

## **EU Strategy for the Danube Region**

**Priority Area 1a – To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways**

### **8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Groups for Priority Areas 1a & Joint PA1a/PA11 Working Group of the EUSDR**

**Linz, Austria  
28 June 2016**

## **MINUTES**

Author(s):

**Joint Technical Secretariat of PACs 1a**

Version (date):

**08/07/2016**

**Time:** 28.06.2016; 14:00 – 16:30 hrs

**Venue:** Hotel “Park Inn by Radisson”, Hessenplatz 16-18, 4020 Linz, Austria

**Attendants:** 39 attendants representing public authorities, the private sector as well as non-governmental organizations and representations of interest in the field of inland navigation (see attached list of attendants)

## 1. Welcome and introduction to the 8th Meeting of Working Groups of Priority Area 1a

Mr. Gert-Jan MUILERMAN, the representative member of the Technical Secretariat for Priority Area 1a, welcomed the participants of the 8<sup>th</sup> Working Group meeting of the EUSDR PA1a. The agenda of the meeting and a short introduction to the activities of Priority Area 1a was presented.

## 2. Working Group 1: Waterway infrastructure & management

**Speaker:** Mr. Gert-Jan MUILERMAN (viadonau / Technical Secretariat Priority Area 1a)

With regard to waterway infrastructure & management the main aim of the meeting was to initiate a more objective discussion about the critical sections on the Danube with the direct help of stakeholders. For this purpose the representatives of the present shipping companies and cargo owners were asked to reflect on the data included in the map of critical sections developed within the FAIRway Danube project.

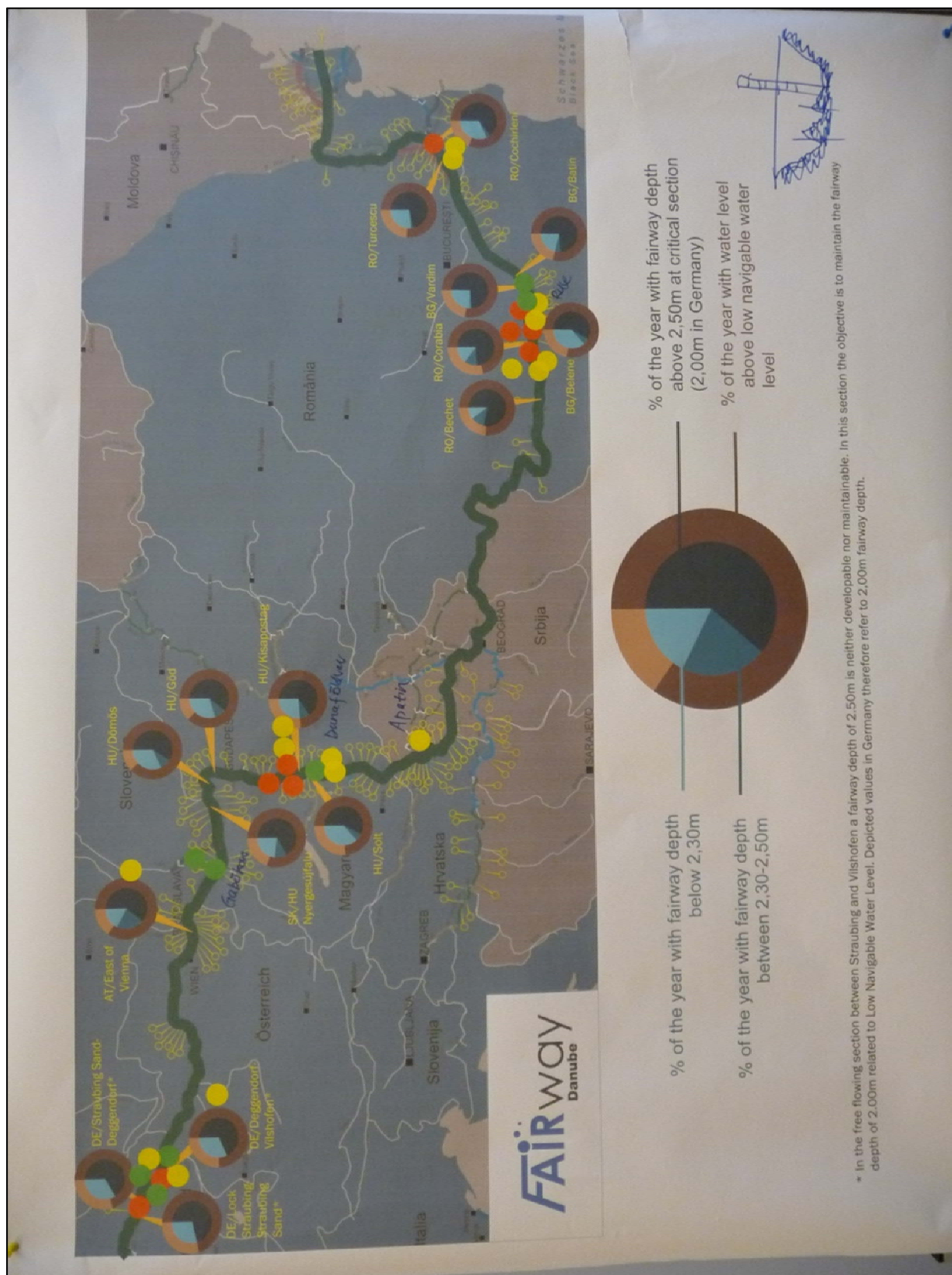
The map focuses on the most critical maintenance locations on the Danube in the year 2015 and illustrates their situation as regards water levels (outer circle) – i.e. the given hydrological framework conditions that cannot be influenced by the waterway managers - in combination with fairway availability (inner circle) – i.e. the effectiveness of interventions by the waterway managers.

