

**Users workshop session about Good Navigation Status
Inland Navigation Europe - Brussels
13 October 2016, 14:00 – 16:00**

Chair: GNS consortium (**Martin Quispel**, Karin De Schepper)

Attendance: Alexander Van den Bosch, Martin van Dijk, Willem Buitenkamp
Apologised: Hester Duursema, Lamia Kerdjoudj-Belkaid, Theresia Hacksteiner (bilateral contacts)

Major expectations from users towards easy-to-use navigation

- reaching the standards for the physical waterway dimensions is key and GNS shall contribute to the enforcement of agreed standards and classifications (AGN, ECMT). This is in particular the case for certain countries along the Danube and also for the Elbe and Oder which suffer from a lack of draught.
- reliability of network (24/7) and better forecasting is desired to ensure predictable navigation
- anticipating authorities undertaking long-term planning (e.g. Mosel Commission at the start) and streamlining procedures for works
- authorities coordinating cross-border and 1 year in advance incl. consultation of sector on closures for repair and maintenance
- mooring places and car-lift jetties

Explanation of GNS concept and what study will bring

There is agreement among users on the focus on hard components and CBA as tool and the enforcement of agreed standards for the physical parameters of the waterway dimensions. First the basic inland waterway infrastructure shall be available and dimensions shall be ensured.

A next step is the accelerated harmonization of RIS to further optimise the use. The further development of RIS services for logistics is nice to have. Larger IWT operators usually have their own internal logistics ICT systems.

Specific issues

- Rivers vs canals: reference water levels e.g. Rhine profile

Differentiation according to characteristics of waterways. The sector considers a 365 days obligation for the TEN-T requirements unrealistic, even for a number of canals. Fairway dimensions should be coupled to the characteristics of the waterway. For free flowing rivers, groynes are helpful. The approach for the Rhine (Rhine Profile) is seen as a good practice. It is pointed out that climate change is already visible in more abrupt variations of water levels. Flash rains and urbanization lead to accelerated discharge which even puts the 240 days under pressure. This requires more anticipating authorities with attention for longer forecast (preferably 10 days) and accelerated diversion of flood water to retentions basins in case of high water and to discharge basis in case of low water situations. Such approaches to mitigate the extreme water levels in free flowing sections shall be further explored.

Lifting bridge clearance for all bridges is unrealistic, but through CBAs, authorities could focus on economically most important areas for container transport. The CEMT requirements are outdated in view of the growing share of high-cube containers which require higher bridge clearances. Moreover, transporting with at least 3 layers in economically important areas is vital to make it more attractive and competitive and a real alternative for road haulage and rail transport.

- ETA vs waiting times and information management with focus on

coordination across borders

Locks: a proper problem analysis precedes corridor management. Working with slots can push the problem down the chain while the entire route is of importance and should be linked to capacity and intensity. The performance of individual locks needs to be analysed and optimized, also in view of the high capital cost to expand physical lock capacity. It is important to detect patterns of delays and incidents to ensure reliability before organizing the spread of traffic. This information is important to reduce waiting times. Lock management also includes timely and regular maintenance to prevent breakdowns. A good example is the lock maintenance along the Main and Mosel where the locks are out of service for about 8 days in a row but the locks prove to be very reliable during the rest of the year.

In-advance information and consultation on closures for maintenance and repair

It is paramount to inform and consult the sector on annual closures for repair and maintenance. Closures should be coordinated cross-border to avoid supply chain disruption. The sector proposes to replicate the good practice of 1 year in advance information and consultation for the Mosel. Ideally, the closure is linked to the exemption procedure to ensure systematic cross-border coordination.

Concertation should take place twice a year with the sector. The sector sees the COV process in the NL as a good practice and similar processes involving users, engineers and waterway managers should be applied in other countries as well and for cross-border waterways within corridors. There are concertation efforts in other countries as well, e.g. chomage in DE and FR for the locks on the upper Rhine (installed after persistent complaining by the sector). In most of the EU Member States the transport users are usually consulted about the infrastructure plans in a transparent manner. However, in some countries the situation is quite problematic (e.g. Hungary). Furthermore, the outcome of such planning processes are not always satisfactory for the IWT sector (e.g. the impact of strict prioritization in the German Bundesverkehrswegeplan is not appreciated by the sector).

Incidents should be swiftly communicated through the entire corridor via traffic centres and not just locally.

- **Mooring places and car-lift facilities** should be included in concept to anticipate growth of waterway traffic as well as safety requirements in case of incidents. With the growing share of 24/7 operation of vessels, there is an increasing need to change the crew on board of vessels which requires car-lift facilities.
- **As regards the exemptions for 2.5 meter draught** it was remarked to take into account the required width of the navigation channel for which the 2.5 draught applies as it makes a big difference if the vessel is 6 meters in beam or 17 meters in beam. Furthermore, exemptions shall not lead to the acceptance of a sub-optimal status quo.