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

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Table of Contents

1	Table of Figures	3
2	Abbreviations	4
3	Introduction	5
4	DPN – knowledge facilitator & information provider	6
4.1	DPN in Periods 2 & 3 (January 2021-December 2021). Overview.....	6
4.2	Danube Ports Day 2021.....	7
4.3	Workshop on Digitalisation in Inland Waterway.....	8
4.4	DPN Coordination Meeting	8
4.5	Report on EU and Transnational Partnerships & Coordination Activities. Current status.....	8
4.6	First Edition of the Danube Ports Handbook	9
4.7	Project newsletter & Capitalisation Factsheet.....	9
4.8	Extending the functionalities of the DPN website.....	9
4.8.1	Port Knowledge Center	10
4.8.2	Digital Initiatives Observatory	11
4.9	Contribution to European initiatives (January-December 2021).....	12
5	Other DIONYSUS Events	14
5.1	Workshop on Ports & Agricultural Products Traffic in the Danube Region Countries.....	14
5.2	Second Workshop on Container Liner Services.....	14
5.3	First Workshop to Facilitate Cross-Border/Cross Black Sea Services.....	14
5.4	Second on Ports & Agricultural Products Traffic in the Lower Danube Region Countries	14



1 Table of Figures

Figure 1: Timeline Period 2 & Period 3.....	6
Figure 2: Danube Ports Days	7
Figure 3: Screenshot from the DPN website	10
Figure 4: Port Knowledge Center	10
Figure 5: Digital Initiatives Observatory	11



2 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
AF	Application Form
DAPhNE	Danube Ports Network project (2017-2019)
DC	Danube Commission
DTLF	Digital Transport & Logistics Forum
DPN	Danube Ports Network
DG MOVE	Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport
EC	European Commission
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
EHOÖ	Ennshafen Port
HFIP	Hungarian Federation of Danube Ports
IWT	Inland Waterway Transport
MPAC	Maritime Ports Administration Constanta
PA	Priority Area
PAV	Port Authority Vukovar
PDM	Pro Danube Management GmbH
VPAS	Public Ports, JSC

3 Introduction

The aim of the Yearly Activity Report 2021 is to provide a comprehensive overview on the capitalisation activities carried out during the year 2021 covering Periods 2 & 3 of the DIONYSUS project in line with the Capitalisation Strategy. The key instrument for the implementation of the Capitalisation Strategy is the Danube Ports Network (DPN), a platform launched in the framework of the [DAPhNE](#) project to facilitate cooperation between Danube inland and maritime ports. Within DIONYSUS, capitalisation is understood way more than a mere dissemination of project activities, events and milestones. And this is where the DPN decisively steps in, facilitating project capitalisation and knowledge-transfer activities, acting at the same time as an information provider and as an instrument to promote Danube port's needs at EU level in ongoing port policy related discussions.

Following the guidelines of the Project Capitalisation Strategy, this year's report consists of a comprehensive overview of all the activities carried out under the umbrella or with the support of the DPN. High on the agenda of this year's activities was the second edition of the Danube Ports Day. Even though a physical meeting was due to the strict COVID-19 restrictions not possible, the Danube Ports Day 2021 event managed to successfully bring together over 70 experts from both the public and private sectors to discuss issues related to the potential of inland ports in inland mobility, fleet electrification as well as sustainable port logistics solutions. This year's event was preceded by the DPN Coordination Meeting where key aspects of DPN's capitalisation and knowledge-transfer activities were discussed. The achieved milestones were evaluated whereas the challenges that still lie ahead thoroughly discussed.

An important milestone reached refers to the update of the DPN website with 2 key functionalities: the **Port Knowledge Center** and the **Digital Initiatives Observatory**. Both became fully operational in Period 2 of the DIONYSUS project. These instruments serve as key facilitators for knowledge-creation and transfer under the umbrella of the DPN.

As foreseen in the AF, strategic coordination meetings with representatives of the European Commission, EUSDR PA 1a & PA 1b, with the RIS COMEX Project Coordinator and relevant transnational sector organisations such as EFIP were high on the agenda. The results of these meetings will all feed in the ongoing proceedings of the DIONYSUS project.

Important milestones have also been reached in the frame of capitalisation activities: based on the results of a survey collecting primary data on the impact of COVID-19 on Danube Ports, an important publication – the first edition of the **Danube Ports Handbook** – was released. Equally important are the two editions of the DIONYSUS newsletter which were both published at the end of Periods 2 and 3 respectively. The end of 2021 also witnessed the publication of a factsheet covering the most important capitalisation activities carried out within DIONYSUS and with the support of the DPN during Periods 2 & 3. All these milestones and highlights are thoroughly described within the present Yearly Activity Report.

