activity "I. <i>Upgrading public rail passenger transport rolling stock</i> "	14
3.2.3. Adding a new activity to construct checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network	14
3.2.4. Changing the name of "C" including adapting and expanding its content	14
3.3. <i>Priority Axis 6 - Road infrastructure (outside the TEN-T CORE)</i>	14
3.3.1. Adding the R2 and R4 expressways	14
3.3.2. Supporting the introduction of alternative fuels in road transport	16
3.4. <i>Priority Axis 7: Information society</i>	17
3.4.1. Supporting the construction of smart cities and regions through ICT	17
3.4.2. Promoting innovative SME solutions using public administration data and services	17
4. IDENTIFYING AFFECTED NATURA 2000 SITES	18
4.1. <i>Priority Axis 4 - Water transport infrastructure</i>	18
4.1.1. Changing current velocity in the lower Hrušov Reservoir	18
4.1.2. Upgrading and construction of public ports	18
4.1.3. Upgrades to buoy technology and navigational aids on the Danube	19

4.1.4.	Introducing regular passenger navigation on the Danube (Dunajbus)	19
4.2.	<i>Priority Axis 5 - Railway infrastructure and upgrading of rolling stock</i>	21
4.2.1.	Constructing checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network	21
4.2.2.	Trebišov integrated passenger transport terminal	21
4.3.	<i>Priority Axis 6 - Road infrastructure (outside the TEN-T CORE)</i>	22
4.3.1.	Adding the R2 and R4 expressways	22
4.3.2.	Supporting the introduction of alternative fuels in road transport	26
5.	IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF AMENDMENTS TO THE OPII ON AFFECTED NATURA 2000 SITES	27
5.1.	<i>Assessment of the impact from individual activities and measures on affected Natura 2000 sites</i>	27
5.1.1.	Changing current velocity in the lower Hrušov Reservoir	27
5.1.2.	Upgrading and construction of public ports	27
5.1.3.	Upgrades to buoy technology and navigational aids on the Danube	28
5.1.4.	Introducing regular passenger navigation on the Danube (Dunajbus)	28
5.1.5.	Constructing checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network	29
5.1.6.	Constructing checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network	29
5.1.7.	Adding the R2 and R4 expressways	29
5.1.8.	Supporting the introduction of alternative fuels in road transport	31
5.2.	<i>Evaluation of cumulative effects</i>	31
6.	CONCLUSION	32
7.	DATA SOURCES USED	34
7.1.	<i>Source materials used</i>	34
7.2.	<i>References used</i>	34
7.3.	<i>Information sources used</i>	34

1. Introduction

An appropriate assessment of the updated 2014-2020 Integrated Infrastructure Operational Programme, Version 6.0 (OPII) was needed for a strategic assessment of the update. The appropriate assessment should include an assessment of the impact on the network of Natura 2000 sites that concentrates just on the changes incorporated in Version 6.0 of the Operational Programme.

The appropriate assessment has been processed in the scope and structure of the *Methodology for assessing the impact of plans and projects on sites of the Natura 2000 network in the Slovak Republic* (State Nature Conservancy 2014, revised 2016, "SNC Methodology 2014"), which lays down the procedure for appropriately assessing plans in a specific section.

Figure 1 below provides an overview of the change in the OPII involving the territorially specified OPII objectives in water transport infrastructure (Priority Axis 4)¹, railway infrastructure (Priority Axis 5) and road infrastructure (Priority Axis 6).

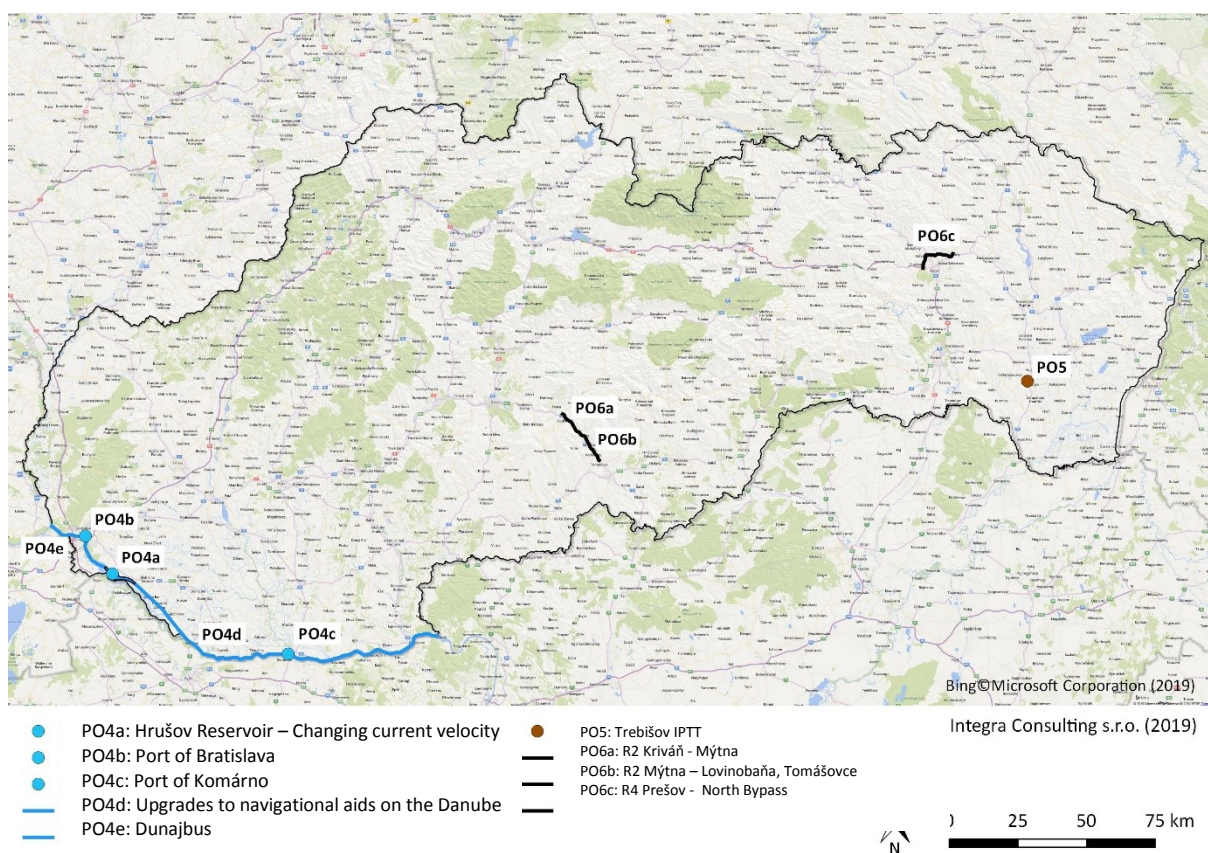


Figure 1: Territorial specification of OPII changes

¹There is no new intention at the new location in the Port of Bratislava, but there are changes in the scope and type of activities at the port.

2. Procedure for processing an appropriate assessment

The appropriate assessment of the impact of the Integrated Infrastructure Operational Programme (v. 6.0) on the Natura 2000 site was processed as an attachment to the evaluated strategy paper provided in Sec. 24/2006 Coll., as amended, and in accordance with Sec. 28 (2) of Act 543/2002 Coll. on Nature and Landscape Protection, as amended, in the scope and structure of the *Methodology for assessing the impact of plans and projects on sites of the Natura 2000 network in the Slovak Republic* (State Nature Conservancy, SNC Methodology 2014, revised 2016, hereinafter "SNC Methodology 2014, 2016"). The appropriate assessment is likewise drafted in accordance with Art. 6.3 of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as amended, and in accordance with EC guidelines on provisions of Art. 6.3 and 6.4 of the Habitats Directive - *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites*. The appropriate assessment focused on those parts of the plan, which change the initially assessed and approved version of the OPII.

2.1. Affected Natura 2000 sites

According to the SNC Methodology (2014, 2016), properly identifying all potentially affected Natura 2000 sites is a key step in correctly executing the appropriate assessment.

The SNC Methodology (2014, 2016) considers the following Natura 2000 sites to be affected:

- Those directly affected territorially by the plan and the action/project envisaged by the plan (the planned project/activity directly affects the Natura 2000 site or is located in the immediate vicinity and the impact can be envisaged);
- There is a presumption that inputs (such as increased raw material extraction, water abstraction, transport corridors, technology) would affect them either while implementing the plan or during preparation, implementation or winding up of the projects which the plan envisages;
- There is a presumption that outputs (such as increased waste generation, waste water, emissions, noise) would affect them either while implementing the plan or during preparation, implementation or winding up of the projects which the plan envisages (use of quantitative data, studies, modeling, etc. are appropriate);
- Where at least one of the areas subject to protection may be affected either while implementing the plan or during preparation, implementation or winding up of the projects which the plan envisages, although only at a certain stage of the lifecycle.

