

IVR Congress 2010 - General Assembly
- Future perspectives of inland waterway transport in Europe -
Vienna, 21 May 2010

SPEAKING POINTS

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

INTRODUCTION

- It is a great pleasure for me to attend this year's IVRs' general assembly and to have the opportunity to outline the future perspectives of inland waterway transport from an EU policy point of view.
- Europe's transport system is not imaginable without inland waterway transport. Inland waterway transport has always played and will continue to play an important role in the European Transport Policy as we are currently in the process of defining our Policy for the coming ten years.
- I have personally taken a great interest in the matter as I hope you remember – and it is a pleasure for me to be back!

INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT POLICY - NAIADES

- The use and performance of a transport mode lies first and foremost with the market actors. The **Commission can only contribute** by establishing the **appropriate framework conditions** through providing the **right regulatory framework** in combination with **soft policy** measures as well as adequate **financial resources**.
- In this respect the Commission had launched in 2006 the **action programme NAIADES**, certainly very familiar to all of you, and thereby set up for the first time an integrated and comprehensive inland waterway transport policy.
- NAIADES is embedded in the **co-modality** concept aiming at the further development of inland waterway transport and its efficient integration into the overall transport chain, it combines legislative with policy and itemised financial support measures.

- It is addressed to all stakeholders - the EU, the Member States and the sector and last but not least it is initially scheduled for a period of eight years.
- We have also launched the FP7 co-ordination platform PLATINA to facilitate and support the implementation of NAIADES, bringing together all relevant stakeholders and establishing a broad knowledge basis.
- Four years after the launch of the programme, a considerable number of tangible results have been achieved, whilst several activities are ongoing. I would like to use this opportunity to bring to your attention some of those main outputs and activities.

NAIADES RESULTS - LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS

- A number of **legislative instruments** have been adopted in the following fields:
 - the harmonisation of **technical requirements** for vessels for all EU waterways, including the Rhine,
 - **statistics** of goods transported by inland waterways,
 - **de minimis rules** regarding **state aid** for Inland Waterway Transport,
 - the harmonisation of the **transport of dangerous goods** and
 - new rules on the **quality of fuel**.
- Preparatory work is undertaken in the field of **harmonising boatmasters' certificates**, on which the Commission will come forward with a legal proposal later this year.

NAIADES RESULTS - POLICY INSTRUMENTS

- Regarding other **policy measures**, the Commission has initiated and supports a number of activities - where appropriate with the assistance of PLATINA:
 - the screening and monitoring of **administrative and regulatory barriers**,
 - the collection and dissemination of **benchmarks** and **best practices**,
 - the harmonisation of **education and training requirements**,
 - the stocktaking of **existing infrastructure and infrastructure bottlenecks**,

- the development of an interdisciplinary **best practice manual** for **sustainable waterway planning**,
- the setting up of a **European hull database**,
- a continuously updated **funding handbook** facilitating ‘information on finance’,
- the **social dialogue**,
- the definition of a consistent **communication and promotion strategy**,
- the setting up of a European **IWT promotion and development network**,
- the establishment of a European IWT **educational network**,
- and last but not least the provision of comprehensive **Inland Waterway Transport information services - RIS**.

NAIADES RESULTS - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

- The NAIADES programme is not meant as a **financial** support programme, but aims at **making better use of relevant funding programmes**. Indeed we can see an increase of the share attributed to inland waterway transport – in comparison to the past decades:
 - Within the framework of the Trans-European Transport Network Programme for the period 2007-2013, **€610 Million support from the EU’s TEN-T budget (= 11.5% of the total)** was granted to two inland waterway projects - TEN-T priority projects No 18 (Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube) and No 30 (Seine-Scheldt). In comparison, **between 1990 and 2006 the amounts granted to IWT projects were a mere 2%** of the total TEN-T budget.
 - **River Information Services** became part of the TEN-T Multi-Annual Programme with an indicative budget of **€50 Million between 2007 and 2013**. In 2008, €16 Million of TEN-T co-financing were allocated for the harmonized implementation of RIS in Europe. A second call for proposals is intended to be launched in the first half of this year.
 - The “**Marco Polo II**” programme continues to promote shifting freight traffic off the road to other transport modes including inland waterway

transport, with **revised criteria** to better accommodate the requirements of inland waterway transport.

- The operational regional programmes of the structural funds take account of inland waterways where applicable.

PERSPECTIVES OF INLAND NAVIGATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE FUTURE EUROPEAN TRANSPORT POLICY

THE FOUR "IS"

- The future European Transport Policy will be based on four pillars, **internal market** - setting the legislative framework for further market opening and enhanced competition, **infrastructure** – maintenance, development and integration of modal networks, **innovation** – deploying new technologies and concepts and **integration** – integration of transport modes, systems and networks.