The most critical sections mentioned by the present sector representatives can be summarised as follows:

- **Upper-Danube:** Straubing-Vilshofen is important for westbound traffic. The current infrastructural status of the Bavarian Danube is bad. The locks of Gabčíkovo have also been identified as weak spots.
- **Middle-Danube:** Kisapostag, Dunaföldvár, and Apatin were identified as most important sections, although Nyergesújfalu was also mentioned.
- **Lower-Danube:** Last year Belene, Bechet, Corabia, Ruse, Vardim, Batin were all in bad condition. Turcescu and Cochirleni were also mentioned.

During the working group the sector could give its feedback directly on the provided map. The results of this feedback session will be used for the future work in the FAIRway project and the alignment of activities with all waterway management authorities along the Danube. They are summarised on the following page.

The current national action plans can be downloaded here: [www.danube-navigation.eu/item/1061100](http://www.danube-navigation.eu/item/1061100). Feedback from the sector as regards the critical locations is always appreciated and can be sent to [gert-jan.muilerman@viadonau.org](mailto:gert-jan.muilerman@viadonau.org) and [gudrun.maierbrugger@viadonau.org](mailto:gudrun.maierbrugger@viadonau.org).



#### Points of discussion:

- In 2016 the Romanian River Administration is already ready for signing the contract for dredging between Calafat and Braila. The problem in Ruse was to enter the port, which is the responsibility of the port administration, not the river administration. In addition to Zimnicea, Svishtov and Bechet, the situation in Popina, Kosui, Batin, Vardim and Belene was also bad.
- The present sector representatives pointed out the lower maintenance target for the Bavarian Danube and underlined that the situation on the German section should not be forgotten in future discussions.
- The participants agreed that the next steps have to be done on the political level. The (shipping) industry is requested to participate in the discussions (e.g. via the FAIRway Danube national user fora) and to flag their needs towards the decision-makers in the Danube Riparian countries. The main aim is to assure sufficient budget for maintenance and rehabilitation.
- In particular, the following counter measures were initiated by the waterway administrations in case the low water situation this year will be as severe as in 2015:
  - The Bulgarian administration announced a tender for dredging; even if budget is assured, unfortunately works can only start as of 2017.
  - The Romanian and Bulgarian Ministries of Transport agreed that the Romanian side will execute works on the stretch under Bulgarian responsibility for 2016, public procurement has started, but likely to take longer than ideal. An agreement for the following years is being worked out.

The present sector representatives demanded for prompt measures in order to assure sufficient fairway depth. There is no time to lose!

- The participants had a brainstorming session on how to ensure sufficient budget for rehabilitation and maintenance in countries with existing budget gaps as lined out in the national action plans (Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Ukraine). Unfortunately neither Bulgarian nor Hungarian representatives were present at the working group to explain the current status in their country. The representatives of the Danube Commission explained that according to the Belgrade Convention each Member State is responsible for its own section. As maintenance activities cannot be co-financed by the European Union, maybe other investment models have to be considered. The Danube Commission will take the issue on its agenda.
- In addition it should be highlighted that only proper maintenance ensures a high safety level and reduces the number of accidents due to insufficient fairway depth. This might be used as an additional argument to convince Danube Riparian States to fulfil their international obligations.