In the analysis conducted according to the SNC Methodology (2014, 2016), the envisaged impact on Natura 2000 sites were assessed using several factors:

- Type, scope and impact during implementation;
- Sensitivity of the protected subject matter to impacts from the plan (e.g. hydrology, habitat fragmentation, dust, noise);
- Range, locomotive and migratory capacity of protected subject matter in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA), where either a site located several (or dozens of) kilometers away may also be affected by a plan or project with remote reach and impacts or there exists migration routes for protected species in areas surrounding the Natura 2000 site.

Affected areas identified were also assessed in the context of possible cumulative impacts on other proposed, approved or already implemented plans or projects.

2.2. Protected subject matter affected

Protected subject matter in Natura 2000 sites that could be affected by the strategy paper were identified in the next step of the analysis. Every protected subject matter in identified sites were

assessed in relation to its direct or indirect impacts on a plan and its envisaged inputs, outputs and cumulative and synergic impacts on other plans and projects. In doing so, both environmental and biological demands of the species and habitats, their mobility and migratory capacity, the nature of their occurrence in the wider vicinity, rarity, vulnerability and sensitivity were taken into account and similarly so to minimize as much as possible the estimated future action and impact of the strategy paper.

2.3. Analysis of the impacts on protected subject matter affected

For every protected subject matter identified in the identified Natura 2000 sites, the envisaged impact and possible interaction of cumulative and synergistic impacts with other plans and projects was analyzed in accordance with the SNC Methodology (2014, 2016).

In particular, information about the following was considered:

- Ecological demands on species and habitats in all phases of their life cycles (reproduction, foraging, resting and migration) and on the quality of their habitats (in the case of species themselves);
- Occurrence in Slovakia, overall population, areas of occurrence and natural habitat, trends in population and range;
- Nature of the occurrence at the impacted site (inside the specific Natural 2000 site);
- Population, the area of occurrence in the site and the effect of the identified impacts on the protected subject matter (loss of individuals, habitat and identified risks).

2.4. Impact assessment

The intensity of the expected impact has been assessed according to the scale shown in the table below so that the impacts can be compared in a standardized manner.

Table 1 Impact significance of plans

Value	Impact significance	Description of impact significance
-2	significantly negative impact	Adverse impact on the integrity of the site according to Art. 6.3 of the Habitat Directive. Significantly disturbing to destructive impact on a habitat or species population or an essential part thereof, significant disturbance in ecological conditions within a habitat or species, significant intervention in a habitat or natural development of a species. The plan may only be approved when the conditions laid down in Sec. 28 (6), (7) and (8) of the Nature Protection Act have been met.

-1	slightly negative impact	Limited (moderate) insignificant negative impact. A slightly disturbing impact on a habitat or species population, slight disturbance in ecological conditions within a habitat or species, marginal intervention in a habitat or natural development of a species. It can be minimized or eliminated through proposed mitigation measures. Approval of the plan is not precluded.
0	zero impact	No demonstrable impact.
1	slightly positive impact	A slightly positive impact on a habitat or species population, slight improvement in ecological conditions within a habitat or species, slightly positive intervention in a habitat or natural development of a species.
2	significantly positive impact	A significantly positive impact on a habitat or species population, significant improvement in ecological conditions within a habitat or species, a significantly positive intervention in a habitat or natural development of a species.
?	Unevaluable impact	In view of the general terms of reference, the impact of the entire plan or certain parts (projects) contained therein cannot be assessed.

Source: SNC Methodology (2014, 2016)

The analysis indicated the plan to be incapable of assessment and the documentation provided by the contracting entity insufficient when the precautionary principle was applied.

Parts of the plan/activity that could not be assessed (either they were unevaluable or there was insufficient information about the details of the localized project/plan activity) need to be appropriately assessed at the project level. When it happened, the appropriate assessment was recommended in its conclusions.

The expected impacts have been assessed, preferably to the highest degree possible quantitatively with regard to the percentage species population or habitat area at the Natura 2000 site to be affected. If the population or area to be adversely impacted were greater than 1% of the protected subject matter's coverage, then the impacts would be considered as significantly negative.

Were a significant negative impact (-2) to be identified for at least one protected subject matter in a defined Natura 2000 site, the impact assessment of the plan for the entire Natura 2000 site would be assessed as significantly negative. And the plan would need to be adjusted accordingly.

When more detailed assessments were available about the impacts on species and/or habitat of those projects which are part of the plan and have already undergone an appropriate assessment, these more detailed and detailed documents were then used.

Species and habitats are mentioned in an appropriate assessment in terms of standard catalogues and nomenclature. Habitats are evaluated and reported according to the Catalogue of Habitats in Slovakia (Stanová, Valachovič et. al., 2002) and the botanical nomenclature is according to the List of Lower and Higher Plants in Slovakia (Marhold, Hindák, 1998). The mammalian nomenclature used is the work of Krištofík and Danko (2012) and the avian nomenclature is according to Kovalík et al. (2010). Should the nomenclature in these sources differ from the nomenclature of the species used in legislation or official documents establishing the Natura 2000 sites in question (SPA Ordinances, National SAC List), both names are then given.

3. Plan information

The amendment to the OPII version 6.0 aims toward adapting and adding content of the selected priority axes to the Operational Programme. Since the adoptions and additions to the OPII are formulated in rather general terms, proposals for specific activities exist to implement the amendment to the OPII. In assessing the possible impact of the OPII amendment, these specific activities are taken into account (see Chapter IV - Evaluation reports), so a brief description of them is presented below as part of the description of the adoptions and additions. It should also be noted that, despite specific activities currently subject to the processing of project documentation and/or related supports (e.g. feasibility studies), it is presumed, in the case of approval of prepared documents and studies, that implementation of these activities will also be financed from the OPII.

Figure 1 in Chapter 1 summarizes the amendment to the OPII for newly added sites in the specific intentions of the OPII.

Amendments to the OPII are proposed in four areas:

- Adaption and addition to the content of Priority Axis 4;
- Adaption and addition to the content of Priority Axis 5;
- Adaption and addition to the content of Priority Axis 6;
- Adaption and addition to the content of Priority Axis 7;

Each of the changes is described in the following sub-chapters, specifying whether the change will take effect in a specific territorially localized form that could affect the Natura 2000 sites.

3.1. Priority Axis 4 - Water transport infrastructure (TEN-T CORE)

3.1.1. Changing the name of Specific Objective 4.1 including adapting and expanding its content

The amendment to the OPII to version 6.0 includes a proposal by the OPII MA to change the name of Specific Objective 4.1. The new name would be "Specific Objective 4.1. Improving the quality of services provided on the Danube Waterway." As part of the Specific Objective, the OPII MA is creating space for the implementation of activities prioritizing pre-project and project preparation, as well as implementation of specific projects to improve the navigability of the Danube Waterway. Intervention in the Danube Waterway includes projects that cover the upgrading and public port construction in Bratislava and Komárno. The amendment does not constitute a change affecting Natura 2000 sites. The specific changes in activities resulting from it are described below, so it does not need to be evaluated separately in the appropriate assessment.

3.1.2. Additions to the Komárno public port financed from OPII funds

Even though the standing of the public port in Bratislava as the main port in Slovakia remains undisputed and its upgrade is one of the main priorities for inland waterway transport, the MTC is accordingly directing its resources toward upgrading the public port at Komárno. The Komárno public port is the second largest port in Slovakia and is located at the confluence of the Váh River and the international waterway on the Danube, which is part of the Rhine-Danube TEN-T Corridor. The Komárno public port plays an important role in moving goods originating from Great Schütt Island (Žitný Ostrov). Planned interventions from the OPII in the Komárno public port are the addition of projects financed from the Connecting Europe Facility - Port Master Plan and Feasibility Study, whose objective is to assess alternatives for upgrading the public port. Following a summarization of development possibilities, procurement of project documentation and the actual upgrade of the port infrastructure in the recommended variant is envisaged. The amendment does not constitute a change affecting Natura 2000 sites. The measures themselves for the Port of Komárno are specified below, so it does not need to be evaluated in the appropriate assessment.

3.1.3. Change in eligible beneficiaries

Adaption and addition to the content of PA 4 requires adaption of the recipients in the list of the Priority Axis's eligible beneficiaries. It is expected that involvement of new entrants and, in particular, implementation of the draft project charter will improve navigation parameters on the Danube international waterway, making water transport more attractive to potential carriers and forwarders and increasing water transport and transport operations in Slovakia. Entrants whose addition as PA 4 eligible beneficiaries have been proposed by the OPII MA:

- Slovenský vodohospodársky podnik, štátny podnik
- Vodohospodárska výstavba, štátny podnik
- Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava
- Pro-Danubia - Association of Municipalities for Local Transport on the Danube
- Transport Authority

Concurrently and following passage of Act 284/2018, amending Act 338/2000 Coll. on inland navigation and on the amendment of certain laws, as amended, which changed a number of laws, it was proposed to drop the Waterborne Transport Development Agency from the list of PA 4 eligible beneficiaries. Adoption of the new act on 1 November 2018 abolished the Waterborne Transport Development Agency, whose role was taken over by the Ministry of Transport and Construction as its legal successor. The amendment does not constitute a change affecting Natura 2000 sites, so it does not need to be evaluated in the appropriate assessment.

