

---

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

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

### **13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Steering Group for Priority Area 1a of the EUSDR**

**Brussels, Belgium  
29 November 2017**

### **MINUTES**

Author(s):  
**Joint Technical Secretariat of PACs 1a**

Version (date):  
**V 0.1 (draft) | 11-12-2017**

## 1. PA 1a Welcome

The 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Danube Strategy's Steering Group for Priority Area 1a – *To improve mobility and multimodality: Inland waterways* was held in Brussels, Belgium, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2017.

The meeting was chaired by **Ms. Vera Hofbauer**, head of inland navigation department within the Austrian Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (on behalf of **Ms. Ursula Zechner** PA1a Austrian Coordinator) and Mrs. Cristina Cuc, counsellor for European affairs within the Romanian Ministry of Transport, henceforth: PACs 1a. PACs 1a welcomed the participants, members of the Steering Group and the observing members - representatives of the European Commission (DG MOVE, DG REGIO), representatives of the Danube Commission and transnational organizations (Pro Danube International, etc.). The participating countries were: Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.

The **Agenda for the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Group** was approved and a presentation from the representative of the Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine regarding the waterway infrastructure development in Ukraine was included.

**Mr. Marco Onida** (DG REGIO) welcomed the participants in Brussels. DG REGIO relies on the results of this Steering Group and that the concrete results coming from the implementation of projects are important for the European Commission. High standards were achieved within this Priority Area and we have to keep them. A special welcome is given to Ukraine, which shall be more intensively integrated into the Danube Region. DG REGIO offered its support for the next actions achieving the targets of PA 1a.

Mrs. Yana Remeniuk (Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine) presented the characteristics of the inland waterways in Ukraine, which have a great potential, which is not used enough, and the main projects. A new legal framework was set up and a new strategy for the transport sector will be adopted by the end of 2017. The sources of financing used for investments in Ukraine are EU funds, loans from EBI and EBRD and grants from US, the NL Government and other donors. A lot of projects are concentrated on the Nipru River, a main artery of transport from North to South. Mention was made of the signing of the high-level agreements within the meaning of Article 49(6) of Regulation (EU) N 1315/2013 (TEN-T regulation) concerning adapted indicative maps of neighbouring countries, between European Commission and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, at the occasion of Eastern Partnership summit, on 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2017. The indicative maps do not include inland waterways.

## 2. Status on Working Group on Waterway Infrastructure & Management

The Working Group on Waterway Infrastructure & Management was held right before the SG meeting and the updated National Action Plans and the conditions for navigation during 2017 as well as the plans of the river administrations for 2018 were discussed in detail.

For the approval of the current FAIRway National Action Plans (update October 2017) it was decided to use the written procedure. A full document will be sent to the Steering Group by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and the comments received by 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017 will be processed. The National Action Plans will be published on the PA1a website by mid-January 2018.

## 3. Status on Working Group PA 1a / PA 11 on Administrative Processes

**Mr. Gert-Jan Mulierman** (viadonau) provided information on the achievements regarding the cooperation between PA 1a and PA 11 – *Security* concerning the improvement of border controls along the Danube. A Practical Manual for border control procedures was elaborated and updated and a survey among shipping companies / vessel operators was conducted at border crossings and lead to a set of recommendations and measures on improved control procedures along the Danube.

Danube Navigation Standard Forms (DAVID) are one of the measures which are under the coordination of PA 1a. A first draft was elaborated by PA 1a for the alignment of forms for the arrival and departure report, the crew list and the passenger list. The compliance with national and international law was checked by the PA 11 working group members. The consultation phase with countries and the private sector ended in November 2017.

The next steps are:

- the translation of the standardised English forms into the national Danube languages,
- the preparation of the agreement on political/administrative level to apply the unified forms in the concerned countries (which will be endorsed by the PA 1a & PA 11 Steering Groups) and
- the implementation of forms into the national legal framework.

Ensuring uniform control procedures is one of the measures coordinated by PA 11. The objective is to avoid multiple controls of inland vessels by implementing an application for exchanging information gained from nautical controls (provided by involved control authorities). A transnational control database would allow the access of control results from previous checks in other countries and will bring benefits to the control authorities (human resources more targeted and efficiently used) and to the shipping companies (reduced control times or reduction of multiple controls).

The next steps on this measure are:

- gaining agreement of the responsible control authorities to implement the database,
- endorsement of the agreement on political/administrative level to implement the database across the concerned countries (endorsed by the PA1a & PA11 Steering Groups) and
- the implementation of the database in the frame of another European project which can provide the required technical expertise.

In the beginning of 2018, the PA 1a technical secretariats will prepare a Steering Group Appeal to call upon Danube Transport Ministers to prepare ministerial conclusions on fairway management and administrative processes during their Council meeting in December 2018, under Austrian EU presidency. PA 1a offers to provide technical support and content for the preparation of the Council meeting. It was requested to PA 11 to initiate a parallel policy process to involve the Danube Ministers of the Interior in a joint work regarding the administrative processes.