4.2 Danube Ports Day 2021

The 2021 Danube Ports Day was successfully organised in the frame of the DIONYSUS project by the teams of Pro Danube Management and the Port Authority Vukovar, with the support of the Danube Ports Network on the 23rd of November.

The event brought together more than 70 experts from the Danube Region and beyond, interested in topics related to **(i) the potential of inland ports in urban mobility, (ii) fleet electrification** as well as **(iii) sustainable port logistics solutions**.

Good practice examples in the field of Danube vessel fleet electrification, as well as sustainable logistics and port solutions in urban areas, were presented by highly experienced stakeholders. Mr. Tomislav Uroda representing iCAT, a Croatian company specialised in innovative ship design and shipbuilding gave an insight into their solar-powered passenger vessel concept. Mr. Edwin van Hassel from the University of Antwerp introduced the “Smart Waterway Project”, a concept developed in order to demonstrate the benefits of using waterways for the distribution of freight in the urban area of Ghent. Mr. Robert Rafael on behalf of the DPN introduced notable examples of sustainable practices collected from several logistics service providers operating in the urban area of Budapest. Moving further downstream towards the Port of Constanta, Mr. Alexandru Craciun representing DP World Constanta shared very interesting insights on DP world’s innovative initiatives to be rolled out in the Danube Region.

The third Danube Ports Day event is envisaged to be organised in Period 5, jointly coordinated by MPAC and PDM. The figure below illustrates the planning of these events and their expected outcome:

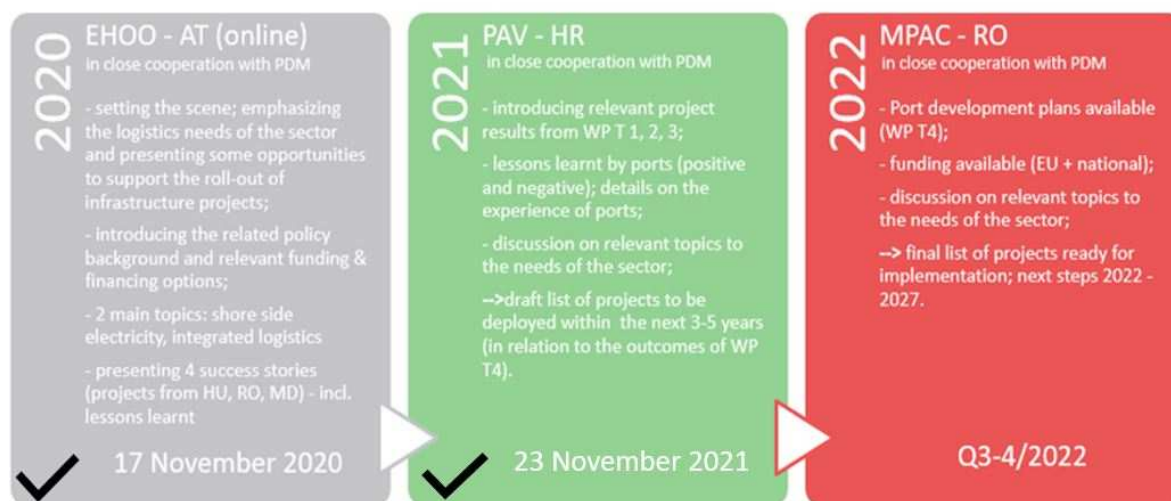


Figure 2: Danube Ports Days

As foreseen in the AF and the Capitalisation Strategy, both Danube Ports Day events – the first one organised in November 2020 followed by the second one in November 2021, managed to bring together highly experienced inland port experts to discuss the latest trends in terms of port development as well as the expected challenges for the decades to come. Both events were highly welcomed by the Danube IWT sector – and beyond – playing a major role in the knowledge transfer, and creation proceedings of the DPN.

The presentations are available for download on the website of the DPN [here](#).

4.3 Workshop on Digitalisation in Inland Waterway

On the 23 November, 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 synchromodality, 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.

4.4 DPN Coordination Meeting

The second coordination meeting, hosted by BRCCI and organised by PDM on the 23rd of November 2021, provided an overview on the planned activities in the framework of the DPN and other related communication and dissemination activities as foreseen in DIONYSUS. During the meeting, PDM made a detailed presentation on the activities carried out with the support of the DPN, the milestones reached so far and the expected challenges that still lie ahead.

4.5 Report on EU and Transnational Partnerships & Coordination Activities. Current status

The DPN plays a vital role in the elaboration process of the **Report on EU and Transnational Partnerships & Coordination Activities**. Capitalisation is understood way more than a mere dissemination of project results and outcomes. As such, this document will report on any kind of transnational partnerships and coordination activities that are relevant for port development. The

DPN will be the key instrument to establish efficient partnerships and cooperation that are of utmost importance for port development in the Danube Region. The final version of this deliverable is due in Period 5, whereas inputs in terms of strategic coordination meetings are envisaged, according to the timeline proposed in the framework of DIONYSUS. As foreseen in the Capitalisation Strategy and the AF, meetings in Periods 2 & 3 were organised with EUSDR PA 1a & PA 1b, with the RIS COMEX Project Coordinator, EFIP and representatives of the European Commission. The results of these meetings will feed into D.T3.3.3.

4.6 First Edition of the Danube Ports Handbook

The first edition of the Danube Ports Handbook was published in December 2021. The first-hand data was collected by means of an online survey having the core objective to identify and to analyse the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Danube ports. The first edition of the Danube Ports Handbook is an integral part of **D.T3.3.4 Report Knowledge Transfer Events, Tools and Publications**. For this first edition, PDM created a template which comprises, for each port that has participated in the survey, a brief description, and some important statistical data. Input for the final version was received by all the ports that participated in the survey. A total of 15 ports, covering the entire area of the Danube Region, participated in the survey and as such are depicted in the frame of this first edition. A second edition is envisaged to be published at the end of the DIONYSUS project in Period 5.

4.7 Project newsletter & Capitalisation Factsheet

During the year 2021 covering Periods 2 and 3 of DIONYSUS, two newsletters were published, having the scope to inform the interested audience – both in the Danube Region and beyond – about the latest developments in the frame of the project. Both newsletters were published in due time at the end of the project's periods 2 and 3. DPN actively contributed to the elaboration of the DIONYSUS newsletter informing the interested audience about the ongoing and future proceedings as well as the implementation status of the project.

A capitalisation factsheet, summarizing the content of this report, was also published in December 2021. Another factsheet is foreseen to be published in December 2022, summarizing the outcomes of the Yearly Activity Report 2022.

4.8 Extending the functionalities of the DPN website

The DPN website (www.danubeports.eu) represents the main source of information concerning the activities rolled-out as part of the DIONYSUS Capitalisation Strategy with the support of the Danube Ports Network (DPN).

Prepared and launched in the framework of the DAPhNE project in 2018, the website has several dedicated sections which provide its visitors first-hand information on the DPN activities, relevant conferences and events, DPN partners, publications, etc.

In the framework of DIONYSUS, the DPN website received new functionalities, namely, the (i) **Port Knowledge Center** and the (ii) **Digital Initiatives Observatory**.

The figure below provides a screenshot of the current DPN website after the two new functionalities were added:

