
EU Strategy for the Danube Region
Priority Area 1a – To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways

**5th Meeting of the Working Groups for
Priority Area 1a of the EUSDR**
Budapest, Hungary
20 November 2013

MINUTES

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Version (date):
V 0.1 (draft) | 22-11-2013

The 5th meeting of the Danube Strategy's Working Groups for Priority Area 1a – *To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways*, was held in Budapest, Hungary in the premises of Art'otel. The meeting was attended by 76 people representing public institutions, the European Commission, the private sector, universities and non-governmental organizations active in the field of inland navigation. The meeting was organized in plenum sessions to give the participants the possibility to express their ideas and opinions and to discuss issues concerning fleet modernization, sustainable development and waterway maintenance with a broad group of stakeholders.

1. Welcome to the participants and status quo of Priority Area 1a on inland waterways

The Coordinators of Priority Area 1a (PACs 1a), Austria and Romania (represented by **Mr. Reinhard VORDERWINKLER** and **Ms. Monica PATRICHI**) welcomed the participants, thanked them for the interest in the PA 1a activities and provided an overview of the current implementation of Priority Area 1a of the Danube Strategy.

They described the milestones reached since the last meeting: the publication of a report evaluating EU macro-regional strategies by the European Commission on 1 July 2013; submission of the second Progress Report by the PA 1a PACs which included the monitoring process of the implementation of the Luxembourg Declaration on effective waterway infrastructure maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries, signed in June 2012; the EUSDR Annual Forum organised by the European Commission in Bucharest on 28 – 29 October 2013, which was attended by more than 900 participants.

Afterwards, the coordinators mentioned the targets for PA 1a and the thematic areas of the Working Groups. They presented the agenda and stressed that the projects presented during the meeting are flagship projects contributing to the achievement of the targets and objectives established for PA 1a.

They also informed the audience that the staff of the Austrian Technical Secretariat had changed. Since 1 October 2013, the Secretariat is executed by Mr. Gert-Jan Muilerman and Mrs. Gudrun Maierbrugger from via donau.

2. Overview on latest European policy developments/NAIADES II

Mr. Cesare Bernabei (EC – DG MOVE) provided information on next year's European elections and reported that the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014-20 had been approved on 19 November 2014.

He presented the new TEN-T guidelines, which have a dual layer approach consisting of a core and a comprehensive network to be completed in 2030 respectively 2050. Member States failing in implementing the core network by 2030 will have to return the funds granted. The new regulation on TEN-T Guidelines and the Regulation for the establishment of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) identifies 9 multimodal corridors, 7 of them comprising IWT. Mr. Bernabei also presented the mechanism for corridor implementation and the budgets available for CEF in 2014 – 2020.

He also reported that the European Action Programme for inland navigation ("NAIADES II") and its implementation platform PLATINA II have been launched this year.

3. Inland vessel fuel consumption under operational circumstances

Mr. Meeuwis van Wirdum (Marin - Stichting Maritiem Research Instituut Nederland) presented the main outcomes of the ongoing MoVe IT! project financed by the Seventh Framework Programme for RTD. The project develops a suite of options for the modernisation of inland ships in order to meet the challenges of over-aging of the fleet, climate change and stronger environmental objectives. It provides decision support regarding the application of these options.

One of the main focal points of MoVe IT! is the modernisation of the ship's drive and power system to match the conditions it faces throughout its lifecycle. Research topics include new power system configurations, alternative fuels, retrofitting techniques for existing engines, improved hull and propulsion organs and assistance to the captain for efficient sailing. Further crucial modernization measures are to increase the vessel's main dimensions to achieve economic and ecological scale advantages and the upgrade of old tankers to meet new ADN requirements.

In this research project, two transport companies with activity on the Danube River are involved.

4. Innovative vessel and technology solutions with high potential of implementation

Mr. Thomas GUESNET (DST) provided information on the status and preliminary conclusions of the Innovative Danube Vessel study on energy efficiency of inland water ships and ways to improve it. The study is focused on vessel types showing the highest traffic on the Danube and on solutions than can be implemented fast.

Mr. Guesnet underlined that water depths have a major influence on the loading capacity, the speed of the vessel, fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions. RIS could assist in optimising cruising behaviour in dependence of the situation of the waterway, but however, lack of water depths could not be compensated by innovative ships.

The participants of the WG suggested considering container vessels more intensely in the study as well as hydrodynamic elements when the convoy is moving.