3.1.4. Changing the name of "A" including adapting and expanding its content

Following the intention to procure appropriate stages of the project documentation, as well as implementing projects aimed at ensuring the required parameters on the Danube Waterway's fairway, the OPII MA proposes to change the name of "A" to "A: *Improving navigability on the Danube Waterway*". Should the EC have a negative opinion of the feasibility study for the projects in this activity, construction of the infrastructure will not be financed from the OPII.

To implement this adoption, the project charter *Changing current velocity in the lower Hrušov Reservoir - pre-project and project preparation* was drafted. The main objective of this national project is to design a technical solution to increase the velocity of the current in the lower Hrušov Reservoir, thereby preventing it from silting, improving water transport safety and creating the conditions both for removing choke points in the TEN-T water transport infrastructure and making this transport method attractive for water transport carriers and operators. Results to date from monitoring the natural environment with respect to the impact of the Gabčíkovo Dam indicate continuing deterioration of navigation conditions in the lower Hrušov Reservoir. Intensive silting in the water ducts located in the lower Hrušov Reservoir expose it to risk mainly from its impact on navigation and is causing the water depth to sink to the minimum level required for operations at this stretch. Assessments from available monitoring and measurement and of ongoing sedimentation and clogging at the bottom imply the measures taken to date to dredge sediments have not been enough and need to be supplemented by new measures focused on increasing current velocity at the lower Hrušov Reservoir to reduce sedimentary deposits.

A cost-benefit analysis (CBA), feasibility study and subsequent documentation of the construction project will be drafted for a technical solution and these will be the supporting documents for the environmental impact assessment provided in Act 24/2006 Coll. on Environmental Impact Assessments. Impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated during pre-project preparation, so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.1.5. Changing the name of "B" including adapting and expanding its content

Along with the addition of the public port at Komárno to OPII funding, the OPII MA proposes changing the name of "B" to "B: *Upgrades and public port construction in Bratislava and Komárno*".

Considering the existing state of safety and security at the public ports, it is desirable to take appropriate action (implementing port monitoring systems) in order to rapidly identify emergencies and shorten response time for rescue and intervention units. Simultaneously, there is a need to implement appropriate emergency measures which would minimize damage and rescue in emergency situations. Implementation of these safety and security measures is planned for both public ports (Bratislava, Komárno).²

After adapting Activity B, intervention in the Bratislava public port will be accordingly eligible for alternative fuel development support leading to the greening of water transport as recommended by the EC (construction of an LNG terminal), creating the conditions for ecologically replenishing operating fluids into river vessels and effectively managing operating and disposing of water transport wastes (constructing vessel facilities). Concurrently and in the context of the existing OPII text, activities concentrating on upgrading applicable port infrastructure were dropped, involving mooring elements, quay walls, walkways along the banks, anchoring sites and warning signs, with no plans to implement these interventions.

To implement this adoption, drafts of the following project charters were prepared:

- Facilities for vessels (Bratislava)

The project objective is to produce a technical and economic study: "Building vessel facilities at the Bratislava public port - pre-project preparation" identifies the most appropriate technology for refueling services, loading drinking water, collecting waste, (pumping out fecal and drainage water, collecting waste oil, municipal waste and both collecting and removing hazardous waste) and treating waste (cleaning/processing), removing it and discharging purified wastewater.

- Building an LNG terminal at the Bratislava public port – pre-project preparation

The LNG terminal is planned to follow a broader distribution chain relationship where a natural gas supplier will deliver gas through a pipeline to a terminal in the Port of Bratislava, which would then refine and distribute it by water to end users - other ports on the Danube, etc. Since LNG is both a traded commodity and a fuel, the LNG terminal is envisaged to be also an LNG refueling station. The feasibility study aims to identify technologies for producing and distributing LNG, compare them in terms of environmental, economic and security considerations and recommend a technology that would be the most advantageous in view of the Bratislava public port's specificities. The feasibility study will cover the following: Technical study, documented safety of the selected technology, CBA and EIA.

- Port security - pre-project preparation

The objective is to design a system for shortening reaction time in an emergency, which an installed monitoring system would identify. Installation of the system is envisages for the entire demarcated public port area in the basic TEN-T Core network. The monitoring system would be required to provide information about cargo dock emergencies and vessels navigating to and from the port during an emergency and also exchange information about safety conditions which would protect the port, vessels and port facilities in the event of an emergency. The system would also rapidly identify emergencies and, where necessary, call rescue and intervention units, thereby contributing toward mitigating the adverse impacts of emergency situations on the environment at public ports in the

² Overall development of both public ports is addressed in the Master Plan. Master Plan II, the second phase of the strategy for developing the Bratislava public port, is the subject of an SEA assessment, with the decision issued in January 2019 <https://www.enviroportal.sk/sk/eia/detail/strategia-rozvoja-verejneho-pristavu-bratislava-faza-ii-master-plan-ii>. Communication from the Strategy Paper for the Master Plan (the strategic plan for development of the Komárno public port) was filed in December 2018.

basic TEN-T Core network. The monitoring system will function with already available navigation data from individual systems, such as RIS.

Given the planned implementation of specific activities at the ports of Bratislava and Komárno, impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated, so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.1.6. Broadening the focus of "C. Introducing modern technology into the management of maritime and port operations"

The original focus of the activity in question was directed only toward supporting River Information Services (RIS). Since these activities are to be co-financed from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the OPII MA proposes to broaden the focus toward upgrading navigational aids to synergistically complement RIS. The RIS application and implementation of related technical measures on the Danube Waterway will enable increased infrastructure capacity, optimal use of existing infrastructure and improved safety at maritime and port operations. Concurrently, this section proposes the option of purchasing a buoy tender to operate along the stretch of the Danube Waterway between Gabčíkovo Dam and Štúrovo, if a feasibility study supports it.

To implement this adoption, a project charter was drafted entitled "*Feasibility study for the upgrade of buoy technology and navigational aids in the Danube waterway of international importance.*" The project would focus on upgrading buoy technology and navigational aids along the Danube in the stretch from the Austro-Slovak border (km 1,880.26) to the Slovak-Hungarian border (km 1,708.20). The study will include an assessment of existing navigational signs and the technology they use, a design for installing and upgrading signaling navigational signs and buoys, for the upgrade of signaling devices (intelligent AIS AtoNs Beacons and a system for monitoring and operating them), for integrating intelligent and virtual buoys into the River Information Service system and for an optimal fairway buoy system with regard for the existing fleet operated by Slovenský vodohospodársky podnik, š. p.

Given the planned implementation of specific measures without any precise localization and specification of the activity to date, impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated, so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.1.7. Adding a new eligible activity "D. Introducing regular passenger navigation on the Danube (Dunajbus)"

The objective of the activity is to use the inland waterway as a means to improve traffic handling in the greater Bratislava region. It involves implementing the comprehensive intention to construct a regular passenger navigation system on the stretch of the Danube Waterway between Šamorín and Bratislava. The project aims to establish a passenger river shuttle service covering the 50 kilometers between Bratislava-Devín and the village of Vojka nad Dunajom. The intention is to construct new port marinas at Bratislava-Devín, Bratislava-Petržalka and Vojka nad Dunajom and stops with snack bars at Bratislava-River Park and Bratislava-Eurovea, while incorporating existing marinas at Čunovo, Hamuliakovo and Šamorín to create eight stops for boats along the Danube (see Figure 2 below). Continuous traffic flow would be ensured by seven (7) catamarans with a displacement of 40 tonnes with no load and 50 tonnes with a full load. A depot and winter port will be established not far from the Hamuliakovo marina. The proposal includes expanding the original parking area and constructing a new parking area.³

³ The intention was submitted in January 2019, see <https://www.enviroportal.sk/sk/eia/detail/-pravidelna-osobna-vodna-doprava-po-dunaji-dunajbus->