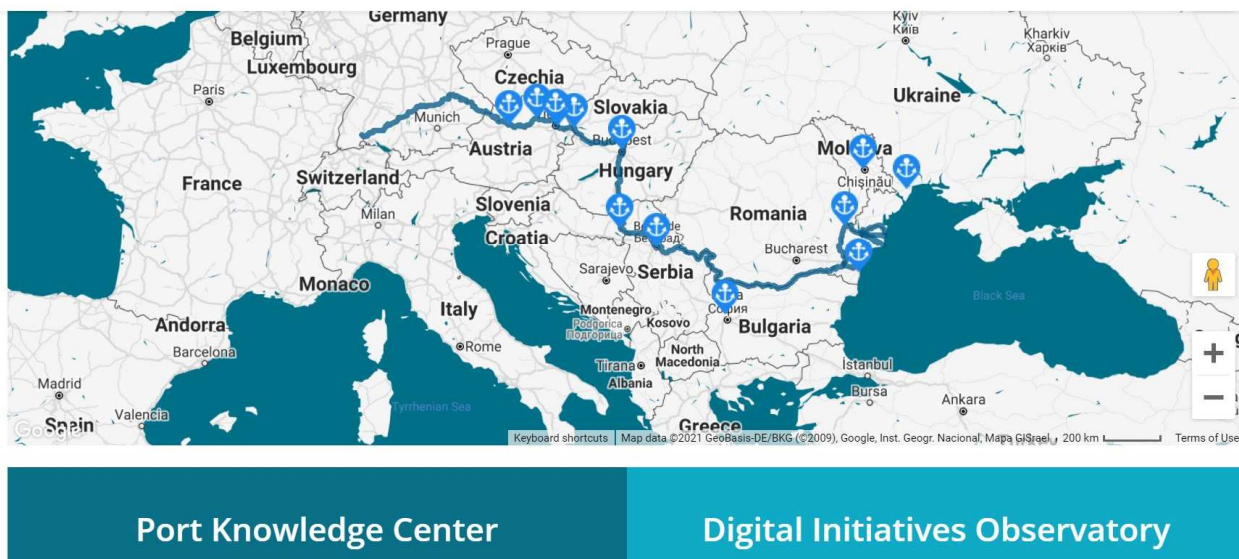


Figure 3: Screenshot from the DPN website

4.8.1 Port Knowledge Center

Work on the update of the DPN website was completed in Q1/2021 in order to accommodate a dedicated section entitled “Port Knowledge Center” which comprises 4 subsections, namely:

- Port Statistics
- Publications
- Events & Coordination Meetings
- Deliverables and Outputs

The figure below illustrates the main functionalities of the Port Knowledge Center:

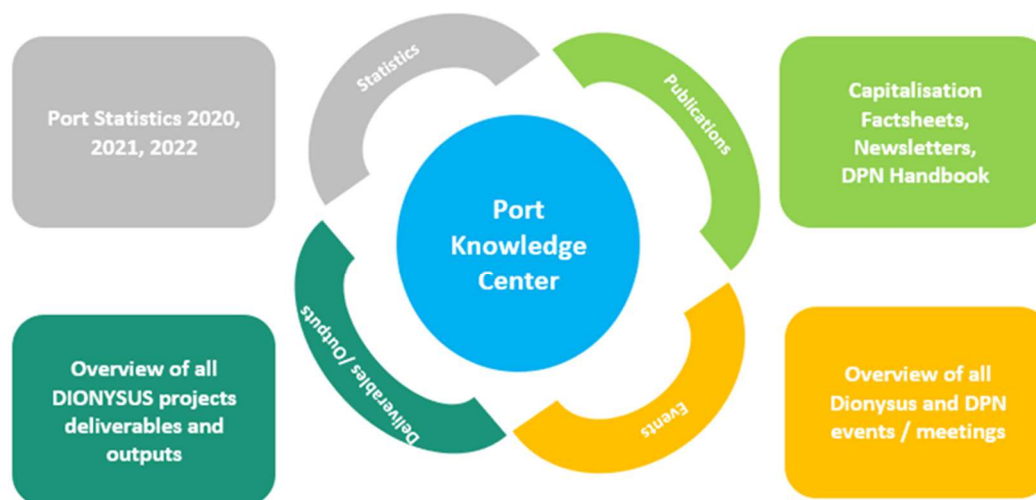


Figure 4: Port Knowledge Center

4.8.2 Digital Initiatives Observatory

The Digital Initiatives Observatory consists of digitalisation initiatives along the logistics chains in line with RIS deployments, EU digitalisation policy goals, legislation and measures in relation to IWT.

The Observatory consists of an interactive webpage which is hosted on the DPN website and will be periodically updated (at least once a year). As such, the information published will support Deliverable T2.4.2 Yearly Activity Reports 2020, 2021, 2022.

The webpage is in such a way designed that it enables the visitor a fast and easy access to the most relevant information. By means of dedicated filters, the visitor will select the information which interest him/her the most, choosing between:

- country
- transnational projects,
- policy initiatives,
- dedicated working groups,
- funding opportunities.

The figure below illustrates the Digital Initiatives Observatory:

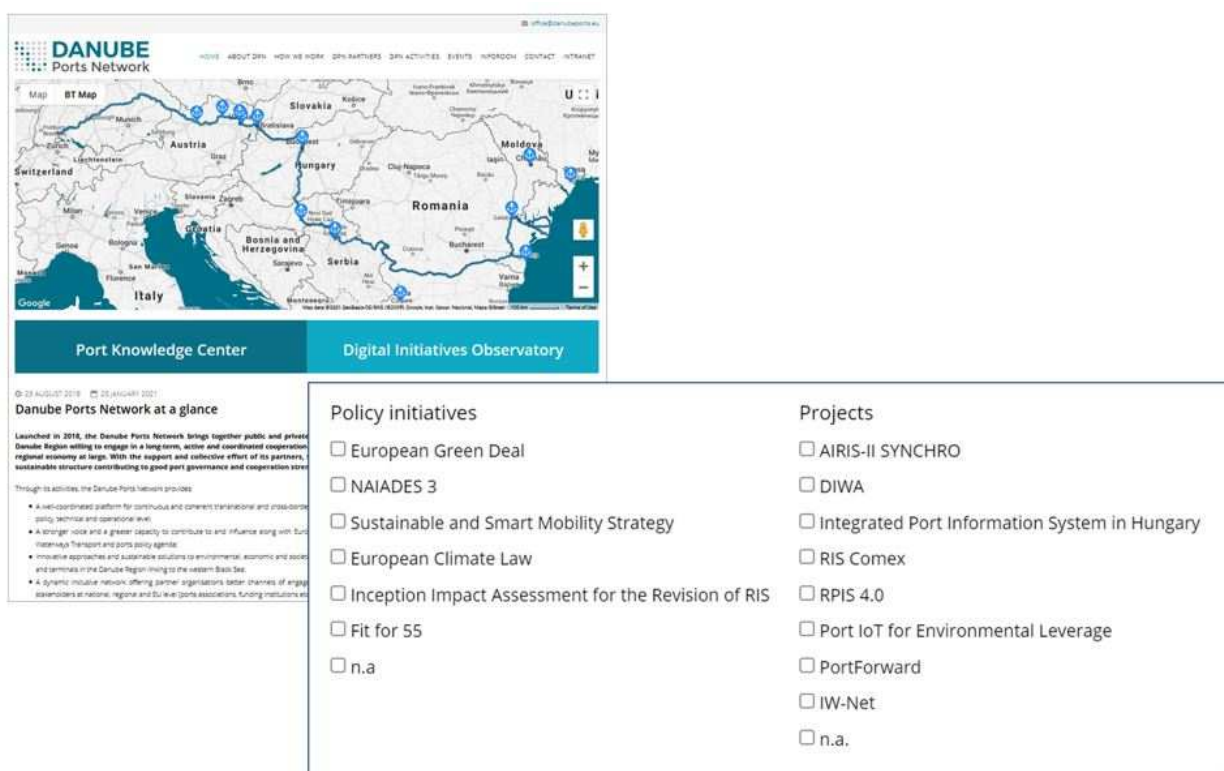


Figure 5: Digital Initiatives Observatory

The Digital Initiatives Observatory is fully operational since Period 2 of DIONYSUS and is periodically updated several times a year.

4.9 Contribution to European Initiatives (January-December 2021)

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 a brief overview:

- **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](#).

5 Other DIONYSUS Events

5.1 Workshop on Ports & Agricultural Products Traffic in the Lower Danube Region Countries

The event brought together Lower Danube Region's port administrations, port operators and service providers (storage operators), agricultural producers and traders as well as logistics service providers to discuss on the present and future traffic flows in the Danube Region. The workshop analyzed the existing transport infrastructure together with the status-quo of the on-going and planned infrastructure projects, as basis for the elaboration of various assumptions on potential traffic and trade agricultural flows of the Danube ports. The workshop was organised on 17 November 2021 by AAOPFR.

5.2 Second Workshop on Container Liner Services

Organised on 7 December online by FTTE, the core objective of the second edition of the workshop was to bring together experts to discuss about the revival and further development of Container Liner Services on the Danube River. Attended by representatives of the EC, the DC, national authorities and stakeholders operating on the Danube, the event provided the interested audience both with first-hand information on the advantages of container liner shipping as well as on the challenges that hamper its development. The event was a follow-up of the successful event organised in December 2020 by the Port of Constanta.

5.3 First Workshop to Facilitate Cross-Border/Cross Black Sea Services

The aim of the First Workshop to facilitate cross-border/cross Black Sea services (08.12.) aimed to identify the possibilities and opportunities to build up new transport links among the Danube corridors and the riparian Black Sea & Central Asia regions.

The workshop analysed the existing transport infrastructure together with the status-quo of the on-going and planned infrastructure projects, as basis for the elaboration of various assumptions on potential traffic and trade flows of the Danube ports in connection to the development of the transport links to the corresponding corridors, collecting important and valuable feedback for the design and operation of potential new cross-border/cross-Black Sea transport links.

5.4 Workshop on Ports & Agricultural Products Traffic in the Middle Danube Region Countries

The event targeted Middle Danube Region's port administrations, port operators and service providers (storage operators), agricultural producers and traders as well as logistics service providers. It discussed present and future traffic flows and the throughputs of agricultural products in the ports located in the sub-region Middle Danube (HU, HR, RS).