



National Action Plan Danube Navigation

Overview of Measures



The political and economic changes taking place in East- and South-Eastern Europe within the last 15 years have created dynamic emerging economic areas and generated trade along the Danube axis. After the fall of the iron curtain and the political stabilization in South-Eastern Europe, the potential of the Danube waterway can be now exploited to its full extent. The accession of the Central and Eastern European countries to the EU increases the significance of the Danube as a major European transport axis. Together with the Rhine, the Danube connects the North Sea with the Black Sea over a length of 3,500 km, linking eleven countries in the process.

After the dramatic events of the past decade, which also affected inland navigation on the Danube, peace has been restored in the Balkan region. The opening of the new bridge in Novi Sad in October 2005 marked the elimination of a crucial bottleneck for Danube navigation; vessels can once again pass through this section without any interference.

Danube navigation also plays an important role in European infrastructure and transport policy, especially concerning the development of the Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T).

The Austrian federal government's 'National Action Plan Danube Navigation' lays the key foundation for promoting this environmentally friendly means of transportation. Competitive inland navigation is not only an essential prerequisite for successful transportation policies, but also for the Austrian economy. The Danube region will again retake its place as one of the most important economic and cultural regions in a unified Europe with the Danube as central lifeline and transport axis.

Chancellor Dr. Wolfgang Schüssel

An efficient traffic system is a vital factor in Austria's economy and for its population. The enlargement of the EU has brought with it an enormous growth in traffic for the transport of international goods along the Danube region. For this reason I have made the expansion of the Danube navigation a top priority in my strategic agenda and the strengthening of this environmentally friendly means of transportation a cornerstone in Austria's transportation policies. Our main goal is to utilize the enormous capacity of the Danube waterways as much as possible.



The European Commission has realized the importance of inland navigation for Europe's economy as well, as expressed in its proposal to this effect in January 2006 advocating the development and enhancement of inland navigation. This so-called "Integrated European Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport" will create favourable conditions for inland navigation services and stimulate employment. The European inland navigation fleet and waterway infrastructure will be modernized and, thanks to this new image, will benefit from a increased awareness and acceptance of its advantages in the shipping industry.

The "National Action Plan Danube Navigation", is Austria's political tool for the implementation of the European Commission's proposal. Another important goal of the National Action Plan is to shift the transportation of goods to the waterways in order to relieve the burden on national roadways. In so doing, the National Action Plan will greatly contribute to protecting the environment and the population, as navigation, economically speaking, entails lower external costs as regards emissions, accident costs, noise, etc.

The step-by-step realization of this program will result in the long-term strengthening of Danube navigation. The Austrian shipping industry will benefit from a reliable, competitive and cost- efficient transportation route taking them directly to the markets of South-Eastern Europe and the Black Sea.

Vice Chancellor Hubert Gorbach
Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology



The Danube Waterway plays an important role in the Austrian transport system. The importance of Danube navigation for the Austrian transport policy is documented in the Federal Government's shipping memorandum of 1992, as well as in the 2002 Austrian General Transport Plan. Inland navigation also is a factor at the European level, which is documented through the European Commission's proposal of a European action plan for the promotion of inland navigation. Inland navigation will also be an important issue within the framework of Austria's EU Presidency during the first six months of 2006.

The strategic importance of the Danube waterway has prompted Austria to develop a comprehensive strategy, and now it has presented a programme of measures derived from this strategy, its "National Action Plan Danube Navigation". This action plan consolidates the Ten Point Programme drawn up in 2003 by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (bmvit) aimed at strengthening Danube navigation. The heart of the National Action Plan is made up of a comprehensive catalogue of measures, which is broken down further into ten areas and 40 independent measures. This catalogue of measures outlines what Austrian navigation policies plan to accomplish over the next ten years and will be periodically updated and brought in line with current developments.

I would like to emphasize the international component of Austria's National Action Plan, as the Danube's transport potential can not be fully exploited by a single riparian country alone. One cornerstone of the proposed measures is therefore to cooperate with all Danube countries, as well as to collaborate actively in developing European inland navigation policies.