### 3. Working Group 6: Administrative Processes – Joint PA1a/PA11 Working Group on border controls

#### Recommendations for improved border controls along the Danube

**Speakers:** Simon HARTL (viadonau / PA1a)  
Ulf MEINEL (viadonau / PA1a)  
Blaga STANCHEVA (Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Bulgaria / PA11)

Simon HARTL and Blaga STANCHEVA introduced the participants to the Working Group on Administrative Processes and provided an overview of the cooperation between PA1a (inland waterways) and PA11 (security) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region to improve border controls along the Danube.

Afterwards Simon HARTL and Ulf MEINEL presented the recommendations for improved border controls which were jointly developed based on inputs from the inland navigation sector and the border control authorities along the Danube (see attached slides). After the presentation the proposed



measures were once more discussed with the present representatives of the Danube logistics sector and the control authorities (Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine).

#### Points of discussion:

- In the Port of Vukovar a so called „ePort“ management system is in operation. Vessel information, data on transport operators and the cargo is directly accessible before the vessel's arrival in the port. The tool helps to reduce waiting times, to enhance the efficiency of transshipment procedures, to facilitate the integration of inland waterway transport into multimodal transport chains etc. The experience gained in setting up this tool can be used in the introduction of electronic tools increasing the efficiency of border controls.
- Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova already apply the standardised forms provided by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in border controls along the Danube (<http://www.imo.org/en/OurWork/Facilitation/FormsCertificates/Pages/Default.aspx>). The participants were asked if the IMO-forms could provide a useful standard for harmonising the forms along whole Danube. The present shipping companies were not very familiar with IMO standard but generally supported every progress in the harmonisation of control forms. It was agreed that PA1a will draft standard forms based on the IMO FAL Convention which will be aligned with the sector representatives. Afterwards PA1a and PA11 will align the proposal with the responsible border control authorities.
- In Bulgaria a “single window”-solution for controls is operated since 1 June 2016 by the Bulgarian Ports Infrastructure Company. The system is used for electronic processing of documents on arrival and departure of vessels to and from Bulgarian river ports. It enables standardized information and documents to be submitted electronically (accessible on BULRIS-website). The system shows which controls have already been carried out and allows to reduce the number of controls (only one control for in and outgoing vessels). For further information: <http://www.bulris.bg/en/news/2016/05/13/single-window-on-the-danube-starts-on-1-st-of-july-2016>  
PA1a and PA11 will study this existing solution and check whether it could serve as a blueprint for a harmonised electronic tool for carrying out border controls.
- Obstacles for passenger transport on bridge between Ruse and Giurgiu: passenger transfer by bus via the bridge between Ruse and Giurgiu takes often 2 hours due to the strict control regime. Terror warnings and waiting times affect image of Danube river cruises in a negative way: the bridge is not dimensioned for the increased traffic volumes. Remark viadonau: border control processes on land are not within the focus of the PA1a working group. In order to keep the focus on the set of presented measures and to foster their implementation it is necessary to focus on border controls carried out on water.
- Opening hours of control points:  
According to the sector representatives Croatian border control points are for example only open 08:00 – 16:00 hrs and only on weekdays; the present sector representatives demanded 24/7 opening hours of water police, customs authorities and border police. Authorities responsible for food safety and public health should also be available. PA1a/PA11 will jointly investigate if 24/7 opening hours at all control points can be offered by prior appointment (e.g. via electronic registration).
- Further topics raised by the sector representatives and interest representations:
  - need to increase transparency and to combat corruption
  - bunkering in Ruse is very complicated as an entrance revision, customs control, controls of the border police and the harbour master are required each time
  - border control processes should not jeopardise just-in-time deliveries of transport companies (reduce control duration, gradual shift towards electronic processes)
- All responsible control authorities from the Danube Riparian Countries need to be involved in the implementation of the foreseen measures; PA11 involves only the law enforcement authorities located in the responsibility of the Ministries of Interior (border police controls). The PA11 representatives will coordinate activities and pass on the information to all relevant control authorities.

- The enclosed slides include an overview of measures that are foreseen to be implemented in the frame of the Work programme for the period June 2016 – June 2017 (measures M01, M04, M05, M06, M10, M11, M14 and M15)  
To elaborate the implementation plan in more detail PA1a (viadonau) and PA11 (Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, Federal Ministry of the Interior (Berlin) and State Ministry for Interior, Building and Transport (Bavaria)) will
  - define coordinators (either PA1a or PA11) and implementing bodies for the selected measures
  - set a more detailed time frame for the implementation of the selected measures.Afterwards the coordinators will revert to the participants of the working group with an aligned approach for the implementation phase (see time schedule in the enclosed slides).

## Enclosures

- (1) Agenda
- (2) List of attendants
- (3) Presentation Administrative Processes