The Steering group members were asked if they agreed on the preparation of an appeal towards the Danube transport ministers. Since there were no objections it was decided that PA1a Technical Secretariat will formulate a draft text which will be distributed to the SG members at the end of March 2018. A remark raised by the participants was the fact that the draft text should take into consideration very clearly which are the responsibilities and tasks of the ministers of transport and which are the responsibilities of the ministers of interior.

#### 4. Discussion on project landscape within PA1a and target achievement

**Ms. Viktoria Weissenburger** (viadonau) presented to the participants the activities performed by PA 1a technical secretariats in order to monitor the project landscape which contributes to the achievement of the PA 1a targets. A new project database is available since October 2017 on the website <https://www.danube-navigation.eu/projects> and contains about 100 projects. The ongoing projects were presented, classified under seven thematic areas, as follows: waterway infrastructure, waterway management, ports & sustainable freight transport, fleet modernisation, River Information Services, education & jobs and IWT policies. With the new project database interface information can be found based on different search parameters.

The participants were invited to use the new project database for PA 1a and were asked whether the current project landscape of ongoing project initiatives is considered sufficient to reach the PA 1a targets by 2020. It was discussed that for fleet modernisation there is no other initiative for the future research and investment in greening technologies for vessels, once the currently ongoing PROMINENT project ends in 2018.

In the field of ports, there are a lot of projects but not so much investments. It is expected that the DAPhNE project, which is doing some preparatory works, will be followed by investments in Danube ports.

## 5. Status on Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Directive 96/50/EC and Directive 91/672/EEC

**Mrs. Doina Munteanu** (CERONAV, Romanian training centre) presented the status of the future Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation which will increase mobility of workforce and the safety of navigation by recognising qualifications on a competence-based approach. The publication of the future directive in the Official Journal of the EU is expected for December 2017. It will enter into force, 20 days after the publication in the OJ which can be expected for January 2018.

18 months from the adoption (July 2019) the following standards will be part of the Directive:

- Standards of competences (operational and managerial level);
- Standards for medical fitness;
- Standards for practical examination;
- Standards for simulators;
- Standards for crew document templates related to the granting of qualifications.

The standards will be elaborated by CESNI (group of experts from the Member States of the European Union and the CCNR and representatives of international organisations with an interest in inland navigation) in the first half of 2018.

**Mrs. Ghiuler Manole** (CERONAV, Danube SKILLS project manager) presented the deliverable 5.1.1- *Transnational gap analysis and impact evaluations of nautical qualifications in the Danube Region*. The report identifies the existing gaps at transnational level in the Danube Region with regard to the mandatory implementation of the EU Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation. Gap analysis and impact evaluations cover all Danube riparian countries (DE, AT, SK, HR, RS, HU, BG, RO, UA, MD) and the conclusion was that many of the riparian countries can implement the provisions of the Directive in a short period of time (2018 – 2020). There are also some requirements of the new EU Directive, problematic for the implementation in most of the countries requiring a long term duration (beyond 2020) and include: minimum requirements for deck crew members regarding the completion of approved education programmes, specific authorization for LNG experts, use of simulators.

## 6. Status on Seed Money Facility

**Mrs. Cristina Cuc** (Romanian Ministry of Transport - MoT) presented all the relevant information available on the Seed Money Facility (SMF), a financing scheme launched by the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) on 27th September 2017. The deadline for submitting applications was set for 7th December 2017 and a particularity is the fact that the applicants need to ask for a **letter of alignment** by the concerned Priority Area coordinators.

The PA 1a coordinators received two applications for SMF projects: REWARD and Innovative SKILLS.

**REWARD - Improve Lower Danube Fairway Conditions through Active IWT User Engagement** project was submitted by Pro Danube Romania and the Bulgarian – Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry / BG. The overall objective of the main project is to set up and manage an inland waterway transport (IWT) users' initiative which through the well-managed involvement, consolidated sector expertise and emphasizing the need for a customer-oriented approach contributes to the improvement of existing waterway management procedures, thus fairway conditions on the common Romanian-Bulgarian Danube section. The application was declined by the Romanian Ministry of Transport because the project is considered to affect the bilateral agreement between

Romania and Bulgaria on maintaining and improving the fairway on Romanian-Bulgarian common sector of the Danube and it would be overlapping with other ongoing projects and activities.

Pro Danube International stated that they were surprised about the rejection of the proposal by the Romanian MoT and that the private sector wants to work with the waterway administrations, as is the case in the PROMINENT project, where ships were equipped with surveying equipment.

The representatives of MoT of Romania explained the reasons based on which it decided to reject the project proposal.

Innovative SKILLS project was submitted by Romanian Maritime Training Centre - CERONAV, Romania and Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences - FPZ, Croatia. It is pursuing the goal of shifting transport to less energy-intensive, cleaner and safer transport modes and include IWT in multimodal logistic chains through the development of better aligned skills with future transport technologies, to acquire digital and green competences for increased employability.

With no objections it was decided that the project will receive a letter of alignment.

## **7. End of meeting**

The PACs PA 1a thanked all participants for their involvement and cooperation.

Next Steering Group meeting is planned to be organized in April 2018, in Hungary.