

SPEECH

by Deputy Director-General of the Danube Commission's Secretariat

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on the 5th Meeting of the Steering Group for Priority Area 1a of the EUSDR

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At the 3rd Meeting of the Steering Group for Priority Area 1a), held on 3-4 May 2012 in Bratislava, the representatives of the Secretariat of the Danube Commission presented two official documents approved by the Decision of the 77th session of the Danube Commission:

1. Plan for major works on the achievement of recommended fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other facilities on the Danube, (Dok. DK/TAG 77/10);
2. Recommendations on minimum requirements for standard fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other improvements on the Danube, (Dok. DK/TAG 77/11), which will enter into force on 1 January 2013.

They also reported on the current situation on the Danube with a focus on the critical shallow-water impact, which has taken place in the second half of 2011.

The Secretariat's report cites data provided in the Information by the Secretariat on the market observation for the Danube navigation. Characteristics of the actual conditions on the Danube.

Based on this information, the interruption of navigation on the certain sections from September to December 2011 ranged from 40 to 70 days.

During this period activities for maintaining navigational conditions on the river were mainly kept to the determination of the path of the navigable fairway, to the additional marking and buoyage, as well as to the allocation of additional berthing areas.

The dredging works, performed in that period, have practically failed.

According to the data available to the Secretariat, the Danube navigation, including ports and associated bodies, have suffered serious losses during that period.

The existing situation was reflected in the report by the President of the Danube Commission at the 77th session (15 December 2011) that encouraged the proposal of the European Commission addressed to the Transport Ministers of the Danube states to discuss challenges facing the Danube navigation at a special meeting. The outcome of the meeting, held on 7 June 2012 in Luxemburg, was the Declaration on effective infrastructure maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries; and the DC's Secretariat also took part in its drafting.

Insufficient water flow in January 2012, as a consequence of the shallow water period during September – December 2011, as well as low temperatures (to - 25°C), have brought about the unusual situation – the total interruption of the Danube navigation in February due to the critical ice events.

The impact of the two climate-related critical processes significantly influenced the economy and safety in 2012. Moreover, the Danube transport market feels the effects of the serious industry's recession in the Danube states, first of all, in the steel sector of the Middle and Lower Danube and fall of the grain cargo volumes transported to the mouth ports.

Therefore, the implementation of the Danube Commission's proposals and national projects of the Member States, incorporated into the developments of the Steering Group for Priority Area 1a) of the EUSDR and aimed at improving, foremost, infrastructure of the Danube navigation, may significantly reduce the critical impact of the climate processes, as well as enhance logistics base of the Danube transport.

It should be stressed that the Secretariat presents the common position of the DC's Member States within the working groups and the Steering Group of the EUSDR, while most large national projects of the Member States have been included in the Plan for major works on the achievement of recommended fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other facilities on the Danube, (Dok. DK/TAG 77/10) that is systematically updated at the experts' meetings on hydrotechnical issues and technical working groups.

The Danube Commission has launched its work on the establishment of the market observation system in 2011. The system is designed for performing operational analysis of the density of vessels' and cargoes' flows on the Danube, for estimating operating capacity of the certain river sections in different navigation periods and influence of various factors on the navigational conditions and economic indicators of navigation. It aims to provide prompt notification of the DC's Member States on the current market situation and possible trends.

The draft of the system "Market observation for the Danube navigation" comprises the following sections:

1. Characteristics of the actual navigational conditions on the Danube.
2. Operating monitoring of the fleet traffic and cargo flows.
3. Indicators of efficiency for the Danube navigation market.

The draft is currently under revision, *inter alia* having regard potential cooperation with the project "*Marktbeobachtung*" of the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR).

The first information "General characteristics of the problems facing the Danube navigation market", prepared by the DC's Secretariat, was published in June 2012 in the first issue of the CCNR's publication "*Observation of the Market for Inland Waterway Transport in Europe*" – 2012-1 and yielded positive response.

