



**Integrating Danube Region into Smart & Sustainable Multi-modal
& Intermodal Transport Chains**

Report on EU and Transnational partnerships & coordination activities

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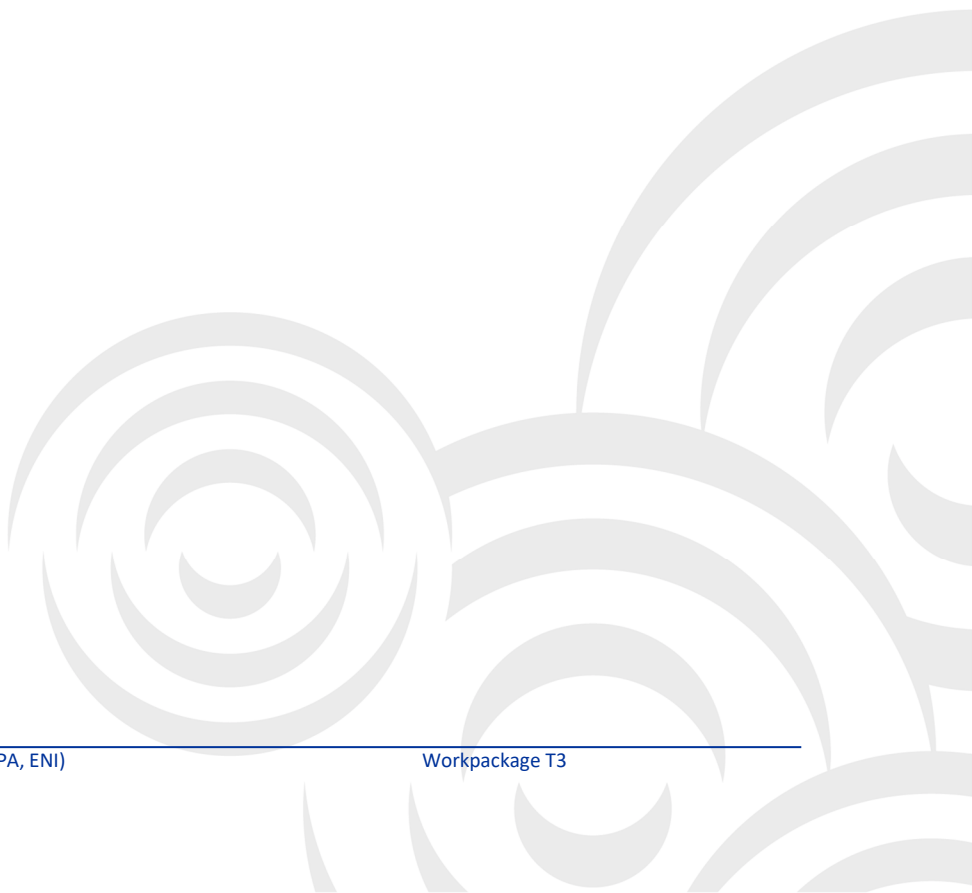
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1 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
DR	Danube Region
EC	European Commission
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
DG MOVE	Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
IWT	Inland Waterway Transport
PDM	Pro Danube Management GmbH
RP 1	DIONYSUS project reporting period 1 (July-December 2020)
RP 2	DIONYSUS project reporting period 2 (January-June 2021)
RP 3	DIONYSUS project reporting period 3 (July-December 2021)
RP 4	DIONYSUS project reporting period 4 (January-June 2022)
RP 5	DIONYSUS project reporting period 5 (July-December 2022)

2 Introduction

Elaborated in the frame of WP T3 Integrated Port Development, Activity A.T3.3 Project Capitalisation Through Danube Ports Network, the core objective of this deliverable is twofold: firstly, to report on the outcomes of external stakeholder consultation meetings attended by the DPN as well as on its fruitful efforts to establish strategic and operational collaboration frameworks with relevant international organisations promoting IWT in general and ports in particular. This report was therefore structured in a way to provide a detailed overview on all these activities attended by the DPN for the benefit of the Danube ports community.

3 The importance of transnational cooperation and coordination

Transnational partnerships and coordination activities amongst sector representatives, decision makers, local, national and European authorities are key instruments that support IWT's challenging pathway towards climate neutrality. Actively supported by the DPN, these activities addressed the complexity of challenges faced by the sector in terms of greening, sustainability, energy efficiency, economic viability and infrastructure facilities. The key takeaway of these strategic cooperation activities is that cooperation and coordination beyond national border is an essential prerequisite to secure IWT's vital role in a multi-modal future-oriented & reliable European transport system.

3.1 Transnational partnerships and coordination activities in RP 1

Since the start of DIONYSUS, the DPN, in its role as information provider and knowledge creation facilitator, was actively involved in numerous action programs, meetings and workshops that play a vital role in shaping IWT's future in the upcoming MFF 2021-2027. The following list provides an overview:

- **Inland waterway transport agenda for Europe 2021-2027**

The agenda plays a vital role in fulfilling the ambitious climate goals set by the European Green Deal, both in terms of modal shift and green transport. It supports an efficient policy framework that facilitates the overall development of IWT considering the upcoming MFF 2021-2027. Pro Danube and the DPN were actively involved in the preparation process of the agenda. Its proposals fed into the preparation of NAIADES3.

- **NAIADES 3 Action Programme preparation**

After consulting the sector and with the support of the DPN, Pro Danube provided substantial input to the preparation works of the NAIADES3 Action Programme.

- **Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy**

The DPN furthermore supported Pro Danube in providing input to the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. Recognizing the importance of IWT and inland ports to decarbonise the transport system, the strategy is a huge step forward in further strengthening the vital role of IWT to efficiently and enduringly decarbonise the transport system in line with the ambitious goals set by the European Green Deal. The strategy furthermore emphasizes the central role of inland ports as multimodal hubs that bring together low-emission modes of transport.

- **CEF 2 & Horizon Europe Programme preparation**

Two key transport projects - FAIRway works! in the Rhine-Danube Corridor and Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine-Danube Corridor - were among the selected ones to be financed via the Connecting Europe Facility. For both, Pro Danube and several of its members provided a letter of support and will follow the proceedings of the actions. Input and feedback will be provided during the entire implementation process of the projects.

- **Digitalisation initiatives**
 - The objective of the *DTLF Subgroup 1 Workshop* was to brainstorm with the expert participants and identify the most relevant diversification driver for the design of the end-to-end business process flows for the implementation of the eFTI Regulation. The

overarching goal of the Regulation is to increase the efficiency of the public and private sectors by digitising the exchange of information of transport operations. The data exchanged and how it is exchanged is also expected to be harmonised.

- Pro Danube participated at the online *Digital Transport Days* organised on 18 November 2020. Of interest for the IWT sector was the recently adopted Regulation on electronic freight transport information. The aim of the Regulation is to encourage the digitalisation of freight transport and logistics in order to reduce administrative costs, improve enforcement capabilities of competent authorities and to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of transport.
- **Eleventh Meeting on the Follow-up of the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin**

Jointly organised by the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), the Danube Commission (DC) and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the event, organised online due to the COVID-19 outbreak, brought together representatives of international organisations, national and local authorities as well as the international representatives of the IWT industry to discuss and to present the current status of relevant European policy initiatives for the Danube Region and the ongoing waterway infrastructure projects that have a huge impact on the navigability of certain sections of the Danube and its navigable tributaries.

Pro Danube welcomed the measures already taken by waterway management organisations and encouraged them to further coordinate their works reflecting the corridor approach and to continue to actively involve the stakeholders of IWT in their endeavour to improve fairway conditions. Regarding fairway closures due to major infrastructure works, Pro Danube stressed the urgent need to adjust them with the needs and requirements of the sector, encouraging dialogue and consultation with the affected stakeholders operating on the Danube.

- **Motorways of the Sea in the Black Sea and the effective integration in the Rhine-Danube & Orient-East Med Core Network Corridors**

Organised in October 2020 by DG MOVE, the workshop "Motorways of the Sea in the Black Sea and the effective integration in the Orient-Est Med & Rhine-Danube core network corridors" brought together representatives of the European Commission and of the industry to share ideas and brainstorm on how to improve the situation of the Rhine-Danube Corridor ports in terms of their role as cornerstones in promoting regional development.

Danube ports must be encouraged to speed up their development into green economic hubs in order to be effectively and enduringly integrated into the multimodal transnational transport and logistics system. Ports must be considered as an indispensable part of the complete logistics chains, both from the seaports and the hinterland perspectives. Moreover, international cooperation is of utmost importance in further strengthening the position of ports as logistics hubs for regional development. In this sense, efficient cooperation at the regional/national level - as IGÖD (Austrian Ports) and HFIP (Hungary) - has already been established. From the transnational point of view, the Danube Ports Network (DPN) established in the framework of the DAPhNE project, will play a vital role in collecting and transferring knowledge on port strategy, infrastructure development and port digitalisation. The successful

cooperation between these entities resulted in the award of DIONYSUS, a recently launched DTP funded project that builds on the results achieved in the framework of DAPHNE.

- **12th Working Group Meeting of the Rhine-Danube Corridor on Ports and Inland Waterways**

Attended by key representatives of the European Commission, relevant national public authorities and representatives of the sector, the discussions proved extremely fruitful, highlighting the need for further major projects in the upcoming MFF to adequately finance the development of IWT related infrastructure.

- **Coordination Meeting with PA 1A & Pa 1B**

The aim of the coordination meetings was to discuss the core objectives and expected results of the DIONYSUS project as well as the key role of the DPN in providing concise information on port development aspects and its role as a key facilitator for knowledge transfer & creation.

- **Coordination Meeting with the RIS COMEX Project Coordinator**

In line with the thematic area of the DIONYSUS project covering aspects of digitalisation, the core objective of this meeting was to discuss both about the role of the DPN as a knowledge creator and facilitator as well as on the overall results expected from the DIONYSUS project in terms of port digitalisation.

- **Fairway Danube Advisory Committee**

Supported by the DPN, Pro Danube provided on the Fairway Danube Advisory Committee a comprehensive analysis on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on IWT.

After the consultation of the sector, it became clear that both passenger and cargo transportation were highly affected, with cargo not having time to fully recover after the drought of 2018. Limiting the devastating impact on the industry therefore must be high on the agenda of decision-makers at both national and local levels. Uncertainty must be proactively reduced by providing uniform regulations for the exchange of crew members. Equally important in reducing the damage caused by the pandemic is proper fairway maintenance. The FAIRway project plays in this regard a vital role, producing noticeable results that were more than welcomed by both public and private entities.

3.2 Transnational partnerships and coordination activities in RP 2 and RP 3

- **Workshop on Digitalisation in Inland Waterway**

On the 23 November 2021, more than 100 stakeholders from the public and the private sector participated in the transnational workshop on digitalization in Inland Waterway Transportation (IWT). The workshop was organised back-to-back with the Danube Ports Day 2021 as a joint initiative of the European projects Platina 3, Masterplan DIWA, RIS COMEX and DIONYSUS – with the support of the DPN - and the sector organizations Pro Danube Management, EICB and the IWT Platform.

The workshop focused on how digital transformation can support business activities and reporting formalities in the upcoming years. Participants provided valuable inputs regarding further requirements on synchronicity, ICT infrastructure, River Information Services and Smart Shipping, data sharing & integration, cybersecurity and compliance.

During the plenary part of the workshop, the 4 projects were introduced by short interviews moderated by the Master of Ceremony Henk van Laar. The workshop perfectly fitted into the timelines of each project, as currently project partners of PLATINA3, DIONYSUS and the masterplan DIWA are working on

collecting input for their dedicated studies, yet at the same time giving them the chance to share intermediate results with a wide range of experts. The RIS COMEX project will launch its European fairway information portal 'EuRIS' in the course of 2022.

Four themes

After the break, the participants joined either one of the four break-out rooms to go into more detail and moreover to share opportunities, requirements and discuss how relevant authorities together with the industry representatives can support a successful digital transformation in IWT.

The themes of the four break out rooms were:

- Smart Shipping
- Synchro modality
- River Information Services
- Sea and inland ports

This thematic approach resulted in lively discussions and new expert inputs relevant for all of the European projects. During the final plenary part, the results of the discussions in the break-out rooms were shared with all the participants. Representatives from European Commission's DG MOVE congratulated the initiative and highlighted the need for similar future cooperation activities of the IWT sector in Europe.

In order to efficiently organize this event, several coordination meetings were organised with the **RIS COMEX Project Coordinator**. One meeting was organised in the aftermath of the event as well to evaluate the outcomes.

- **PA1 a & PA 1b Coordination Meetings**

In order to update on the milestones achieved in the frame of DIONYSUS, coordination meetings with PA 1a and PA 1b were organised both in RP 2 and RP 3. During these meetings, organised online, possible takeaways of DIONYSUS's results for the activities coordinated under the umbrella of PA 1a and PA 1b were debated.

- **Preparing Fairway 2 Works in the Rhine-Danube Corridor**

In order to determine the shipping sector's requirements regarding the availability and quality of public mooring places, a survey was initiated. Based on the survey results, the project team undertook preparatory measures for the construction and/or upgrading of public mooring places in the project countries Austria, Croatia and Serbia. DPN supported the dissemination of the survey.

- **13th Working Group Meeting of the Rhine-Danube Corridor on Ports and Inland Waterways**

The meeting proved extremely fruitful from a multitude of perspectives. It provided a platform to discuss and present the ongoing proceedings directly affecting the legislative framework on inland waterway transport, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Danube riparian countries, and last but not least, information on the status quo of digitalisation and alternative fuels as well as on the current status of the revision of the TEN-T Regulation.

- **15th Online Meeting of the Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor Forum**

High on the agenda of the meeting was the presentation of the progress of the updated Study on the Rhine-Danube TEN-T Core Network 2021. The presentation addressed several aspects, such as: What has changed compared to the findings in 2017? Which bottlenecks still hamper multimodality? What is the status quo of ongoing projects? This and further relevant questions will be touched by the study which is expected to be published soon.

- **EBU Hybrid Event 2021: IWT Key to Deliver the Green Deal and Contribute to the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy**

200 participants joined the EBU 2021 hybrid event attended by representatives of the European institutions, river commissions and IWT industry representatives.

- **Webinar on Greening Challenges and Stage V**

Under the title Greening Challenges and Stage V, organised by the European IWT Platform and attended by Pro Danube's transnational branch organisations, innovative technology providers, representatives of the public sector as well as international organisations, the core objective of the webinar was to discuss, analyse and provide recommendations on the more than challenging pathway towards a climate resilient European IWT system. Given the adoption of NAIADES III as well as the provisions of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, the webinar provided a fruitful ground to share information and provide several examples of good practices.

- **NAIADES3 Implementation Group**

The aim of the NAIADES3 Implementation Group is to assist the European Commission in the implementation process of the NAIADES3 Implementation Expert Group. In the frame of the meeting, Pro Danube also representing the DPN, called for a significant reduction of the administrative burden in the application process to EU funds and encouraged the synergy between small operators to optimize the scale of projects.

- **CESNI Hearing on RIS standards**

The scope of the Hearing organised on 9 September 2021 was to identify how the River Information Services (RIS) could better help the integration of inland navigation into logistic chains. DIONYSUS's role in identifying the challenges RIS is facing in the Danube IWT system were presented and discussed. The hearing concluded that digitalisation and other opportunities given by new technologies represent a significant step forward to a sustainable and efficient transport mode. Given that digitalisation lags behind in the Danube IWT sector, DIONYSUS strives to provide effective solutions to overcome this issue.

