

The Danube (known by various names in other languages) is Europe's second-longest river, after the Volga River, and also the longest river in the European Union region. It is located in Central and Eastern Europe.

Originating in Germany (the town of Donaueschingen, in the Black Forest of Germany), the Danube flows southeast for 2,860 km passing through or touching the border of Romania (29.0%, Hungary (11.6%), Serbia(10.2%), Austria (10.0%), Germany (7.0%), Bulgaria (5.9%), Slovakia (5.9%), Croatia (4.4%), Ukraine (3.8%), and Moldova (1.6%)

The Danube played a vital role in the settlement and political evolution of central and southeastern Europe. Its banks, lined with castles and fortresses, formed the boundary between great empires, and its waters served as a vital commercial highway between nations. The national capitals of Vienna (Austria), Budapest (Hungary), Bratislava (Slovakia), and Belgrade (Serbia) have depended upon Danube for their economic growth.

The river's majesty has long been celebrated in music. The famous waltz *An der schönen, blauen Donau* (1867; *The Blue Danube*), by Johann Strauss the Younger, became the symbol of imperial Vienna.

The Danube is of great economic importance to the 10 countries that border it, for transport, the generation of hydroelectricity, irrigation, and fishing. The movement of freight is the most important economic use of the Danube. Among the major ports are such cities as Izmayil (Ukraine); Galați and Brăila, (Romania); Ruse, (Bulgaria); Belgrade, (Serbia); Budapest, (Hungary); Bratislava, (Slovakia); Vienna, (Austria); and (Regensburg), Germany.

The Danube was once a long-standing frontier of the Roman Empire, and today flows through 10 countries, more than any other river in the world. It ends its journey in a beautiful delta in Romania.

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