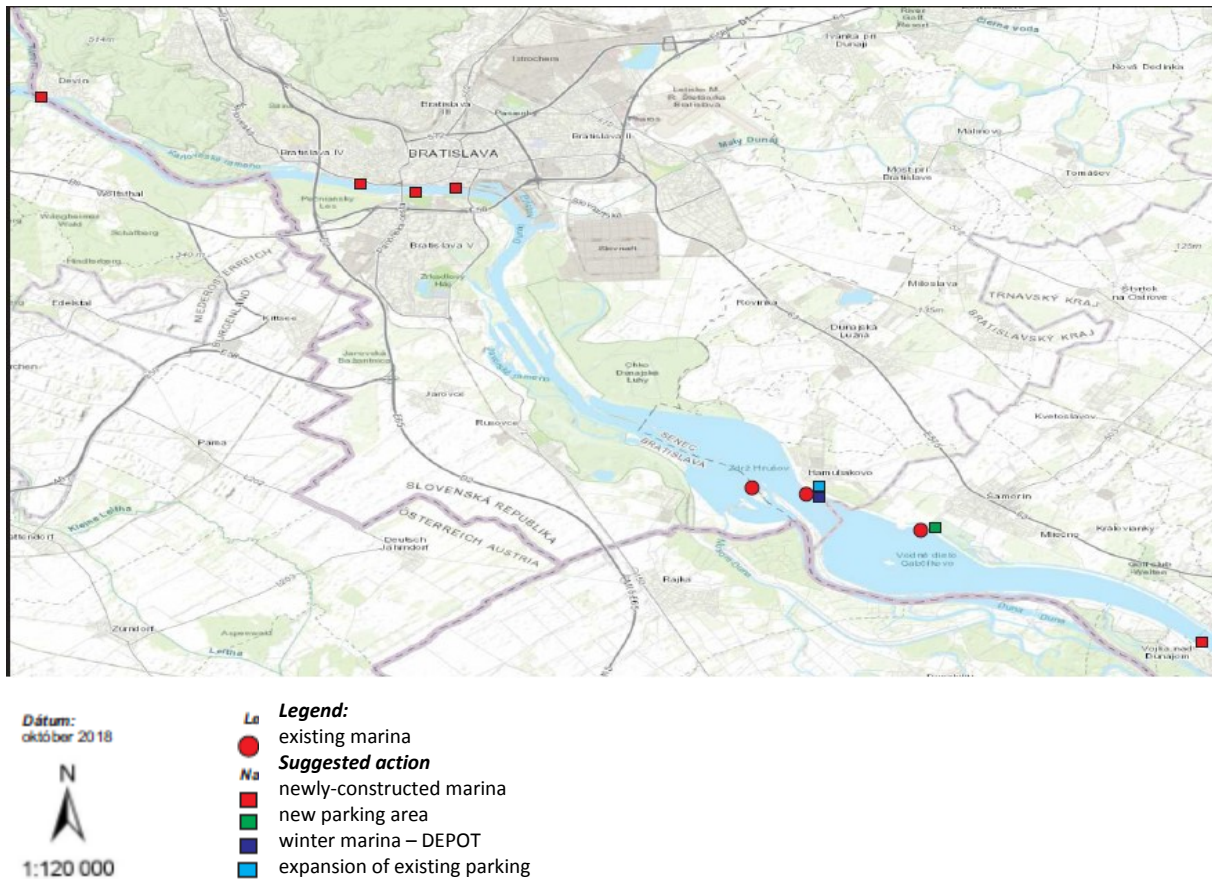


Figure 2: Map of the expanded Dunajbus ports.

Source: EIA, October 2018, EKOJET, s.r.o., Industrial and landscape ecology

PA 4 resources would be preferably channeled toward drafting a feasibility study to identify the potential for introducing regular passenger navigation in the greater Bratislava region and, if the project were feasible, to procure design documentation. It is envisaged that the project's implementation phase would require, in particular, the construction of anchorages for river vessels, a Park & Ride lot and bulwarks to protect the anchoring sites, as well as the purchase of the vessels themselves to transport passengers. Should the EC have a negative opinion of the feasibility study, neither construction of the infrastructure nor purchase of the vessels would be financed from the OPII.

Given the planned implementation of specific measures for this activity, impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated, so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.2. Priority Axis 5 - Railway infrastructure and upgrading of rolling stock

The OPII Managing Authority for PA 5 proposes adding new activities and specifying the existing priority axis text in greater detail. The proposed changes are described below.

3.2.1. Changing the name of Priority Axis 5 and adding a new specific objective 5.3

The OPII MA proposes changing the name of PA 5 to "Railway infrastructure and upgrading of rolling stock". Simultaneously, it proposes adding thereto a new specific objective "Specific objective 5.3: Enhancing the attractiveness and quality of public rail passenger transport by upgrading rolling stock." The aim of this modification is to create space for upgrading rolling stock providing public passenger transport by rail. The amendment does not constitute a change affecting Natura 2000 sites, so it does not need to be evaluated in the appropriate assessment.

3.2.2. Adding a new activity "I. Upgrading public rail passenger transport rolling stock"

Because of increasing interest among passengers in rail passenger transit, the MTC sees the scope for broadening projects of this type also to other regions in Slovakia. Therefore, it proposes to support the suburban and regional transport segment by adding the option to acquire new trainsets, primarily in Prešov Region, to PA 5.

Since the introduction of new trainsets and their use on existing tracks will have no impact on Natura 2000 sites, the amendment does not constitute a change affecting Natura 2000 sites, so it does not need to be evaluated in the appropriate assessment.

3.2.3. Adding a new activity to construct checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network

OPII MA proposes as part of "B: Reducing rail transport safety risks (e.g. eliminating level railway crossings in road infrastructure and upgrading railway crossings)" to specify with greater detail the intention to construct infrastructure manager checkpoints. Building these points may constitute a significant contribution toward reducing the number of safety incidents and traffic accidents in the ŽSR network. Specific points would be located along the ŽSR network and furnished with technical installations in accordance with the feasibility study of constructing network checkpoints and would include the method for integrating data into the ŽSR network.

Given the planned implementation of specific, but not yet exactly specified activities, impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated, so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.2.4. Changing the name of "C" including adapting and expanding its content

Following the intention to construct an intermodal terminal in Trebišov from PA 5 funds, the OPII MA proposes changing the name of "C" to "C: Construction and upgrading of intermodal terminals for rail passenger transport and for integrated passenger transport and connecting them to the road network." The OPII MA proposes adoption so the main characteristic of the Trebišov structure is to integrate transport systems in building an integrated transport system (ITS) as part of the KSGR's integration of individual passenger transport (automobile and bicycle) and public passenger transport (bus and rail) and also pooling facilities on a commercial basis for ITS passengers.

Given the planned implementation of specific measures for "C", impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated, so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.3. Priority Axis 6 - Road infrastructure (outside the TEN-T CORE)

The OPII Managing Authority proposes more detailed specification of the existing PA 6 wording, namely:

3.3.1. Adding the R2 and R4 expressways

The OPII MA proposes for expressway construction to add further stretches of the R2 and R4 which, in the event of an increase in the OPII financial framework, can be funded from resources in the operational programme. The stretches to be added to PA 6 by the OPII MA are:

- R2 Kriváň - Mýtňa; and
- R2 Mýtňa – Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce.

The present construction (including both stretches above) were assessed by the MOE in accordance with National Council of the Slovak Republic Act 127/1994 Coll. on Environmental Impact Assessments, as amended by Act 391/2000 Coll., amending the earlier mentioned law on assessing environmental impact. The EIA process was completed with the final opinions for the R2 Expressway Zvolen – Lovinobaňa from the environmental impact assessment issued by the MOE on 17 February 2006 (4366/04-1.6) and for the R2 Expressway Lovinobaňa – Ožďany from the environmental impact assessment issued by the MOE on 18 December 2007 (2329/07-3.4/ml.).

Subsequently, Communication of changes in the proposed R2 Expressway Kriváň - Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce was drafted at the construction authorization documentation (CAD) stage and this was submitted to the MOE, which on 13 February 2017 decided from the communication that no substantial adverse impact on the environment was envisaged and so there was no assessment under Sec. 18 (1) (e) of Act 24/2006 Coll. on Environmental Impact Assessments, as amended. On 7 June 2017, Národná diaľničná spoločnosť, a.s. (National Highway Company) filed the second Communication of changes in the R2 Expressway Kriváň – Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce, Stretch I Kriváň – Mýtňa. The MOE initiated action in the investigation procedure. On 23 August 2017, the MOE issued its decision (No. 6260/2017-1-7/dj R) not to require further assessment of the proposed project changes. On 25 September 2017, an appeal against the MOE's decision in No. 6260/2017-1.7/dj R was filed with the MOE by a party to the proceedings. Nothing has yet been decided regarding the appeal.

A joint communication of changes was drafted for both stretches in 2018, although each stretch is located in a different phase of project preparation. For the stretch between Kriváň and Mýtňa, technical requirements for construction work have been prepared (in the form of tender documentation), while for the stretch from Mýtňa to Lovinobaňa and Tomášovce construction authorization documentation has been drafted.



Figure 3: R2 route for the stretch between Kriváň and Lovinobaňa.

Source: Communication of changes in the proposed activity in Annex 8a to Act 24/2006 Coll. (Integra Consulting, 2018).

Another stretch whose addition to PA 6 has been proposed is:

- R4 Prešov – North Bypass.

