Declaration
on effective waterway infrastructure maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries

Danube Ministers Meeting

Luxembourg
7 June 2012

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for Transport from the Republic of Austria, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Slovak Republic met on 7 June 2012 in Luxembourg and reached the following understanding:

Having regard to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (hereafter referred to as "the Strategy"), and the White Paper 2011 "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area";

Taking into account the Convention regarding the regime of navigation on the Danube (Belgrade Convention) which stipulates that "the Danube riparian States undertake to maintain their sections of the Danube in a navigable condition for river-going and, on the appropriate sections, for sea-going vessels, to carry out the works necessary for the maintenance and improvement, of navigation conditions and not to obstruct or hinder navigation on the navigable channels of the Danube" (Art. 3);

Bearing in mind the interdependency of all related policy areas such as transport, environment and sustainable development of the Danube Region.

Considering the importance of inland waterway transport for the development of the European economy, in particular the Danube and its navigable tributaries as part of the Trans-European Transport Networks;

Having regard to the Strategy and the related targets aimed at increasing the cargo transport on the river by 20% by 2020 and establishing effective waterway infrastructure management by 2015;

Recognizing the challenges presented by low water periods and further risks due to climate change and that a well-maintained fairway is a prerequisite for smooth, safe and cost-effective inland waterway transport, especially in low-water periods and that maintenance of waterways requires substantial resources from respective countries;

Acknowledging the need for urgent and immediate action in the field of fairway maintenance;

COMMIT to:

> ENSURE the execution of the regular fairway maintenance work on the Danube and its tributaries providing financial means and applying sustainable and effective methods of river training works as well as deploying adequate equipment (e.g.: signaling equipment, surveying vessels, water gauges and aids to navigation) and highly skilled personnel for:

- Surveying of the fairway on a regular basis
- Effective methods of dredging of the fairway in shallow sections to ensure a good navigation status
- Signaling of the fairway

MAINTAIN adequate fairway parameters for a good navigation status according to the provisions of: the Belgrade Convention and – for those countries who have ratified it – the AGN, while respecting the international obligation relating to the protection of environment when taking the above mentioned measures;

INSTALL, as early as 2013, the necessary national and cross-border coordination procedures in order to implement effective response actions, in extraordinary circumstances (low water, ice, floods), to re-establish the optimum and safe navigation conditions;

ENSURE continuous communication on the up-dated fairway situation, in particular fairway depth and width data in shallow sections, via the national administrations respectively River Information Services providers to inform the waterway users (e.g. by web portals, Notices to Skippers, on-line communications etc.);

MONITOR the implementation of the above actions through a common regular monitoring and reporting mechanism in the framework of the priority area "Inland waterways" of the Strategy, which includes coordination with the Danube Commission. The signatory countries will compile national reports on an annual basis and forward them to the coordinators of the priority area, who will draft a consolidated report. This report will be submitted to the European Commission (in the context of the annual reporting on the Strategy implementation and to the European TEN-T Coordinator responsible for the Danube Corridor).

USE the working group on waterway management of priority area "Inland Waterways" of the Strategy as a sustainable dialogue platform between the waterway administrations, the Danube Commission and the relevant public and private stakeholders;

MEET once a year or as necessary to follow-up on the present conclusions and make sure that they are implemented as agreed.

Signatures

For the Republic of Austria

Minister Doris Bures, Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology

For the Republic of Bulgaria

Minister Ivaylo Moskovski, Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications

For the Republic of Croatia

Minister Siniša Hajdaš Dončić, Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure

For the Federal Republic of Germany

Minister Peter Ramsauer, Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development

For Hungary

Minister of State Pál Völner, Minister for Infrastructure, Ministry for National Development

For the Republic of Moldova

Minister Anatol Salaru, Ministry of Transport and Road Infrastructure

For Romania

State Secretary Valentin Preda, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure

For the Slovak Republic

Minister Ján Počiatek, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic