

# **NAIADES : An Integrated European Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport**

**Statement by the International Navigation Association (PIANC)**

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Presented at the High level Meeting (February, 15 2006 in Vienna, Austria)

## **Background and relevant experience of PIANC**

The International Navigation Association (known as PIANC) is pleased to have the opportunity to present its views to this important meeting. PIANC endeavours to be known worldwide as the leading international source of impartial and authoritative information covering the promotion, the operation, management and sustainable development of ports and waterways.

As such PIANC is a stakeholder for the promotion of Inland Water(way) Transport (IWT). It is a global organisation, founded in 1885, having its general secretariat in Brussels. Not less than 15 of the 25 EU-member nations are a governmental member of PIANC, among them all countries for which IWT is of relevance.

Within PIANC, a dedicated commission for inland navigation (InCom) is dealing with all technical matters related to IWT. This commission supervises international working groups of experts that produce state-of-the-art-reports. Recent examples are :

- Guidelines and Recommendations for River Information Services (used by the EU as a basis for the RIS-Directive)
- Economic Aspects of Waterways
- Design of Movable Weirs and Storm Surge Baniers
- Organisation and Management of River Ports (in preparation)

PIANC's members have a wide range of expertise, coming from a wide variety of industry, consulting, contracting, research, planning and regulation backgrounds.

## **Our comments on the Action Programme**

### ***1. Infrastructure***

The main topic of PIANC since its creation has been infrastructure for navigation.

A number of bottlenecks and missing links in the European waterways network prevents IWT to develop as it should. Generally known examples are the Danube, the Elbe and the Seine-Scheldt connection.

Their removal should become a top priority for the countries involved.

Besides the major connections, the secondary waterways remain important in the concept of a logistic network. This is more specifically the case when introducing new markets such as the distribution of consumer goods and transport of waste.

Most waterways have a considerable free capacity. However, to attract new customers and to fit better in a "just in time" concept, locks and bridges should be operated continuously (7 days per week, 24 hours per day) on the major axes.

PIANC supports the idea of fair competition between the modes, involving internalisation of external costs. The implementation of the EU-directive on River Information Services (RIS)

will be a major improvement for the operation of the EU-network of waterways. PIANC has a permanent working group that updates on a regular base the report on RIS.

Contrary to road and rail, waterways have a multifunctional character which means that besides transport they also are used for flood management, recreation, nature development and irrigation. New techniques regarding environmentally friendly bank protection, fish stairs and other infrastructures are being developed and should be supported and promoted.

It can be observed that in many countries, the budget for maintenance is insufficient for meeting the real needs. To guarantee optimal use of the infrastructure an annual maintenance budget of about 2,5 % the total value is necessary for remedial, and preferably, pro-active maintenance.

The management of (contaminated) dredged materials from inland waterways consumes ever increasing amounts of money. As a consequence, again by lack of budgets, IWT is restricted temporarily or even on the longer term in certain waterways. Waterways operators should be able to ensure and guarantee minimal draughts, corresponding to the classification of the waterway concerned.

PIANC has published (or will do so in the near future) reports on :

- Maintenance and Renovation of Navigation Infrastructure
- Handling and Treatment of contaminated Dredged Material

## ***2. Image***

Through its publications and other products, PIANC can support initiatives to improve the image of IWT and to convince potential customers of its importance in the logistic chain. As its membership comprises both the authorities and the customers, PIANC is in the possibility of mobilising experts from both sides to contribute to efforts in this respect.

## ***3. Fleet***

PIANC is not directly involved in the design and construction of inland vessels. However, the reduction of the environmental effects of IWT are a point of interest, in particular for the Environmental Commission.

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Finally, a copy of the 2003 Resolution "The waterway is the better way" is attached. This resolution was issued in Bergen, Norway at the occasion of the Annual General Assembly of 2003.

PIANC's Resolution 2003 :  
'THE WATERWAY IS THE BETTER WAY'

Sustainable development requires increased efforts  
for waterborne transport

The International Navigation Association (PIANC) calls upon the international community, the national governments and the general public to focus attention on the urgent need for developing and maintaining waterway infrastructure - known for its fuel efficient and environmentally friendly character. In line with guidance from the United Nations and other international bodies, transportation needs must be reconciled with sustainable development.

Representing navigation experts from 63 nations in the Norwegian port town of Bergen, the Annual General Assembly of PIANC has raised concern about the slow improvement of much needed waterborne transportation infrastructure. Yet maintenance and upgrading of this infrastructure is a precondition for economic expansion and sustainable development, both in the developed world and in countries in transition. With regard to the Danube, the Elbe and the Seine-Scheldt link in Europe, the Mississippi waterway network in the United States, or the Brahmaputra, Ganges and Mekong rivers in Asia, the needs and the bottlenecks are similar - yet the focus of political authorities does not always include them as a matter of priority.

At a time when both the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) and a new priority list for transport infrastructure projects are reaching the political agenda in Europe, PIANC is drawing the attention on the need for a modal shift that will contribute to a healthier environment. As the leading international source of impartial and authoritative information on management and sustainable development of ports and waterways for almost 120 years, PIANC extends this concern well beyond the borders of Europe. PIANC asks national and international leaders as well as the general public to make better use of waterborne transportation for a better future. PIANC offers its expertise to contribute to this effort.

Bergen, 13th May 2003