

Conclusions

*on effective waterway infrastructure rehabilitation and maintenance
on the Danube and its navigable tributaries*

Danube Ministers Meeting

Brussels

3rd December 2014

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for Transport from the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Slovak Republic, Ukraine and the Republic of Serbia met on 3rd December 2014 in Brussels and reached the following conclusions:

HAVING REGARD TO:

- Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, obliging EU Member States to preserve a good navigation status, while respecting the applicable environmental law;
- the NAIADES II Communication 2013(623 final of the European Commission of 10 September 2013 "Towards quality inland waterway transport", which includes infrastructure as one of its key areas of intervention;
- the European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN) – for those countries who have ratified it;
- the provisions of the Belgrade Convention of 1948 establishing the Danube Commission and the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin, stipulating that the riparian states undertake to maintain their sections of the waterway in a navigable condition;
- the Danube Commission's activity providing and developing free navigation on the Danube for the commercial vessels flying the flag of all states in accordance with interests and sovereign rights of the Member States of the Belgrade Convention;
- the European Strategy for the Danube Region and the related target to establish effective waterway infrastructure management by 2015;
- the "Declaration on effective waterway infrastructure maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries", signed by the Danube Ministers Meeting in Luxembourg on 7 June 2012 by the Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for Transport from the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Moldova, Romania and the Slovak Republic and supported by the responsible Ministers in the Republic of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Ukraine;
- the "Agreement between the People's Republic of Romania and the Government of the People's Republic of Bulgaria concerning the maintenance and the improvement of the fairway on the Romanian-Bulgarian sector of the Danube", signed in Sofia on 29 November 1955;

CONSIDERING the importance of inland waterway transport for the support of Europe's growth and competitiveness and in particular, the fact that the transport potential of the Danube river and of its navigable tributaries is not sufficiently exploited,

CONSIDERING the importance of a Master Plan for the rehabilitation and maintenance of the fairways as an instrument to achieve reliable fairway conditions for navigation of the Danube and for monitoring, coordination and reporting on the necessary measures for the realization of fairway conditions in accordance with harmonized minimal standards in line with the existing EU, national and international legal frameworks,

WE, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for Transport:

REITERATE the need for national action and cross-border coordination procedures in the field of fairway maintenance, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity;

RECOGNISE the work done by the Steering Group of Priority Area 1a and the Danube Commission, which are established to improve mobility and multimodality in the area of inland waterways in the framework of the European Strategy for the Danube Region;

WELCOME therefore the "Fairway Rehabilitation and Maintenance Master Plan – Danube and its navigable tributaries" prepared by the countries' experts and by the Steering Group of Priority Area 1a with the contributions of the Danube and Sava Commissions.

ENDORSE the Master Plan in annex and

INTEND to implement it as soon as possible.

AGREE to take the necessary measures as identified and agreed by each EU Member State and riparian non-EU countries to deal within the framework of fairway maintenance with the critical fairway sections identified in the Master Plan, to establish for this purpose national roadmaps which identify individual actions, responsibilities, funding resources and intermediate milestones for the implementation of these measures and to communicate these roadmaps by 30 June 2015 to the relevant coordinating bodies;

CALL ON all relevant EU Member States and riparian non-EU countries to take action to tackle the critical fairway locations as identified in the Master Plan as far as possible within the framework of fairway maintenance;

RECOGNISE that the availability of appropriate national financial means for the implementation of the Master Plan is of fundamental significance and by that a critical success factor,

INTEND to allocate the necessary national budgets as referred to in the Master Plan, and STRESS the importance of making use of European Union co-financing opportunities for the implementation of required measures, notably within the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Connecting Europe Facility where applicable.

RECOGNISE that the Master Plan also extends to non-EU countries;

NOTE that the Master Plan shall not affect in any way the determining and marking of the state borders;

INVITE the European Commission and the national administrations to support through the available instruments the involvement of these countries in the implementation of the Master Plan;

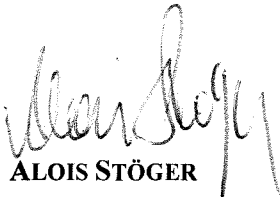
REAFFIRM the will to cooperate with the relevant coordinating bodies for the establishment of joint initiatives for the efficient and effective implementation of the Master Plan, such as projects with respect to the sharing of resources and joint investment.

CALL ON all relevant EU Member States and riparian non-EU countries to further support effective monitoring within the framework of the EUSDR Priority Area 1a Coordinators in coordination with the Danube Commission;

MEET once a year or as necessary to follow-up on the present conclusions and make sure that they are implemented as agreed.

Signatures

AUSTRIA



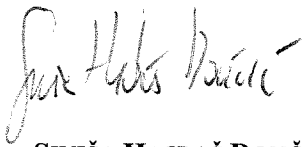
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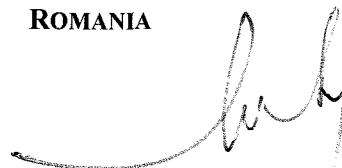
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