This is the stretch of construction of the R4 Expressway bypassing Prešov to the north in the proposed category R 24.5/100, functioning to address transit traffic currently creeping through Prešov. The construction aims to link the D1 Motorway and R4 Expressway between Kapušany and Giraltovce to relieve traffic on the existing Prešov road and to insert interchanges to reallocate source and destination traffic. This would result in improved driver safety with smoother and more comfortable driving. The Prešov-North interchange will shift transit traffic away from Route I/68 in the central city and the direct connection of I/68 to the D1 and R4.

In 2004, *R4 Expressway Prešov- North Bypass* was drafted by (Dopravoprojekt, a.s. Bratislava as an assessment report which was subsequently submitted to the MOE as the competent authority under Act 24/2006 Coll. The MOE issued its final opinion on the environmental impact assessment on 17 February 2006. In 2009, planning authorization documentation was drafted which essentially factored significant changes from tunnels, bridges, protection walls and size of land to be appropriated into the environmental impact assessment. As construction was prepared, further changes were made, which in 2014 were reflected in design drawings from construction authorization documentation and subsequently in two communications of changes in proposed activities (2015 and 2017).

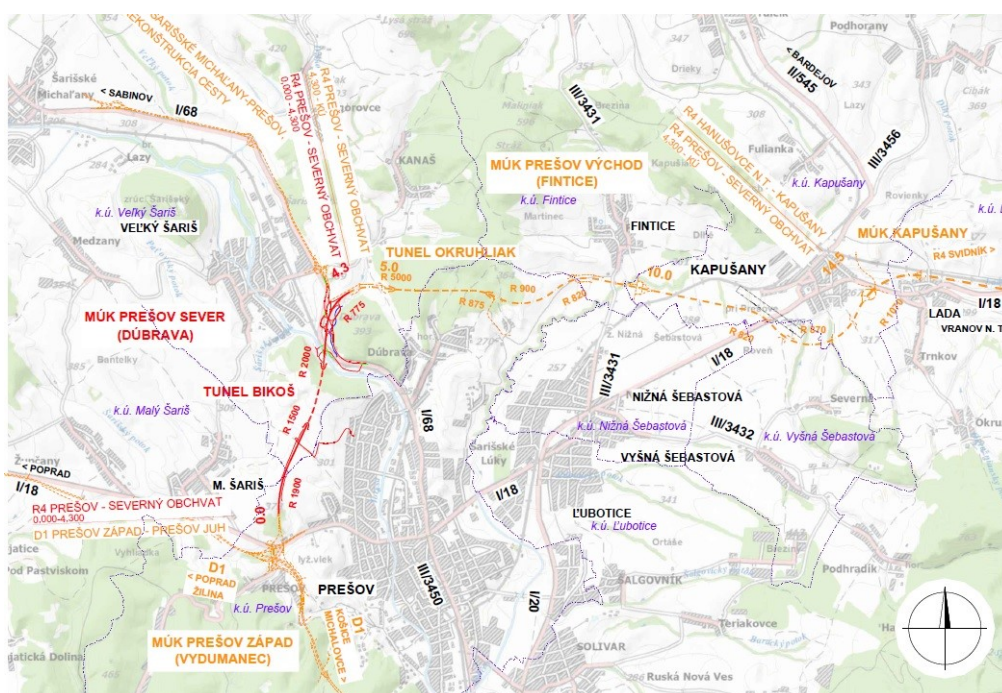


Figure 4 Transparent situation of the R4 Prešov – North Bypass.

Source: R4 Prešov – North Bypass, Detailed construction design. HBH Projekt, s.r.o., 2017.

Given the planned implementation of specific measures in adding new expressway stretches to the OPII, impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated and so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.3.2. Supporting the introduction of alternative fuels in road transport

This new activity aims to promote market development of alternative fuels in road transport, including development of the relevant infrastructure. The relevant measures for promoting alternative fuels will be implemented through financial instruments which have been set up at the national level and are included in the OPII. Selected measures will respect the national policy framework and the national policy for introducing an alternative fuel infrastructure, which was approved by the Slovak Government in 2016 following the provisions of Directive 2014/94/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure. The most promising area of support from the OPII, in line with the action plan for the development of e-mobility in the Slovak Republic, appears to promote an electric car charging infrastructure.

Given the planned implementation of specific measures for this new activity, impacts on Natura 2000 sites need to be evaluated, so they are elaborated in Chapters 4 and 5 of this appropriate assessment.

3.4. Priority Axis 7: Information society

3.4.1. Supporting the construction of smart cities and regions through ICT

Information and communication technologies (ICT) play an important role in urban change, carbon footprint reduction, more effective use of energy sources and providing residents with better services. ICT is an integral part and base for smart cities concepts since they enable integration of diverse urban systems and processes. The objective of this new activity is to promote ICT introduction in cities. The beneficiaries of the national projects will be pilot cities, with significant involvement from the European Commission and World Bank, which are already working together with the Prešov and Banská Bystrica self-governing regions under the Catching-Up Regions initiative. The amendment does not constitute a change affecting Natura 2000 sites, so it does not need to be evaluated in the appropriate assessment.

3.4.2. Promoting innovative SME solutions using public administration data and services

The objective of this new activity is to create a Small Project Fund, which would encourage innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through a voucher mechanism to use open public administration data to create new applications and services. In practice, the Small Project Fund will be implemented through a national project whose beneficiaries will be subsequently appropriated aid through vouchers to finance the emergence of innovative applications using open public administration data. Beneficiaries of the national project will be the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic for Investments and Informatization. Beneficiaries of aid will be individuals and legal entities as defined by Sec. 2 (2) of the Commercial Code, which are established and pursue economic activities in Slovakia. The amendment does not constitute a change affecting Natura 2000 sites, so it does not need to be evaluated in the appropriate assessment.

4. Identifying affected Natura 2000 sites

Based on the proposed changes in the strategic paper and the analysis of the possible impacts on the environment and landscape, including possible impacts on protected areas and Natura 2000 sites, changes where implementation of the projects may have a direct impact on nature conservation interests will now be discussed. When a strategic paper leading to changes in beneficiaries or to the purchase of new means of transport is amended, that means the envisaging of no impact on nature conservation.

Amendments to the OPII which identify possible impact on Natura 2000 sites are analyzed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

4.1. Priority Axis 4 - Water transport infrastructure

4.1.1. Changing current velocity in the lower Hrušov Reservoir

The project to change the current velocity in the lower Hrušov Reservoir should be implemented in areas with a low concentration of nature conservation interests and is focused particularly on pre-project and project preparation for this activity. No construction is envisaged in the project implementation itself from OPII funds.

In preparing the project documentation, it is necessary to take into account that the activity itself is planned to be implemented in the Danube Floodplains (Dunajské luhy) SPA and where several nationally and internationally protected areas are located nearby. The resulting project could have an impact on Natura 2000 sites, particularly the ones below:

- CHVÚ Dunajské luhy (SKCHVU007) - Danube Floodplains SPA;
- ÚEV Bratislavské luhy (SKUEV0064, SKUEV2064) - Bratislava Floodplains SAC;
- ÚEV Biskupické luhy (SKUEV0295) - Podunajské Biskupice Floodplains SAC;
- ÚEV Hrušov (SKUEV0270) - Hrušov SAC,

So an appropriate assessment of the impacts on the sites in the Natura 2000 network needs to be prepared, as required in the Scoping issued by the MOE on 6 July 2016 (No. 4421/2016-1.7/mv) in Point 2-2-19. Only after a thorough impact assessment on the aforesaid Natura 2000 sites and their protected subject matter and the EIA process has been completed can further project preparation phases proceed.

4.1.2. Upgrading and construction of public ports

4.1.2.1. Port of Bratislava

In terms of nature conservation interests, the activities planned in the port of Bratislava should have no significant impact on them. When assessing individual projects, it is necessary to check whether they would be no impact on the nearby Natura 2000 sites below which would be potentially affected:

- CHVÚ Dunajské luhy (SKCHVU007) - Danube Floodplains SPA
- ÚEV Bratislavské luhy (SKUEV0064, SKUEV2064) - Bratislava Floodplains SAC
- ÚEV Malý Dunaj (SKUEV0822) - Little Danube SAC

The Danube Floodplains SPA and the Bratislava Floodplains SAC are located near the Port of Bratislava, while the Little Danube SAC has an outlet into the Little Danube near the port.

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the impacts on Natura 2000 sites, examine them in detail at the project level and produce an appropriate assessment(s) of them.

4.1.2.2. Port of Komárno

In terms of nature conservation interests, the activities planned in the port of Komárno should have no significant impact on them. When assessing individual projects, it is necessary to check whether they would be no impact on the nearby Natura 2000 sites below which would be potentially affected:

- ÚEV Dunaj (SKUEV2393) - Danube SAC
- ÚEV Vážsky Dunaj (SKUEV0819) - Váh Danube SAC

Therefore, it is necessary to consider the impacts on Natura 2000 sites, examine them in detail at the project level and produce an appropriate assessment(s) of them.

