

## Welcoming Address

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured and pleased to welcome you on behalf of the Minister of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications of Republic of Bulgaria to this workshop, organized by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) within the PLATINA project.

As you know, on 2.06.2008 the European Commission launched the Platform for the Implementation of the EU NAIADES Programme – the PLATINA project. This project marks an important step in the Commission's Strategy to promote navigation and inland waterway transport in Europe, which was initiated in 2006 by the publication of the NAIADES action programme.

The Republic of Bulgaria fully supports the European Commission's efforts to turn inland waterway transport into an attractive type of transport with great perspectives for future development.

Within the context of the European policy on using the free potential of inland waterway transport, the development of the Danube River as a European transport axis is outlined as one of the priorities of our National policy. It is also a priority in the Sectoral Operational Programme Transport of the Republic of Bulgaria, namely Priority axis 4 – Improvement of the navigation conditions for maritime and inland waterway transport. Within this priority axis it is planned together with the Republic of Romania to implement the project „Improvement of the Navigation on the Danube River in common Bulgarian –Romanian Sections from km 530 to km 520 – Batin and from km 576 to km 560 – Belene, as on the Bulgarian side the beneficiary is the Executive Agency „Exploration and Maintenance of the Danube River” - Ruse. The main Project objective is to ensure the recommended navigation parameters in two of the most critical sections of the Danube River and in this way to ensure the safe passing along those critical sections of vessels during the whole year.

The same priority axis also includes the project for establishment of River Information Services System, and the beneficiary is the Bulgarian Ports Infrastructure Company. The purpose is to support the establishment of a safe and effective transport process and the use of the inland waterway transport in its full scope.

The transport policy of the Republic of Bulgaria corresponds to the outlined guidelines and visions of the European Union and aims at accomplishing optimal use of infrastructure by integrating the transport process and at the same time to reduce the unfavourable environment impact. All that together with improved services, modern management and new technologies will guarantee higher competitiveness of our transport network and sustainable mobility.

The PLATINA project, as a tool for implementation of the NAIADES programme, provides technical and organizational support in the field of the policy on inland waterway transport and ensures active participation, opportunity for exchange of knowledge, experience, good practices and know-how between the main stakeholders and organisations. That is why the participation in this project is of great importance for Bulgaria and we are glad that we have the opportunity to host this event.

Finally I would like to express my belief that our joint work today and tomorrow will be successful and constructive and will lead to good results.

I wish to all participants in the workshop successful and pleasant stay in the city of Ruse.

Eng. Georgi Georgiev  
Executive Director of  
Executive Agency for Exploration  
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Executive Agency for ExploMaintenance of the Danube river - Ruse