The National Action Plan represents a dynamic tool that points the way for Austrian navigation policy until 2015. It provides a solid basis for planning and decision-making for national transport policies and will sustainably strengthen Danube navigation. Austria's National Action Plan also underlines the Danube waterway's great significance within the Austrian transport system.

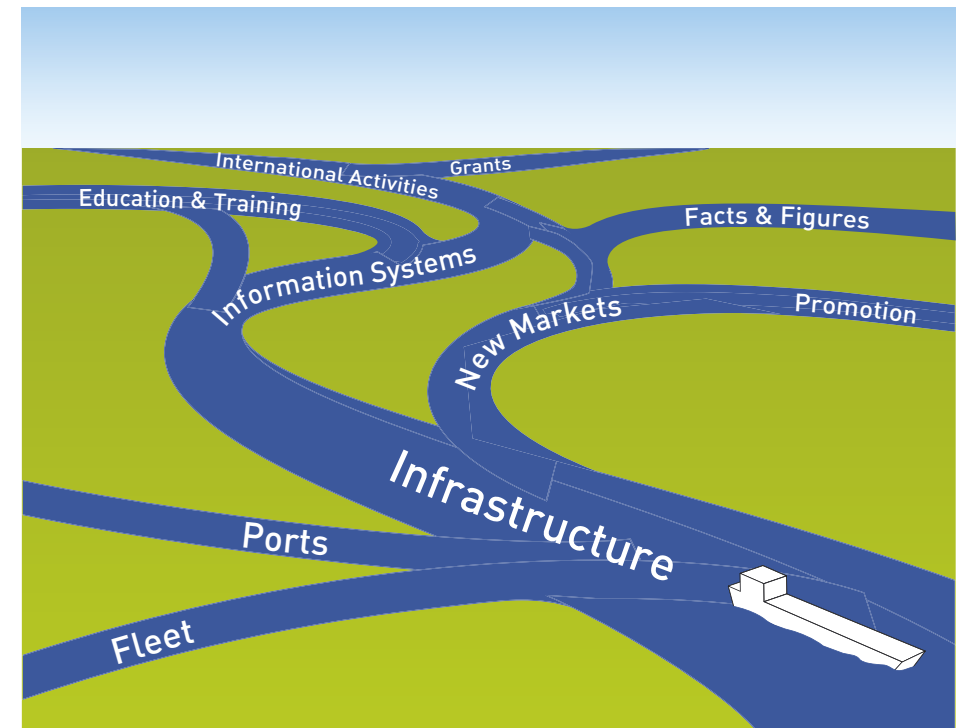
State Secretary Helmut Kukacka

Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology

Strategic approach

The long-term promotion of Danube navigation requires a strategic approach embracing the comprehensive consideration of all aspects of navigation and its framework conditions. Inland navigation as a transport mode cannot be regarded as an isolated phenomenon, but must be seen as an integral part of the entire logistics chain. This reflects the important status of inland navigation in the National Action Plan Danube Navigation, namely as a partner on equal footing with rail and road and not as a competitor.

Adequate waterway infrastructure is a 'conditio sine qua non' for ensuring the competitiveness of Danube navigation. Calculable waterway depths all-year round and intact locks alone are not enough to boost Danube navigation in the long-term. Rather, an integrative approach is what is needed. The tributaries to the main river, as shown in this diagram, must be seen as further fields of action. Danube navigation can tap its full potential only by implementing all measures in a coordinated way. This would result in the politically desirable figures of an increase from currently 12 million tonnes per annum to 25-30 million tonnes.



I

Infrastructure

Maintain and improve waterway infrastructure

Infrastructure constitutes a fundamental element of the inland navigation system. Infrastructural bottlenecks have significant effects on how cost-effective inland navigation is. The aim of Austria's policies is therefore to improve the waterway infrastructure through correct maintenance, removal of bottlenecks and efficient lock management. At the same time, efforts must be made to coordinate action for removing bottlenecks in the other countries bordering the Danube. Ensuring competitive waterway infrastructure and conserving the environment are not mutually exclusive, as the 'Integrated River Engineering Project on the Danube to the East of Vienna' clearly shows.