THE THREE "CS"

- These pillars will be aligned with three horizontal themes, the ***citizen*** - safety, security and social protection issues, the ***competitiveness*** of Europe's industry and ***climate*** – low-carbon and other emission aspects.
- Inland waterway transport **plays a key role** in our reflections on the competitive and sustainable future of transport. Let me therefore elaborate a bit on how the strategic areas of our inland waterway transport policy fit into these principles of our future transport policy approach.

1. Internal market

- The internal market embarks on further market opening, administrative and regulatory simplification and harmonised environmental obligations without compromising safety and security standards. Inland waterway transport is already the most liberalised (land) transport sector. In this context, the reduction of administrative barriers is a priority concern, and technological innovations are constantly incorporated.
- But how can we talk of a true European inland navigation space with at least 3 Commissions – Rhine, Danube, Sava – the UNIECE and the European Commission all being active in the same areas – both geographical to a large extent, but also technological, etc, etc.

- We need to precisely know what are the concrete tasks, both at project level and as a matter of a routine. And I would like to ask for your support when we will be discussing funding of these actions – we need to find the suitable model. And finally, we would need to know who will execute these tasks. There again we need to be creative and put the interest of the whole of Europe above all.

2. Infrastructure

- The efficiency and competitiveness of inland waterway transport operations is largely depending on the quality and conditions of the waterway infrastructure. In order to ensure and increase inland waterway transport, efforts need to focus on the maintenance of waterways and the further enhancement of their navigability through the removal of bottlenecks and the closure of missing links.
- The guiding principle in the currently ongoing revision of the Trans-European Transport network (**TEN-T**) policy is the **better alignment with overall European transport policy objectives**. The revised TEN-T policy will focus on a core network approach – extended corridors including intermodal nodal access points in which European multi-modal projects shall be developed. In particular **nodal points such as sea and inland ports** shall be strengthened and the link to the hinterland connections improved. Inland waterways and inland ports will be key components of the core network.

3. Innovation

- Innovation does not only require considerable efforts in research and technological development, but simple mechanisms, concepts and support to **facilitate and promote actual deployment**. **Standardisation** will be one of the key instruments.
- In inland waterway transport **concrete results** have already been obtained in this respect, for example with the development and deployment of **River Information Services (RIS)** across Europe. RIS has even become a **blueprint for the eMaritime initiative** in the maritime transport sector. We are constantly watching its further development, its integration with logistics applications and with other modal systems via the eFreight initiative.
- Research and technological innovation will play an important role in reducing CO₂ emissions from transport. Concepts for retrofitting and therefore modernising the inland waterway fleet as well as the development of low emission vessels will therefore play an increased role in the future.

4. Integration

- The better integration of modal networks will require **efficient, reliable and safe** transport modes. Transport modes that can each exploit their full potential and dispose of optimised interfaces, **integrated paperless electronic information flows, intelligent traffic** and transport management solutions and simplified transport chains.
- Major emphasis will be put on the **enhanced integration of inland waterway transport into the overall logistics transport chain**. This requires a well-maintained and integrated inland waterway network with efficient nodal access points, covered by harmonised River Information Services, which are integrated with other modal traffic management systems and logistics and transport management systems.
- The horizontal themes *competitiveness* and *climate* themes are evidently embedded in the pillars, but let me say still a few words as regards the *citizen*.
- All of this will not be possible without **well-trained and motivated human resources**. The introduction of new technologies and integrated solutions often requires organisational adaptations, changes in workflows, thinking and behaviour. This is why **qualification and training** are indispensable factors, whilst not neglecting the need for **social protection and sufficiently attractive working conditions**. In this context, for example education and training standards as well as working time requirements will be followed up.

BEYOND NAIADES

How can the inland waterway transport policy as defined in NAIADES be best aligned with the future European Transport Policy? How will continuity be ensured considering that the current programme will come to an end in 2013? What about the follow-up of activities started in the framework of NAIADES and PLATINA?

The Commission will come forward with a 2nd NAIADES progress report this year. It will further in due time do an assessment of the NAIADES approach, also in view of the overall transport policy objectives. Based on the conclusions drawn, we will come forward with a proposal on how we imagine the follow-up of NAIADES.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, let me once again stress that we are convinced that inland waterway transport will also play its role in the future. It will be a key component in the future European Transport Policy, since we are convinced that a strong use of inland waterways will contribute to make the overall transport system more efficient and sustainable. Promoting inland waterway transport will help to meet the overriding objectives, namely a cleaner environment and a more efficient utilisation of scarce resources.