

Press release

PLATINA hold workshop on integrated waterways planning

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For immediate release

On the 9th and 10th of June, in Zagreb, a workshop was held to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue on waterway management.

45 people from 10 countries participated, including representatives from various government bodies (transport and environment), the European Commission, the Danube Commission, the International Sava Commission and local and international NGOs. The workshop was held as part of PLATINA's (the platform for the implementation of NAIADES) commitment to developing an interdisciplinary dialogue on waterway management and was organized by the ICPDR (International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River) as the first of three training workshops on the integrated planning of inland waterway projects.

Presentations at the workshop included examples of integrated planning and related execution of IWT projects on the Thames, Rhine, Main and Danube rivers. PIANC presented its new position paper "Working with nature" (2008) which constitutes a major shift in philosophy, in that it advocates moving from controlling nature to managing it, in other words, factoring the ecosystem in when pursuing inland waterway projects, and thus ensuring win-win solutions.

The starting point of the discussion was the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles for Inland Navigation and Environment Protection. The Joint Statement was developed and committed to by Danube Basin Governments, the European Commission and related interest groups in 2007 and can serve as a guiding tool to assure the implementation of EC legislation, especially the Water Framework, Birds and Habitats Directives.

During the workshop several speakers emphasised that the key factors for balanced success are"

- the early involvement of relevant stakeholders
- adding and combining ecological objectives to waterway goals

- assessing alternatives and measures on the basis of a comprehensive environment database
- assuring early environment monitoring and
- an adaptive execution of designed measures.

In keeping with this consultative philosophy, a key topic of the workshop was the presentation and discussion of a draft PLATINA Manual on integrated planning for inland waterway projects: The manual aims to provide background information for waterway developers and managers about ecology, legal requirements and integrated planning as well as a concrete Road Map on how to prepare, execute and sustain integrated inland waterway projects. Workshop participants were very satisfied with the overall PLATINA support and provided valuable feedback on the structure and contents of the manual.

The intention is that this feedback will be incorporated into a comprehensive draft which will be further discussed at the next PLATINA training workshop on 15-16 September 2009. The manual should be available for application in November 2009.

PLATINA (the platform for the implementation of NAIADES) is an FP7 initiative which brings together more than 22 partners from 9 European countries to implement actions and measures promoting inland waterway transport. For further information contact www.naiades.info.

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