- The navigational conditions within the market observation system are put forward for assessment based on the following indicators:
 - ensuring minimum fairway parameters along the whole Danube and on its certain sections;
 - existence of limited navigation on the certain sections caused by the accidents, reparation of hydrodams' locks, dredging works;
 - existence of limited and prohibited traffic related to the critical shallow water, freeze-up or critical high water, emergence of fords on the certain sections.

Pursuant to the Recommendations on minimum requirements for standard fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other improvements on the Danube, (Dok. DK/TAG 77/11), the minimum fairway parameters shall be assessed by the following performances:

- minimum fairway width;
- minimum curvature radius.

Due to the fact that the fairway parameters on a concrete river section can be assessed to a large extent by the level indicators from the closest gauging stations, therefore on the basis of the daily indicators, provided by 26 main stations which are close to the critical sections – bottlenecks, the navigational conditions for a certain period of time can be estimated in dynamics (for instance, during a calendar week).

For the certain sections, based on the level indicators from the gauging stations located thereon, the actual operating draughts can be calculated, knowing the calculation model.

Additional information on the limited navigation and emergence of fords shall be submitted by the competent authorities of the DC's Member States responsible for the section where such limitations occur.

- The proposed system is meant to monitor operatively (within a calendar month) dynamics of fleet traffic on the certain sections of the Danube river using monthly reporting data on vessels' passage through the main hydrodams and control stations (a total of 9 points).

Beginning 1 January 2012 the DC's Secretariat regularly receives appropriate data in table form from the Slovakian (hydrodam Gabčíkovo) and the Hungarian (Mohács) competent authorities. In addition to this, following the recommendation of the competent authorities from Austria, Germany and Romania, their web-resources are also used. Availability of these data allows carrying out analysis of market dynamics, primarily, for the Middle Danube and partially for the Upper Danube.

In the current month the dynamics of vessels' passages through the control point is compared to the data of the previous month, as well as with the reporting data referred to the same periods of the preceding year.

The dynamics of cargo flows is estimated every month, meanwhile, the indicators of the current month are compared to the data of the previous month and of the same period of the preceding year, and further, on the basis of this analysis the indicators of market efficiency are calculated.

To optimize recording of cargoes, passing through the control point, the cargoes have been selected according to the main nomenclature, namely, 9 groups out of 24 under NST, over 3% of the total cargo volume transported by the Danube is due to each of the group. At the first stage 92-93% of the cargo flow is thereby subject to recording.

- The outcomes of the market observation (performance of the current navigational conditions, dynamics of fleet traffic and cargo flows), contained in the Information issued twice a year by the Secretariat, are offered to be evaluated employing special indicators. Indicators, performing dynamics and efficiency of the Danube navigation market, may be broken down into:
 - economic,
 - related to the safety of navigation;
 - ecological.

Economic indicators for the Danube navigation market are divided into 4 groups:

1st group: key indicators for the reporting period (for the preceding year), featuring the freight volumes expressed in tonnes and number of passengers in thousand people.

2nd group of indicators is determined by the calculation method based on the 1st group's indicators:

- capacity of the cargo and passenger transport market (transport revenues), (*in mln. euro*).

3rd group of indicators is determined by the outcomes of the operating monitoring of the cargo flows and fleet traffic at the control points.

4th group of indicators, performing the infrastructure development and the efficiency of the Danube navigation market, namely:

- modernization of the navigable waterways aiming at improving navigational conditions, for example, under the Plan for major works on the achievement of recommended fairway parameters, hydrotechnical and other facilities on the Danube, (Dok. DK/TAG 77/10);
- introduction of a new fleet;
- introduction of new mooring lines and special areas (container terminals Ro-Ro) at ports;
- introduction of new sections covered by the RIS systems (AIS).

The draft of the system has been approved by the expert group on shipping policy (15 April 2013).

The Danube Commission will keep the Steering Group informed about the outcomes of the market observation.