4.1.3. Upgrades to buoy technology and navigational aids on the Danube

Neither precise localization for the implementation of this activity, nor localization of it on the international Danube waterways is known from the strategy paper and will depend on proposals for specific implementation projects. It should be noted that there are several Natura 2000 sites along the Danube and near it. On the other hand, it can be envisaged from the nature of the activity that these specific projects are going to be implemented at spots and by integrating individually designated elements into a functional whole. When placing the elements, it is necessary to avoid spots which are important for the various protected subject matter in the surrounding Natura 2000 sites, although this may sometimes not be possible. At the Hrušov Reservoir (Danube Floodplains SPA), for example, a substantial population of common terns (*Sterna hirundo*), an SPA selected species, nest right at the guidepost where elements indicating the fairway are located.

Therefore, it will be necessary for every implementation project to investigate the real impacts on the area surrounding the Natura 2000 sites also in relation to specific project activities (including connections to energy distribution facilities and the like). Such investigations should include identifying affected sites. The possible impact has to be investigated whenever a project will not be subject to the EIA process under Act 24/2006 Coll. due to its scope and nature.

Activities connected to maintenance of the Danube Waterway would not have a negative impact on nature conservation and Natura 2000 when there is compliance with all regulations governing the design and authorization of these activities. Nevertheless, when preparing the pre-project and project documentation, it is necessary to assess consistently the probability of the impact and the action thereof on Natura 2000 sites. If the probability of specific parts of the project affecting Natura 2000 sites is identified, then an appropriate assessment at the project level needs to be produced.

4.1.4. Introducing regular passenger navigation on the Danube (Dunajbus)

The Dunajbus project will be implemented together with its infrastructure in an area where several Natura 2000 territories are located. An appropriate assessment of the impacts on Natura 2000 sites by SOS/Birdlife was prepared for the project (10/2018) as part of the EIA. The analysis of the Natura 2000 sites that would be affected by the project is summarized below in Table 2.

Table 2: Natura 2000 sites affected by Dunajbus

Site	Code	Distance from project	Notes
Danube Floodplains SPA	SKCHVU007	activity to be carried out at the site	The site would be directly affected broadly at the Hrušov Reservoir.

<p>Bratislava Floodplains SAC</p>	<p>SKUEV2064</p>	<p>navigation at the site, 50 m from the port marina</p>	<p>The site would be affected by the project. The intensity of navigation in the international fairway would grow and the degree of disturbing noise and frequency of adverse impacts from waves would rise for the fish - a protected subject matter</p>
<p>Bratislava Floodplains SAC</p>	<p>SKUEV0064</p>	<p>120 m from navigation</p>	<p>The site would not be affected by the project. There is no intention to intervene directly in the SAC. No habitats and species habitats in the SAC itself would be directly appropriated.</p>
<p>Podunajské Biskupice Floodplains SAC</p>	<p>SKUEV0295</p>	<p>400 m from navigation, 2,000 m from the port marina</p>	<p>The site would not be affected by the project. Given the great distance the project is located from the site, that no habitats would be directly appropriated and the indirect impact on quality, there would be no impact on the protected subject matter affected.</p>
<p>Hrušov SAC</p>	<p>SKUEV0270</p>	<p>150 m from navigation, 500 m from the port marina</p>	<p>The site would not be affected by the project. No habitats and species habitats in the SAC itself would be directly appropriated. Because a catamaran would be used for navigation, no mortality is envisaged of the</p>

			protected subject matter (e.g. fish)
Ostrovné Lúčky SAC	SKUEV0269	150 m from navigation, 1,500 m from the port marina	The site would not be affected by the project. Activities would not affect the SAC and the Danube waters to be navigated and are separate from the branch system. Therefore, the Ostrovné Lúčky SAC would not be affected by navigation and likewise neither the protected subject matter at the site.

Source: BirdLife, 10/2018

Based on the appropriate assessment produced by SOS/BirdLife (10/2018), Dunajbus implementation and operation would not affect these sites: Danube Floodplains SPA (SKCHVU007) and Bratislava Floodplains SAC (SKUEV2064).

4.2. Priority Axis 5 - Railway infrastructure and upgrading of rolling stock

4.2.1. Constructing checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network

No precise localization for the implementation of this activity is known from the strategy paper and will depend on proposals for specific projects. It can be envisaged from the nature of the activity that these specific projects are going to be implemented at existing rail infrastructure (stations, checkpoints and existing buildings). Therefore, it can be envisaged that possible impacts on sites in the Natura 2000 network will not be probably significant.

Nevertheless, it will be necessary for every implementation project to investigate the potentially real impacts on the area surrounding the Natura 2000 sites also in relation to specific project activities. Such investigations should include identifying affected sites. The possible impact has to be investigated whenever a project will not be subject to the EIA process under Act 24/2006 Coll. due to its scope and nature.

4.2.2. Trebišov integrated passenger transport terminal

The EIA has been processed for the Trebišov integrated passenger transport terminal (Trebišov IPTT) and the envisaged impacts on nature conservation and landscape interests have been assessed. Implementation of the project is planned at a distance of approx. 930 meters northwest of the Ondava River Plain (Ondavská rovina) SPA (SKCUV037).

The EIA included an assessment of the process for constructing and operating the Trebišov IPTT, which concluded that it would have no impact on the Ondava River Plain SPA (SKCHVU037) and the site would not be affected by the Trebišov IPTT.

4.3. Priority Axis 6 - Road infrastructure (outside the TEN-T CORE)

4.3.1. Adding the R2 and R4 expressways

4.3.1.1. R2 Kriváň – Mýtňa and R2 Mýtňa – Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce

A separate study on nature conservation and the R2 Kriváň – Lovinobaňa – Mýtňa, Tomášovce project's impact on Natura 2000 sites was produced by Integra Consulting in 2018 and appears in Annex 7.

The study investigated the impact of the assessed stretch of the R2 on the Natura 2000 sites in the network and the results of this analysis are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Identification of possible impact of R2 Kriváň – Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce on Natura 2000 sites around the project

Site Name	Code	Distance from site and direction	Impact assessment and justification
Poľana SPA	SKCHVU02 2	1 km southwest 2.8 km northeast	<p>No adverse impacts were identified</p> <p><i>There are 16 selected bird species in the SPA considered protected subject matter (Bonasa bonasia, Coturnix coturnix, Crex crex, Dendrocopos leucotos, Dendrocopos syriacus, Dryocopus martius, Ficedula albicollis, Ficedula parva, Jynx torquilla, Lanius minor, Lullula arborea, Pernis apivorus, Picoides tridactylus, Picus canus, Saxicola torquatus and Tetrao urogallus).</i></p> <p>All species are linked to the forest, grassland habitats and environment of the mosaic agricultural landscape in the Lazníčky neighborhood of Podpoľania. Their territories do not encroach upon the route of the proposed R2 stretch and it is envisaged that individual nesting areas in the SPA will not be flying to the route of the future expressway.</p>

Poľana SAC	SKUEV0319	11.2 km north	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC are forest, grassland and wetland habitats and plants (<i>Campanula serrata</i>, <i>Buxbaumia viridis</i>), invertebrates (<i>Carabus variolosus</i>, <i>Cucujus cinnaberinus</i>, <i>Pseudogaurotina excellens</i> and <i>Rosalia alpina</i>), amphibians (<i>Mumbai variegata</i>, <i>Triturus montandoni</i>), bats (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>, <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>) and large carnivores (<i>Canis lupus</i>, <i>Lynx lynx</i> and <i>Ursus arctos</i>). Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact of the project on habitats, plants, invertebrates, amphibians and bats is envisaged. A migration study (Integra Consulting, 2018) confirmed the option of large carnivores migrating past the R2 large-scale on planned migration structures. Therefore, the project should have no negative impact on large carnivores in the SAC.</p>
Koryto SAC	SKUEV0009	10 km north	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises habitats. Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the site is envisaged.</p>
Rohy SAC	SKUEV0247	5.2 km west-northwest	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises forest and grassland habitats and invertebrates (<i>Lucanus cervus</i>, <i>Cucujuscinnaberinus</i>). Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the site is envisaged.</p>
Hradné Lúky SAC	SKUEV0969	9.8 km northwest	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises habitats and invertebrates (<i>Lycaena dispar</i>, <i>Maculineus teleus</i>, <i>Thesium ebracteatum</i>). Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the site is envisaged.</p>

