



DANUBE COMMISSION

Expert meeting on Development of Ports and Port Operations

Topic 5.1 – Progress of the “Joint Statement of the Danube Port Authorities and Ports Stakeholders”

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DC Secretariat initiative:

“Joint Statement of the Danube Port Authorities and Ports Stakeholders”

Rationale for the initiative:

- The Danube region’s river and sea ports are important logistics and transport nodes in supply chains and contribute substantially to regional economic development and cohesion as industrial hubs;
- In the context of the energy transition, ports have significant untapped potentials to become hubs for clean energy production and distribution as well as for the development of the circular economy;
- Paris Agreement, the EU Green Deal and non-EU Danube States with similar national commitments have set ambitious climate goals for 2030 and 2050 that require immediate and targeted action to decarbonise all sectors of the economy;
- The EU Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy underline the need to increase the modal share of IWT by 25% by 2030 and by 50% by 2050 and recognize that IWT together with rail transport is central to the decarbonisation of the European transport system;
- Port authorities, port administrations, port operators and other port businesses need to implement concrete measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ensure sustainability of port development and operations;

There is a strong need for intensive cooperation and coordination between port actors at a given port location as well as between ports, across borders, but also across economic sectors, and at transnational level.



Framework - Green Danube Port Joint Statement

Framework conditions:

- The ports in the Danube region have different organisational, financial and governance conditions;
- Although the climate goals are the same, the pathways to reach them are different and depend on many factors;
- Port authorities/administrations can decide on the greening of their own activities and jurisdiction, but have limited possibilities to influence green behavior of port users (terminal operators, transport companies, etc.);
- Ports can also be an important partner of surrounding communities and regions in achieving higher levels of sustainability and supporting the energy transition;
- There is extensive experience from the work of ESPO for sea ports (EcoPorts Initiative encompassing Port Environmental Review System (PERS) and Self-Diagnosis Method (SDM); see also: ESPO Green Guide 2021, Manual for European Ports towards a green future), which can be used as input for the work of the Danube ports;
- Port Environmental Management Plans (PEMP) and specific green port polices can be valuable tools to ensure port sustainability;

Port authorities/administrations are required to take an active role (the lead) for both the greening of the port authority/administration and the greening of the entire port area. They have to play an important role in coordinating activities and ensure high stakeholder participation.



Objectives - Green Danube Port Joint Statement

Objectives of the proposed Joint Statement:

- Initiate a comprehensive, transnational public-private initiative supporting Europe's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and to achieve net zero CO2 emissions by 2050 and a high level of sustainability in port development and port operations in the Danube region's river and sea ports;
- Align port stakeholders of the Danube region on the principles and measures needed to decarbonise river and sea ports of the Danube region and to ensure sustainability of port development and operations;
- River and sea port administrations as well as private port owners and operators agreeing to the Declaration demonstrate their commitment to take concrete measures to achieve Europe's climate goals;

The proposed Joint Statement will:

- **Provide a platform for cooperation among ports in the Danube Region;**
- **Support the sustainable and smart development of inland waterway transport, climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy transition and circular economy;**
- **Trigger the creation of a project pipeline that will feed into the European Union's funding programs;**
- **Raise awareness on all political levels in the member states and at EC level.**



Final Text - Green Danube Port Joint Statement

Joint Statement of the Danube Port Authorities and Ports Stakeholders

- *Recognising the essential role of river and sea ports for the mobility of goods and people in European Transport networks, acting as important logistics and transport nodes in the supply chain and contributing to regional economic development and cohesion in the Danube region;*
- *Recognising that ports also act as important hubs for industry, clean energy and circular economy development;*
- *Recognising the need for immediate and appropriate action to support and incentivize the decarbonisation of cargo and passenger transport, in particular in the light of commitments made by the Danube region countries under the Paris Agreement of 12 December 2015, the European Union's 2030 and 2050 climate commitments and the Fit for 55 package of proposals, as well as other similar commitments and initiatives from public and private stakeholders;*
- *Recognising that inland waterway transport (IWT) together with rail transport plays a central role in the efforts to decarbonise the European transport system;*
- *Recognising that the European Union Green Deal and the European Union Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy underline the need to increase the modal share of IWT by 25% by 2030 and by 50% by 2050;*
- *Recalling that the decarbonisation of ports and port operations is a complex challenge that should be addressed through the implementation of a range of different measures and accompanied by public and private stakeholders;*
- *Recalling that decarbonisation of ports and port operations requires adequate policy frameworks and effective incentives, as identified for example in the European Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and the NAIADES III – Inland Waterway Transport Action Plan for 2021-2027;*
- *Recognising that environmental and climate goals at international and European level need to be supported by effective and tangible measures at national, regional, local and company levels that cut across sectors and national borders;*
- *Emphasising that, in addition to decarbonisation, the ecological footprint and adverse non-CO2 impacts of ports and port operations need to be addressed to ensure sustainability and resilience;*
- *Noting the importance of also promoting the social acceptance and compatibility of river and sea ports in proximity to urban agglomerations;*
- *Recognising the important role of ports for the digitalization of the entire European transport system as well as for water quality, land use, waste management, soil and noise protection;*



The undersigning public and private port stakeholders declare that they:

- *Reaffirm their commitment to the decarbonisation and sustainability goals set by the European Union as well as to similar commitments from national goals of non-EU states in the Danube region for the transport sector and in particular for IWT by 2030 and 2050;*
- *Strive for environmentally, socially and economically sustainable port development and port operations;*
- *Undertake concrete activities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from port operations by at least 55% by 2030, to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and to improve the overall environmental performances of ports in the Danube region;*
- *These activities include the following measures:*
 - *Identify, assess and monitor the environmental impact of port operations (air, water quality, waste, noise, dust, sediments);*
 - *Develop and implement Environmental and Sustainable Management Systems (ESMS);*
 - *Identify and implement new, environmentally friendly and sustainable solutions that support the increase of energy efficiency and the transition to the use, generation and distribution of renewable energy and to zero-emission port operations;*
 - *Initiate/participate in the development of strategies, action plans and implementation projects aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving sustainability goals;*
 - *Facilitate the implementation of alternative and renewable fuels infrastructure;*
 - *Facilitate the exchange of know-how and other cooperation activities between ports and engage in cross-sectoral cooperation, research and development initiatives and projects to promote the greening of port development and operations;*
 - *Support urban and short-distance inland waterway transport (water buses, ferries, urban logistics, etc.) where possible;*
 - *Investigate and exploit opportunities arising from digitalization of port management and operations to increase efficiency and support sustainability;*
- *Invite other stakeholders to sign this Joint Statement and work together towards higher levels of sustainability and decarbonisation in the Danube region and across Europe.*



Implementation of the Joint Statement

- Procedure since 2022:
 - EM PORTS (9 March 2022), by the end of April 2022 - initiative and consultation process , verified by WG TECH;
 - 97th session of the Danube Commission (15 June 2022), confirmation of the initiative;
 - On 24 June 2022, port authorities/administrations, private port owners and port operators of the DC member states were invited to sign the Declaration by 1 September 2022;
- "Joint Statement of the Danube Port Authorities and Ports Stakeholders" – relaunch of the signing procedure on 2 February 2023
 - Renewed invitation to all stakeholders to sign the "Joint Statement of the Danube Ports and Danube Port Authorities";
 - Port authorities will work to promote and get port operators, associations and other interested parties to sign the Joint Statement;
 - The DC Secretariat presented "Joint Statement of the Danube Port Authorities and Ports Stakeholders":
 - Executive Committee meeting of EFIP, 19 and 20 October 2023, Belgrade;
 - The Danube Regional Workshop on Energy Transition in Inland Ports-EU HORIZON Europe project "SEANERGY", 21 September 2023, Budapest;
 - The Danube Port Days 2023, 23 and 24 November 2023, Vienna;
 - The Danube Port Days 2024, 29 and 30 October 2024, DC, Budapest.
- 6 port authorities/operators/stakeholders had signed the document by 20 March 2025
- Interaction with the actual/new EU projects
 - Experts from Panteia (a member of the GRIP consortium – Green Inland Ports Study) will present today how the Environmental and Sustainability Management Systems (ESMS) developed for inland ports as part of the Study can be implemented. The event is intended to support the transition to greener and more sustainable inland ports across Europe.



**Thank you for
your attention!**

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Commission**

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