- **Danube Commission Expert Group on Ports**

During the meeting, the role of the Danube Ports Network (DPN) as a knowledge facilitator and project initiator was highlighted. Launched in the framework of the DAPhNE project, the DPN is an initiative that has emerged in response to a real need to address and reduce the development and innovation gap between the ports situated on the Rhine-Danube Corridor, aiming towards cooperation strengthening between inland and maritime ports in the Danube Region. DPN brings together public and private sea & inland ports and terminal operators from the Danube Region willing to engage in a long-term, active and coordinated cooperation process benefiting the port industry and regional economy at large. Moreover, DPN emphasizes the importance of sharing knowledge and networking to keep the Danube ports at the forefront of global innovation and as such to adapt them to the needs and requirements of a future-oriented European transport system. One of these recent initiatives refers to E4Danube - On-Shore Power

Supply in Danube Region Ports. In light of Europe's ambitious target to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, E4Danube aims to provide solutions for the transition towards a zero-emission transport mode. The project furthermore aims to comply with the corridor approach in order to reflect the possibilities for a harmonised financing, invoicing, and payment framework.

The presentations are available for download [here](#).

3.3 Transnational partnerships and coordination activities in RP 4 and RP 5

- **Danube Commission Expert Group on Ports**

DPN's intervention initiated a fruitful discussion among experts from the Danube-riparian countries in view of applicability, economic viability, and environmental impact. It was concluded that OPS indeed has the capacity to play an essential role in the greening transition of Danube inland and seaports. The successful greening transition of Danube ports must be tackled as a joint transnational effort having the corridor approach as a priority, for which the DPN is ready to provide its full support.

- **NAIADES Implementation Group**

The role of this Expert Group is to provide advice and expertise to the Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) in relation to inland navigation issues. Its tasks are the following:

- to provide advice to the Commission for the preparation of legislative proposals and policy initiatives in the inland navigation sector.
- assist the Commission in the implementation of the NAIADES Action Programmes.
- give advice and provide input to the Commission in the preparation of the progress reports of the NAIADES Action programmes.
- support the Commission with regard to the policy-making discussion concerning the EU transport policy in the inland navigation sector, including aspects related to governance and cooperation with international river commissions and other relevant international organisations.
- provide input for the discussion of other topics of general interest for the sector, including, inter alia, the smooth integration of inland navigation transport in the TEN-T, the achievement of good navigation status, innovation and technological development issues, greening of inland navigation transport, new business models, innovative financing schemes or market enabling measures supporting modal-shift objectives.

- **FAIRway works! & Preparing FAIRway 2 Advisory Committee**

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the current status of both projects as well as their expected impact on the overall well-being of IWT. Important topics - such as the Upgrade of the Serbian Iron Gate 2 locks, Serbian Equipment for Good Navigation Status, Austrian Equipment for Good Navigation Status, as well as the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Facility were - just to mention a few - high on the agenda. Both actions are co-financed by the Connecting Europe Facility of the European Union and are implemented by the waterway management organisations of Austria, Croatia, and Serbia.

- **NAIADES & DINA Expert Group**

High on the agenda were topics concerning the adoption of legislation aimed at supporting the implementation of the goals stipulated in NAIADES III and the status of digitalisation - considered a prerequisite for competitive waterborne transportation.

- **Coordination meetings with the RIS COMEX Project Coordinator & PA 1A and PA 1B**

Pro Danube as well as the DPN organised continuous consultation during RP 4 and RP 5 with viadonau as coordinator of the RIS COMEX project and participated in the feedback rounds in order to deliver the inputs of the IWT/port business sector. The last meeting was held online on 10 October 2022 where the parties have updated each other on the final results of RIS COMEX (EURIS and CEERIS portals) and the requirements and demands from the sector, including the findings in the DIONYSUS project.

Equally important – the cooperation with PA 1A & PA 1B was furthermore tightened in the course of RP 4 and RP 5 by highlighting DIONYSUS's important role in the implementation process of EUSDR.