Mr. Alexandru Capatu requested information from the PACs and the EC on actions carried out for solving the navigation problems (i.e. maintenance of the river) which are under the responsibility of national authorities. He expressed his concerns regarding the activity of the TEN-T coordinators in solving the navigation problems.

Mr. Cesare Bernabei explained that there is a legal framework for navigation and its environmental aspects. Numerous stakeholders have to be integrated in the process. He provided several examples of major projects where such dialog is taking place, currently being implemented in Austria, Serbia and Romania,

He also stated that the TEN-T coordinators follow the legal requirements and that the Member States are the parties committed to implement the network. If the ideal of 2.5m fairway depth cannot be reached, solutions must be found.

Mr. Reinhard Vorderwinkler added that one of the topics of the next SG meeting, which will take place on 21st of November 2013, addresses the implementation of the *Declaration on effective waterway infrastructure maintenance*, signed in June 2012, in Luxemburg.

5. Impacts of extreme weather events on waterways

Ms. Nina Siedl (via donau) provided a presentation on extreme weather effects on inland waterway transport, explaining that uncertainties are still high. Ms. Siedl stated that there is no convincing evidence for increasing water levels on European waterways until 2050. However, floods are not expected to decrease. Predictions indicate that ice occurrence will decrease and visibility will improve. Regarding wind activity, almost no change is expected.

She concluded that on the Rhine- Danube corridor, there will be no decrease in the performance of inland waterway transport due to climate change until 2050.

She informed the participants on the next steps within the MOWE-IT project, which are a Draft Guidebook and the development of road map for enhanced resilience of inland waterway transport.

6. Master Plan on waterway maintenance on the Danube

Mr. Thomas HARTL (via donau) provided information on one of the main outcomes of the NEWADA duo project, which is a master plan for waterway maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries (Waterway Maintenance Master Plan - WMMP). It will be based on information gathered by questionnaires sent to the Danube countries: each country is asked to provide information on maintenance plans, expected costs and need for equipment (e.g. surveying and dredging vessels). This needs assessment will be a main element of the WMMP and serve as basis to prepare for funding opportunities in the next European programme period.

Another important outcome of NEWADA duo will be an Annual Danube Report comprising performance indicators and statistics.

7. Contributions to ongoing EU initiatives with regard to recognition and modernisation of professional qualifications in inland navigation

Ms. Ana Leganel (CERONAV) explained the HINT project and provided information regarding the Joint Working Group with members from CCNR, European Barge Union, EDINNA, European Transport Workers' Federation, European Skippers Organisation, PLATINA, the Danube Commission and the Sava Commission. The main goal of the JWG is to prepare Standards of Training and Certification in Inland Navigation (STCIN). The problems identified in the sector (shortage of skilled personnel in IWT, ageing workforce, safety) could be addressed through harmonisation of the training standards and harmonisation of the professional qualification and certification rules. The next steps in the project are publishing the results of a public consultation, an impact assessment and promoting the strategy. Mrs. Leganel pointed out that the project partners had hardly received answers to their questionnaires from the private sector.

Mr. Radu Comanici (Danube Cruises Romania) added that there are significant problems related to the recognition of certificates. For example, according to EU Directives, certificates valid on the Rhine are also valid on the Danube but not vice versa. For Danube certificates, getting permission for the Rhine results in increased financial and temporal effort.

8. Ship waste management on the Danube

Mr. Hans Berger (via donau) and **Mrs. Raluca Danila** (APDM Galati) presented the CO-WANDA project (A Convention for Ship Waste Management on the Danube, duration 2012-2014), which contributes to a green transport system in the Danube region. Within this project, an International Danube Ship Waste Convention including financing models and control mechanisms will be elaborated as well as waste reception facilities for users developed along the Danube. The first draft of the Convention will be available in early 2014, and an Electronic Vignette System to support the waste reception network management is under development as well. The Project Partners asked for support for data investigations and feedback on the draft Convention.

9. Next steps

The Coordinators of PA1a thanked the participants for their contributions and announced that the next meeting of the Working Groups will take place in Vienna, in June 2014, in combination with the 3rd EUSDR Annual Forum. The exact date and venue will be communicated by the PACs in due time.

Enclosures

Please note: All documents are available for download at the website of EUSDR PA 1a
→ www.danube-navigation.eu

- (1) Presentations given by the participants at the Working Groups meeting
- (2) List of attendants