

# **EBU Seminar 2010 – “Future of Transport – The role of inland navigation within the new white paper”**

Brussels, 18 March

## **Statement of panel member Manfred Seitz, Chair Executive Board of PLATINA**

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the experts of the reflection group REGINA for their participation in three full day workshops and for their great engagement. I also would like to thank EBU for bringing the report into a wider public and to the ears of the key decision makers of the European Union. The PLATINA project proved to be an excellent support structure to providing the necessary organisational and technical support for the facilitation of the REGINA report.

REGINA took a very pragmatic approach for its work. Based on an analysis of the current and future challenges of the sector, an inventory of tasks that require strong co-ordination on European level was elaborated, completed by a short assessment of the NAIADES program.

As all the members of REGINA are long-term serving experts, either in the industry or in public administration, the real problems and the needs of the sector as well as the shortcomings in the current policy framework are well known to them. Therefore, the report delivers very clear recommendations that should be reflected in the revision of the White Paper on transport.

High Level representatives of the European Union already pointed out that the inland navigation sector can make significant contributions to improve the environmental and economic performance of the European transport system and therefore will have to play an important role in the new European transport policy as it will be described in the White Paper.

But, how to materialize the potentials of inland navigation for our economies and societies? The expert of the REGINA delivered very important answers for this question.

First, we need an **intensified cooperation between all competent institutions.**

The inland navigations sector is the most liberalised and most international transport sector. In contrary to this, the sector misses a permanent and structured cooperation and co-ordination on the European level. In an inventory, the REGINA experts identified about 60 tasks where such European coordination is needed now and in the future.

It clearly has to be stated that **this inventory of tasks is not a shopping list** for policy makers but must be considered as a check list for the activities of a future work program. The further development of inland navigation requires a comprehensive and integrated systems approach with activities to be taken in the fields of infrastructure, fleet, port, innovation, human resources and public affairs and in the overall policy framework. In all of these fields we need concrete and long-term actions. The necessary prioritisation will address not the tasks themselves but their timing, their depth of implementation, their applied budgets and the distribution of the responsibilities among the competent institutions.

Secondly, we need a concise and **permanent European IWT policy**.

NAIADES was the first integrated inland waterway transport strategy on European level ever. Without any doubts, NAIADDES proved to be successful and therefore must be continued after its foreseen end in 2013. Nevertheless, a follow up program must contain clear and measurable objectives and a comprehensive catalogue of activities addressing all areas of the IWT system as noted before.

The notion “permanent” has a second meaning as well. In the REGINA group we have identified tasks that require continuously action on European level because they are operational tasks. In addition to that PLATINA will generate some more of these European operational tasks like the operation of the European Hull Database, the European Position Server, the information databases, just to name some of them.

Thirdly, as one of the major weakness of NAIADDES the **lack of dedicated financial resources as well as the lack of human resources for its implementation** was identified.

A follow up program of NAIADDES therefore needs sufficient financial support on European Union level for the implementation of targeted actions. For many actions, existing EU programs like TEN-T, Marco Polo, the Framework Program for RTD shall be used as well. But the experiences proved that a successful implementation of a sector oriented program can not be based on a project by project basis in programs of different priorities and different administrative rules. This poses too many obstacles to a concise and reliable program implementation.

In addition to the money which is needed for the implementation of actions sufficient financial and human resources have to be provided at European Union level for implementing the program and for executing the permanent operational tasks.

The inland navigation community is a very small family and we see currently more expert to retire than new ones to enter the community. The budgetary constraints of many member states will certainly not increase the number of inland navigation experts on national levels.

But, who will do the co-ordination work on European level? Therefore, the new program also must be used for building up the human capacity of the sector in order to function like a European competence centre being able to support the existing competent institutions in a proper and effective way. With the experiences we have now, it comes clear that a project based implementation structure like PLATINA can not deliver the required long – term implementation management as it is by definition too limited in scope, budget and time as well as restricted to the respective program procedures.

Last but not least, the REGINA experts point out that the current implementation structure PLATINA will end in spring 2012 and that the continuation of many of its activities are essential for a seamless transition into a new inland navigation strategy and program In other words, there is the **need to bridge the gap to ensure continuity of co-ordination efforts and to prepare the start of a new program**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Europe needs reliable, safe and cost-effective logistic services to keep its industry competitive in the globalized economy; the economic crisis even increases the pressure on efficiency of transport and logistics.

Inland navigation can deliver such cost-effective solutions on a much wider scale as nowadays and therefore has a high potential to contribute to economic growth, social welfare and environmental improvements.

But time has come to act, if we do not want to loose our credibility by those people that work on the rivers, in the ports and in the offices of all the waterborne service providers.

The REGINA report should be seen as a first but important step into a structured and joint exercise which in end will have to deliver a clearly improved framework for inland waterway transport in Europe as well as significantly more cargo on European waterways.

Therefore, let us continue to work together on this aim and let us elaborate as a next step the objectives of a new inland navigation program for the time horizon of 2020 as well as appropriate measures to achieve these objectives. The PLATINA project is ready to provide further important contributions for this work.

Thank you for your attention.