The strategic importance of the Danube for a sustainable development of the region

Transnational pilot-workshop “Cross-programme ETC Danube projects”

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Course of presentation

• The river Danube as eco-efficient transport axis within the European transport system.

• Roadmap on how to integrate previous development activities into a strategic coordination project.
The political dimension: The Danube region as an important element within the enlarged EU

- About 90 million inhabitants live in the Danube region, producing a gross domestic product (GDP) of about € 450 billion
- Since the last EU-enlargement of 2007 six riparian countries are EU members (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania)
- Croatia and Serbia have short- resp. mid-term EU accession perspective

The Danube river – an integrative element for the Danube region

- The Danube is the most international river of the world and connects 10 riparian countries
- The Danube is the 2nd longest river of Europe (2.850 km entire length)
- The Danube is via the Main-Danube canal connected to the Rhine, linking Western Europe with Southeast Europe and creating a waterway axis of about 3.500 km.
The international dimension of the river Danube

- Ten riparian countries share the river, six of them are EU Member States
- The Danube has a navigable length of 2.411 km, wherefrom 1.156 km (48%) are border sections
- The Danube is a very important ecosystem and flora-fauna-habitat

The Danube Belt – an economic development axis

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Source: Assumption of OIR based on forecasts of BMVIT, EC, WIIW 2007

Source: Graphics: Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning
therefore: regional cooperation and programs are needed to create a sustainable transport system in order to cope with the transport growth.

The Danube waterway as part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN–T)

Planned infrastructure projects

- Germany: Straubing – Vilshofen (Danube km 2321 – km 2249)
- Austria: Vienna – cross border section with Slovakia (Danube km 1921 – km 1873)
- Hungary: Palkovicovo – Mohacs (Danube km 1810 – km 1433)
- Bulgaria - Romania: Iron Gate II – Calarasi (Danube km 863 – km 375)
- Romania: Calarasi – Braila (Danube km 375 – km 175)
Integrated, interdisciplinary and intraregional approach is needed

- to transfer national development activities into medium and long term national action plans
- to harmonize activities across national boundaries
- to create synergies through wide-spread co-operation
- to identify cross-border activities in development areas
- to ensure a sustainable development in line with the economic and environmental objectives of the region

Source: Austrian Action Plan Danube Navigation, via donau

Project – „Harmonized Action Plans“

- Danube states elaborate within a EU funded co-operation project national action plans (master plans) for a medium and long term development of Danube waterway as core transport axis of the region
- The project shall consolidate national development activities into an harmonized regional development program
- The identified development projects will be elaborated up to a pre-feasibility level ready for further implementation on national level as well as in EU programs
- The project shall last 3 years and will aggregate project preparation costs of approx. 10-15 mio. €
Possible topics of National Action Plans (1)

- **Improvement and maintenance of waterway infrastructure**
  - Removal of infrastructure bottlenecks and improved maintenance of waterway infrastructure – international cooperation between Danube waterway administrations
  - Renewal of locks and other auxiliary infrastructure (e.g. berths)

- **Exploitation of the Danube waterway’s potential**
  - Foundation of dedicated national inland navigation development agencies
  - Support of new and innovative multimodal transport services on the Danube

- **Capacity building for waterway and navigation authorities as well as related administrations**
  - Creation of the necessary administrative structures and capacities in order to fulfil the different tasks and challenges related to the waterway Danube

- **Implementation of River Information Services on the Danube**
  - Implementation of fully harmonised River Information Services in the Danube countries enabling the international exchange of relevant traffic and transport data for authorities and logistics users
Possible topics of National Action Plans (2)

• Modernisation of the fleet
  • Improvement of environmental performance and safety of the Danube fleet
  • Stimulation of investments in new vessels – Setting-up of dedicated funding programmes

• Investment in human capital
  • Improvement of education and training facilities and international harmonisation of standards in order to create jobs and to obtain qualified personnel for the inland waterway transport sector – international cooperation of all Danube countries

• Improvement of knowledge and awareness of Danube navigation
  • Creation of information tools improving the knowledge about Danube navigation
  • Setting-up of a dedicated public relations strategy pro Danube navigation

• Development and integration of ecological strategies and concepts for the Danube river
  • Improvement of the ecological situation of the ecosystem Danube through dedicated measures and based on the Joint Statement between inland navigation and environment (ICPDR)

Possible topics of National Action Plans (3)

• Creation of an international traffic model for the Danube region
  • Evaluation of the current modal-split (road, rail and inland waterways transport) within the Danube corridor
  • Identification of regional and international transport relations and industry structures
  • Setting-up of an international traffic forecast model (road, rail and inland waterways transport) for the Danube corridor

• Development of ports into multimodal logistics centres
  • Creation of strategic development plans for the modernisation of ports and transshipment facilities
  • Improvement of hinterland connections of ports, especially within cross-border regions

• Identification and development of cross-border economic development zones
  • Stimulation of regional development based on tri-modal Danube logistics hubs
Possible areas for dedicated cross-border economic zones

Benefits of the proposed project (1)

- Support the implementation of NAIADES in the Danube region
- Prepare high-quality projects suitable to be funded in EU programs like OPT, OPRegDev, OPENV, TEN-T, IPA, etc.
- Streamline and harmonize national activities and create synergies through interregional co-operation
- Turn the Danube as a traditional border between states into an element for regional co-operation and economic development
- Improve cross-border co-operation and trigger regional initiatives
- Provide an important input to the forthcoming EU Danube Region Strategy
Benefits of the proposed project (2)

- Create an environmentally friendly and cost-effective backbone for the transport system of the region
- Enable the economic, social and cultural development of cross border regions along the Danube
- Contribute to the territorial, economic and social cohesion objectives of the EU
- Ensure the maintenance and restoration of the ecosystem Danube as a natural living space and habitat
- Strengthen the co-operation among authorities and administrations, exchange knowledge and good practice

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