Measures

- Remove bottlenecks on the Austrian Danube
- Ensure adequate waterway maintenance and management
- Minimize lock closing times due to revision works
- Support an integrative improvement of fairway conditions on the entire Danube



II

Ports

Further develop Danube ports into multimodal logistics centres

As multimodal logistics centres, ports and transshipment sites act as hubs between the waterway, road and rail transport modes. A suitable development and investment strategy is needed to cope with the expected increase in transport. Industrial settlements along the Danube waterway should be stimulated by coordinating site policy and safeguarding development areas. A further important point concerns port innovation.

Measures

- Draw up a development and investment strategy for the Austrian Danube ports and transshipment sites
- Push for the modernization of ports and transshipment sites
- Stimulate industrial settlements along the Austrian Danube
- Support the further development of South-Eastern European Danube ports



III

Information Systems

Implement and further develop River Information Services (RIS) on the Danube

Telematics and information services for inland navigation, called River Information Services (RIS), have been developed over the past several years. RIS contributes substantially to increasing the safety and efficiency of inland navigation. Shipping lines and ports and logistics service providers can optimize their transport, transshipment and logistics operations, thereby reducing overall transport costs. Austria has taken a forerunning role in the Danube area with the implementation of Danube River Information Services (DoRIS). The potential of RIS can, however, only be fully realized if it can be implemented along the entire length of the Danube. The aim is therefore to develop and standardize the greatest possible number of coordinated services on the entire Danube by 2010. The foundations for this are the European RIS guidelines, the IRIS master plan and EU supporting resources for national implementation projects.

Measures

- Implement DoRIS in Austria
- Further develop RIS for official and commercial use
- Further develop technologies relevant to RIS
- Support the Danube countries in implementing of RIS



IV

Fleet

Modernize the Austrian fleet

The fleet forms the third main pillar of the inland navigation system, alongside infrastructure and ports. The Danube fleet has been undergoing considerable restructuring since the radical political transformation taking place in Europe since 1989. Formerly national fleets have been privatized, and new enterprises have emerged. Business management and administrative framework conditions must be improved for Austria to become an attractive location for shipping companies. Extensive modernization is needed to increase the competitiveness of inland navigation. In doing this, the aspects of environmental responsibility, safety and the opening up of new markets should be made top priorities.

Measures

- Improve the environmental performance of the Danube fleet
- Increase the safety of inland navigation
- Improve the framework conditions for investment in the fleet
- Push innovative plans in the inland navigation sector



V

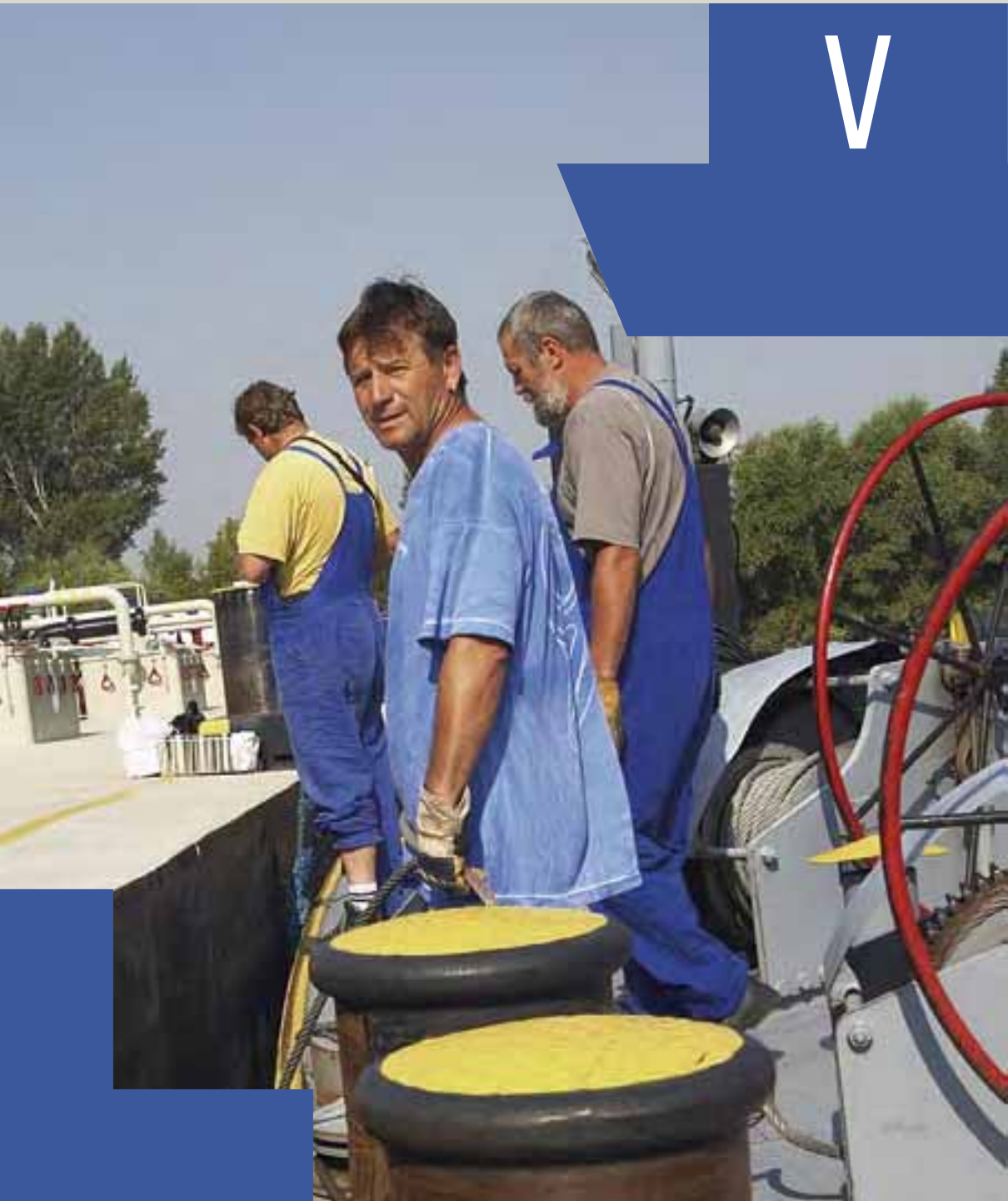
Education & Training

Invest in jobs and qualifications

The competence and efficiency of inland navigation depends to a large extent on the availability of qualified personnel. However, inland navigation in Austria, just as in most other Western European countries, is experiencing a staffing shortage. The increased availability of training and education possibilities, as well as the facility of the free movement of workers in international inland navigation should remedy the shortage of personnel and young people in the profession. Furthermore, the NAP aims to improve work and socially legislative framework conditions by encouraging social dialogue between employers and employees – similar to the one in place on the European level.

Measures

- Launch a training offensive
- Improve the availability of education
- Facilitate the employment of qualified foreign workers
- Improve framework for labour and social conditions through social dialogue



VI

Promotion

Raise awareness and boost the image of Danube navigation

Danube navigation is still insufficiently present in the awareness of both the general public and political and economic decision makers. Its image tends to be portrayed rather negatively; prejudices which are often heard are that it is outmoded, slow or unreliable. The fact that significant modernization processes have been carried out in inland navigation and that it is now already, and will in the future be even more so, an environmentally friendly, reliable and innovative partner is not communicated sufficiently. A strong public relations programme has long been a matter of course for road and rail transport carriers. The NAP aims at coming up with an extensive pro-Danube navigation public relations programme by creating a national platform as a tool for a coordinated PR-strategy as well as for a target group-specific image campaign.

Measures

- Create and implement a coordinated PR-strategy
- Create a national platform for pro-Danube navigation public relations work
- Strengthen pro-Danube navigation national lobbying activities
- Implement a pro-Danube navigation image campaign



VII

Facts & Figures

Disseminate knowledge and improve the fundamental data on Danube navigation

Information kills rumours. Navigation is a complex system that is determined by numerous components and plagued by numerous false opinions and prejudices. User-specific processing of information in handbooks, on websites, in presentations and teaching materials should bring inland navigation closer to the public and potential users. Future logistics service providers must be familiarized beginning in their training with the inland navigation system in order to be able to integrate it efficiently in logistics chains and offer these services effectively to their customers. Sound observation of the market forms the basis for a focused inland navigation policy, as well as for making and evaluating economical transport decisions.

Measures

- Collect and process fundamental data on Danube navigation
- Provide web-based facts and figures about Danube navigation
- Introduce Danube navigation to training and education
- Construct an information and training centre at the Enns-Ennsdorf port

VIII

New Markets



Exploit the Danube waterway's transport potential

In Austria, the Danube waterway is used to about 15% of its capacity – road and rail on the other hand have to struggle to accommodate capacity. It is high time that cooperation between the transport carriers was boosted. Traditionally, inland navigation transports mass goods such as coal, ore or mineral oil products. The aim is to expand its area of use to more valuable general cargo. To achieve this, it will be necessary to actively persuade shippers and considerably extend and improve the logistics services available, for example by introducing scheduled liner services for container transport. As the link between the public and private sectors, national inland navigation development agencies should urge the development of the Danube waterway forward.

Measures

- Provide logistics advice in the field of Danube navigation
- Stimulate cooperation between inland navigation and road/rail
- Support the construction of scheduled liner services on the Danube
- Push the foundation of national inland navigation development agencies in the Danube countries

IX

Grants

Provide supporting resources for the modernization of Danube navigation

A public support strategy with the relevant tools and means is needed to specifically strengthen Danube navigation and speed up the market development. The modernization of fleets and ports, the development of scheduled liner services and the innovative use of technology form the focus of public support. The advantages of modern, competitive inland navigation are obvious. As an industrial location, Austria profits as a result of reduced transport costs. Low external costs (emissions, accident costs, noise) protect the environment and the population. In times of budgetary constraints, the resources allocated to Danube navigation clearly contribute to the national economical public welfare.

Measures

- Fund flexible and competitive transshipment facilities
- Fund an environmentally friendly and market orientated Austrian fleet
- Fund the development of scheduled container liner services and new multimodal transport
- Fund an innovative use of technology in Danube navigation



X

International Activities

Strengthen European inland navigation

Commitment to the development of the Danube Waterway does not stop at Austria's borders. A comprehensive strategy is required internationally as well. The European Commission's commitment to strengthening inland navigation in the direction of the 'European Action Plan' is an important step towards an active European navigation policy. A particular matter of concern for Austria is the integration of all countries bordering the Danube into a Pan-European navigation policy. Only together can framework conditions be optimized: creating coordinated legal regulations; gaining political support and improving the image of inland navigation are important issues in this context.

Measures

- Push the development and implementation of the European action plan
- Contribute to the harmonization of legislative and institutional framework conditions
- Improve the image of European inland navigation
- Play an active role in the development of the Pan-European Corridor VII

Costs and Benefits

Costs

The 'National Action Plan Danube Navigation' (NAP) does not just set the course for Austrian inland navigation policy, but also forms a decisive basis for a large part of the waterway and inland navigation budgets until 2015. Accordingly, the implementation of the measures contained in the NAP (exclusive the 'Integrated River Engineering Project on the Danube to the East of Vienna') costs around € 270 million.

The 'Integrated River Engineering Project on the Danube to the East of Vienna' must be seen separately and will cost another € 208 million according to current planning considerations. About 15% of this sum will be financed by EU funds.

... and Benefits

The implementation of the NAP will increase the annual transport volume on the Austrian stretch of the Danube from currently 12 million tonnes to 25 million tonnes in 2015. This will mean a savings of € 42 million a year in transport costs for Austrian industries.

The increased utilization of inland navigation as an environmentally friendly transport mode reduces the external costs in the Austrian freight transportation system by cutting down on pollutants, noise, congestion and accidents in the amount of € 11 million annually.

The achievable benefits brought about by the NAP are also dependent on the quality of the neighbouring stretches of the Danube. An adequate improvement of the fairway conditions between Straubing and Vilshofen (Germany) by 2015 would even increase the annual transport volume on the Austrian Danube by up to 29 million tonnes. This would mean a savings of € 64 million in annual transport costs and reduce external costs by € 18 million annually.

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Detailed information concerning the National Action Plan Danube Navigation is available online:

www.bmvit.gv.at/schifffahrt/aktionsplan, www.donauschifffahrt.info

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