Močidlíanska Skala SAC	SKUEV0248	8.2 km north-northwest	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises forest and grassland habitats, invertebrates (<i>Rosalia alpina</i>) and amphibians (<i>Bombina variegata</i>). Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the site is envisaged.</p>
Kopa SAC	SKUEV0045	7.8 km north	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises forest and grassland habitats, amphibians (<i>Bombina variegata</i>), Eurasian lynx (<i>Lynx, lynx</i>) and brown bears (<i>Ursus arctos</i>). Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the habitats and amphibians is envisaged. A migration study (Integra Consulting, 2018) confirmed the option of large carnivores migrating past the R2 large-scale on planned migration structures. Therefore, the project should have no negative impact on large carnivores in the SAC.</p>
Detva Stream (Detviensky potok) SAC	SKUEV0400	7.9 km north-northwest	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises forest, grassland and wetland habitats, invertebrates (<i>Carabus variolosus</i>) and amphibians (<i>Bombina variegata</i> and <i>Triturus montandoni</i>). Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the site is envisaged.</p>
Javorinka SAC	SKUEV0046	10 km north-northeast	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises grasslands and plants (<i>Campanula serrata</i>). Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the site is envisaged.</p>

Uderinky SAC	SKUEV0957 (Phase C)	2 km east	<p>No adverse impacts were identified.</p> <p>The protected subject matter in the SAC comprises habitat type 9110 - Euro-Siberian steppic woods with <i>Quercus</i> spp. Due to the distance from the project and the protected subject matter, no impact from the project on the site is envisaged.</p>
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Source: Appropriate assessment of R2 Kriváň – Lovinobaňa – Mýtina, Tomášovce (Integra Consulting, 2018 Annex 7)

Based on the information from the above study, none of the surrounding Natura 2000 sites would be affected by construction of the R2 Kriváň – Mýtina and R2 Mýtina – Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce.

4.3.1.2. R4 Prešov – North Bypass

In order to assess the impact on Natura 2000 sites surrounding the projected R4, an appropriate assessment was produced by HBH Projekt (01/2014) with a detailed impact assessment from construction of the R4 Expressway North Bypass on the Natura 2000 network located nearby and their protected subject matter. Table 4 below identifies the Natura 2000 sites that would be affected by the project.

Table 4: Identification of possible impact of R4 Prešov – North Bypass on Natura 2000 sites around the project (prepared by HBH Projekt in 01/2014)

Site Name	Code	Distance from site and direction	Impact assessment and justification
Slanec Hills (Slanské Vrchy) SPA	SKCHVU025	1700 m south	<p>The site would not be directly affected by the project.</p> <p>No protected subject matter habitat in the SPA was appropriated. Provisionally identified indirect options affecting protected subject matter: The impact occurs only when the protected subject matter (in this case, birds) is moving outside of the sites in the Natura 2000 network - noise and light disturbance, dodging vehicles.</p>
Fintice Slopes (Fintické svahy) SAC	SKUEV0322	900 m north	<p>The site would not be directly affected by the project. Neither habitats nor protected subject matters in the SAC were</p>

			appropriated. The impact occurs only when the protected subject matter is moving outside of the sites in the Natura 2000 network - noise and light disturbance, dodging vehicles.
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Source: Appropriate assessment produced by HBH Projekt (01/2014)

Based on the information from the above study, construction and operation of the R4 Expressway north bypass would affect two sites: Slanec Hills SPA (SKCHVU025) and Fintice Slopes SAC (SKUEV0322).

4.3.2. Supporting the introduction of alternative fuels in road transport

No precise localization for the implementation of this activity is known from the strategy paper and will depend on proposals for specifically implemented projects. It can be envisaged from the nature of the activity that these specific projects are going to be implemented in urban areas (parking areas, public buildings, service stations) or in already existing infrastructure (service stations, rest stops). Therefore, it can be envisaged that possible impacts on sites in the Natura 2000 network will not be probably significant.

Nevertheless, it will be necessary for every implementation project to investigate the potentially real impacts on the area surrounding the Natura 2000 sites also in relation to specific project activities (including connections to energy distribution facilities and line pipes). Such investigations should include identifying affected sites. The possible impact has to be investigated whenever a project will not be subject to the EIA process under Act 24/2006 Coll. due to its scope and nature.

5. Impact assessment of Amendments to the OPII on affected Natura 2000 sites

5.1. Assessment of the impact from individual activities and measures on affected Natura 2000 sites

This section assesses the impacts of individual activities and measures on sites belonging to the Natura 2000 network.

5.1.1. Changing current velocity in the lower Hrušov Reservoir

An appropriate assessment of the impacts on the sites in the Natura 2000 network needs to be prepared, as required in the Scoping issued by the MOE on 6 July 2016 (No. 4421/2016-1.7/mv) in Point 2-2-19.

An appropriate assessment at the project level will be able to analyze all necessary details for defining the scope and severity of project impacts on affected Natural 2000 sites. Given the nature of the activities, it can be envisaged that project implementation can be planned as to mitigate or minimize the adverse impacts on species and habitats in the surrounding areas.

Only after a thorough impact assessment on the affected Natura 2000 sites and their protected subject matter and the EIA process has been completed can further project preparation phases proceed.

Assessment: ?

Impacts cannot be evaluated at this level of project details and appropriate assessments will need to be processed at the project level as required by the competent authorities responsible for the environmental impact assessment.

5.1.2. Upgrading and construction of public ports

5.1.2.1. Port of Bratislava

In identifying the sites to be affected by the projects, the following list indicates those likely to be categorized as such. When assessing individual projects, it is necessary to check whether they would be no impact on the nearby Natura 2000 sites below:

- CHVÚ Dunajské luhy (SKCHVU007) - Danube Floodplains SPA
- ÚEV Bratislavské luhy (SKUEV0064, SKUEV2064) - Bratislava Floodplains SAC
- ÚEV Malý Dunaj (SKUEV0822) - Little Danube SAC

An appropriate assessment of the impacts on the sites in the Natura 2000 network needs to be prepared for individually implemented projects, in compliance with future decision-making EIA and nature conservation authorities. An appropriate assessment at the project level will be able to analyze all necessary details for defining the scope and severity of project impacts on affected Natural 2000 sites. Given the nature of the activities, it can be envisaged that project implementation can be planned as to mitigate or minimize the adverse impacts on species and habitats in the surrounding areas.

Only after a thorough impact assessment on the affected Natura 2000 sites and their protected subject matter and after the EIA process has been completed can further project preparation phases proceed.

Conclusion: Assessments: ?

Impacts cannot be evaluated at this level of project details and appropriate assessments at the project level will need to be processed.

5.1.2.2. Port of Komárno

Chapter 4 identified the sites listed below as likely to be affected by the intended upgrading of the Port of Komárno. When assessing individual projects, it is necessary to check whether they would be no impact on the nearby Natura 2000 sites below:

- ÚEV Dunaj (SKUEV2393) - Danube SAC
- ÚEV Vážsky Dunaj (SKUEV0819) - Váh Danube SAC

An appropriate assessment of the impacts on the sites in the Natura 2000 network needs to be prepared for individually implemented projects, in compliance with future decision-making EIA and nature conservation authorities. An appropriate assessment at the project level will be able to analyze all necessary details for defining the scope and severity of project impacts on affected Natural 2000 sites. Given the nature of the activities, it can be envisaged that project implementation can be planned as to mitigate or minimize the adverse impacts on species and habitats in the surrounding areas.

Only after a thorough impact assessment on the affected Natura 2000 sites and their protected subject matter and the EIA process has been completed can further project preparation phases proceed.

Assessment: ?

Impacts cannot be evaluated at this level of project details and appropriate assessments at the project level will need to be processed.

5.1.3. Upgrades to buoy technology and navigational aids on the Danube

Activities connected to maintenance of the Danube Waterway would not have a negative impact on the Natura 2000 sites when there is compliance with all regulations governing the design and authorization of these activities. Nevertheless, when preparing the pre-project and project documentation, it is necessary to assess consistently the probability of the impact and the action thereof on the Natura 2000 sites near the Danube Waterway.

Only after a thorough impact assessment on the affected Natura 2000 sites and their protected subject matter and after the EIA process has been completed can further project preparation phases proceed.

Assessment: ?

Impacts cannot be evaluated at this level of project details and appropriate assessments at the project level will need to be processed.

5.1.4. Introducing regular passenger navigation on the Danube (Dunajbus)

An appropriate assessment of the impacts on Natura 2000 sites by SOS/Birdlife (10/2018) was produced for Dunajbus at the project level and two sites were identified.

- CHVÚ Dunajské luhy (SKCHVU007) - Danube Floodplains SPA
- ÚEV Bratislavské luhy (SKUEV0064, SKUEV2064) - Bratislava Floodplains SAC

The appropriate assessment of the impacts on Natura 2000 sites drafted by SOS/Birdlife (10/2018) stated the following:

Conclusion: -1

The appropriate assessment found the impact on the Natura 2000 network by regular Dunajbus passenger water transport along the Danube to be slightly negative on several protected subject matters in the Danube Floodplains SPA (SKCHVU007) and the Bratislava Floodplains (SKUEV2064).

The slightly negative impact was found with 50 protected subject matters in the Danube Floodplains SPA and 12 in the Bratislava Floodplains SAC (SKUEV2064). There was no significantly negative impact found on any protected subject matter. Therefore, including Dunajbus in the OPII would have no negative impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

To mitigate or eliminate the negative impact on the protected subject matter affected, 14 mitigating measures have been proposed whose compliance would be necessary to implement the project. The measures aim at minimizing the risk of bird collisions on glazed surfaces, minimizing disturbance, habitat appropriation and the impact on selected food and nesting habitats and minimizing disruption from the risk of accidents.

5.1.5. Constructing checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network

No individually implemented projects have been localized and despite the envisaged nature of these projects, the potential impact on some Natura 2000 sites near the implementation area cannot be ruled out. Therefore, it is necessary, in applying the precautionary principle, to screen the impacts on Natura 2000 sites when each project is implemented. Only after a thorough impact assessment on the affected Natura 2000 sites and their protected subject matter in identifying possible impacts after the EIA process has been completed, including appropriate assessment of the sites, can further project preparation phases proceed.

Assessment: ?

Impacts cannot be evaluated at this level of project details and appropriate assessments at the project level will need to be processed.

5.1.6. Constructing checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network

As assessed in the EIA by SIRECO (08/2014) for the project, the Trebišov IPTT would have no impact on the Ondava River Plain Special Protection Area (SKCHVU037) located nearby.

Assessment: 0

The Trebišov IPTT project would have no impact on Natura 2000 sites in its vicinity.

5.1.7. Adding the R2 and R4 expressways

5.1.7.1. R2 Kriváň – Mýtňa and R2 Mýtňa – Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce

A separate study on nature conservation and the R2 Kriváň - Lovinobaňa - Mýtňa, Tomášovce project's impact on Natura 2000 sites was produced by Integra Consulting in 2018 and appears in Annex 7.

The study investigated the impact of the assessed stretch of the R2 on the Natura 2000 sites in the network. The table below shows a more detailed summary of the results from the assessment.

Table 5: Summary of the impact assessment for Natura 2000 sites near R2 Kriváň - Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce

Site Name	Code	Distance from site and direction	Impact assessment
Pol'ana SPA	SKCHVU022	1 km southwest 2.8 km northeast	no impact
Pol'ana SAC	SKUEV0319	11.2 km north	no impact

Koryto SAC	SKUEV0009	10 km north	no impact
Rohy SAC	SKUEV0247	5.2 km west-northwest	no impact
Hradné Lúky SAC	SKUEV0969	9.8 km northwest	no impact
Močidlíanska Skala SAC	SKUEV0248	8.2 north-northwest	no impact
Kopa SAC	SKUEV0045	7.8 km north	no impact
Detva Stream (Detviansky potok) SAC	SKUEV0400	7.9 km north-northwest	no impact
Javorinka SAC	SKUEV0046	10 km north-northeast	no impact
Uderinky SAC	SKUEV0957	2 km east	no impact

Source: Integra Consulting, 2018.

Assessment: 0

Therefore, it can be stated, based on the findings from the above study, that construction of the R2 Kriváň – Mýtina and the R2 Mýtina - Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce expressways would have no negative impact on sites in the Natura 2000 network and its surroundings.

5.1.7.2. R4 Prešov - North Bypass

In order to assess the impact on Natura 2000 sites surrounding the projected R4, an appropriate assessment was produced by HBH Projekt (01/2014) with a detailed impact assessment from construction of the R4 Expressway North Bypass on the Natura 2000 network located nearby and their protected subject matter. The results from the impact assessment on the integrity of the sites in the Natura 2000 network are shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Overall impact assessment overview on the integrity of individually affected Natura 2000 sites

Location of affected Natura 2000 sites	Impact on the integrity of the sites
Slanec Hills (Slanské Vrchy) SPA	-1
Fintice Slopes (Fintické svahy) SAC	-1

Overall assessment of intent	-1
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0 = no impact

-1 = slightly negative impact

-2 = significantly negative impact

Source: HBH Projekt, s.r.o., 01/2014

To mitigate negative impacts that emerge, several mitigating measures have been proposed which should be implemented when the design is constructed.

Assessment: -1

Based on the appropriate assessment, it can be stated that the stretch of the R4 expressway has no negative impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

5.1.8. Supporting the introduction of alternative fuels in road transport

No individually implemented projects have been localized and despite the envisaged nature of these projects, the potential impact on some Natura 2000 sites near the implementation area cannot be ruled out. Therefore, it is necessary, in applying the precautionary principle, to screen the impacts on Natura 2000 sites when each project is implemented. Only after a thorough impact assessment on the affected Natura 2000 sites and their protected subject matter in identifying possible impacts after the EIA process has been completed, including appropriate assessment of the sites, can further project preparation phases proceed.

Assessment: ?

Impacts cannot be evaluated at this level of project details and appropriate assessments at the project level will need to be processed.

5.2. Evaluation of cumulative effects

Evaluations of cumulative impacts were analyzed at the project level for designed activities and measures appropriately assessed at that level. In terms of all other activities where an appropriate assessment is recommended at the project level due to the possibility of a more detailed and exact impact assessment, it will be necessary to analyze the cumulative effects likewise at the level of individual sites.

An evaluation of cumulative effects at the strategy paper level is not accurate in a large number non-localized activities.

No cumulative strategic and national level impacts have been identified in the OPII with other strategy papers which would impede approval of amendments to the OPII (version 6.0).

6. Conclusion

Table 7 below evaluates the impact of all new activities and measures in the OPII (version 6.0) on Natura 2000 sites in the network based on the analysis found in Chapters 4 and 5. Four project-level activities have already had separate impact evaluations (appropriate assessments or screenings), which have evaluated individual activities as neutral or with a slight negative impact. Five activities/measures could not be evaluated for impacts on Natura 2000 sites at the strategy paper level, so an evaluation of them is needed at the level of individually implemented projects.

Table 7: Overall impact assessment overview of OPII activities and measures on the integrity of individually affected Natura 2000 sites

OPII measure activities (v 6.0)	Impact of the project on the integrity of the sites at the plan level	There is a need for a project-level appropriate assessment
Changing current velocity in the lower Hrušov Reservoir	?	yes
Upgrade - Port of Bratislava	?	yes
Upgrade - Port of Komárno	?	yes
Upgrades to buoy technology and navigational aids on the Danube	?	yes
Dunajbus	-1	yes (was drafted)
Constructing checkpoints on the Slovak Railways (ŽSR) network	?	yes
Trebišov integrated passenger transport terminal	0	no
R2 Kriváň – Mýtina and R2 Mýtina – Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce	0	no
Prešov – North Bypass	-1	yes (was drafted)

Supporting the introduction of alternative fuels in road transport	?	yes
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Note: Evaluation based on the SNC Methodology 2014, 2016

Based on the impact assessment and the results presented in Table 7, it can be stated that the OPII amendment (version 6.0) has no adverse impact on the integrity of the analyzed Natura 2000 sites in terms of their conservation objectives and it can be approved. Because the impact of some activities could not be evaluated due to the lack of detailed information about localization and the nature of the activities, in accordance with the conclusions presented in Table 7 for some of the projects, the appropriate assessment will cover the plans below or projects defined in the framework established by the plan.

Processing the appropriate assessment at the strategy paper level is no substitute for the requirement to process an appropriate assessment at the level of individual projects.

7. Data sources used

7.1. Source materials used

- Amendment to the Integrated Infrastructure Operational Programme 2014-2020 (Version 6.0, draft proposal)
- Appropriate assessment of the R4 Expressway North Bypass (HBH Projekt, 01/2014)
- REGULAR PASSENGER WATER TRANSPORT ON THE DANUBE - DUNAJBUS - Appropriate assessment covering the impact on the Natura 2000 network (SOS/BirdLife, 10/2018)
- Communication of changes in R2 Kriváň - Lovinobaňa, Tomášovce. Annex 7 (Integra Consulting, 2018)
- Trebišov integrated passenger transport terminal - Communication of Changes SIRECO, 08/2014)
- Standard Natura 2000 site data sheet (SNC, 2017)

7.2. References used

- SNC Methodology 2014 for assessing the impact of plans and projects on sites of the Natura 2000 network in the Slovak Republic (version updated 2016). Banská Bystrica, 38 pp.
- SNC Methodology 2013: Article 17 report Habitats Directive, published at https://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/Converters/run_conversion?file=sk/eu/art17/envurbnznz/SK_species_reports-131217-132945.xml&conv=354&source=remote
- SNC Methodology 2014: Article 12 report Habitats Directive, published at http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/Converters/run_conversion?file=sk/eu/art12/envuyluvw/SK_birds_reports-14314-132352.xml&conv=343&source=remote

7.3. Information sources used

- www.biomonitoring.sk
- www.enviroportal.sk
- <http://aves.vtaky.sk/index/>

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