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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

Fiftieth session

Geneva, 11-13 October 2006

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON MEASURES AIMED AT
PROMOTING TRANSPORT BY INLAND WATERWAYS**

Transmitted by the Government of Romania

Note: At its forty-ninth session, the Working Party was informed that on 13 and 14 September 2006 a Ministerial Conference on Inland Waterway Transport would be organized in Bucharest as a follow-up to the Rotterdam Conference of 2001.

The secretariat reproduces below the final text of the Declaration adopted at the Pan-European Conference on Inland Water Transport (Bucharest, 13-14 September 2006), received from the organizers, for consideration and possible follow-up by the Working Party.

PAN-EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT

Bucharest, 13 – 14 September 2006

INLAND NAVIGATION: A KEY ELEMENT OF THE FUTURE PAN EUROPEAN TRANSPORT SYSTEM

DECLARATION

adopted by the Bucharest Conference

Representatives of governments of European countries, of international organizations and of observers from other countries having an interest in inland waterway transport, meeting at the Pan-European conference on inland waterway transport in Bucharest on 13th and 14th September 2006,

I. PREAMBLE

A) Recognizing the importance of the Pan European Conference on inland waterway transport (Rotterdam 5 - 6 September 2001) “Accelerating Pan European Co-operation Towards a Free and Strong Inland waterway transport” and noting the substantial progress made by Governments in meeting the objectives put forward by the Rotterdam Declaration,

B) Taking into account the contributions made by the European Commission, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine and the Danube Commission with a view to implementing the recommendations put forward in the Rotterdam Declaration, including the findings and recommendations of the Group of Volunteers on Legislative Obstacles,

C) Recognizing the importance of the communication of the European Commission on the promotion of inland waterway transport “An Integrated European Action Programme for Inland waterway transport” (NAIADES) published in January 2006,

D) Taking into account the Conclusions of the EU Transport Council of 8 - 9 of June 2006 on NAIADDES,

E) Having in mind the ongoing process on the revision of the Belgrade Convention and the joint communiqué of the members and observers of the Danube Commission, adopted in Budapest on the 3rd of July 2006,

F) Conscious that the challenges for Pan-European inland waterway transport are closely interrelated and need to be structurally considered as a whole by all states engaged or interested in inland navigation whether they are a member of the European Union or not,

G) Convinced that the elimination of obstacles that hinder the development of inland waterway transport and the opening up of markets is a crucial factor to realize a free, competitive and sustainable transport system on the Pan-European inland waterway network,

Hereby endorse the following objectives and actions to accelerate the development of inland waterway transport and better integrate it into multi modal transport chains.

II. STRATEGIC AREAS FOR ACTION

The strategic areas for action are:

- *Harmonization and integration of the regulatory framework;*
- *Coordinated development of inland waterway transport;*
- *Infrastructure development and environment.*

Pan-European cooperation between governments and international organizations must be continued and, where possible, reinforced by implementing the following actions.

HARMONIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

1. Ministers welcome the progress made in the harmonization of technical requirements for inland waterway vessels, where equivalency has been established between the rules of different organizations. They call the organizations concerned to ensure that equivalence is preserved in the future maintenance as these requirements evolve aiming at mutual recognition of ship certificates.

2. Ministers consider the free movement of crew members Europe wide as a strategic priority in view of the opening and integration of markets. It is essential for the functioning of the sector. Therefore they invite governments to facilitate such free movement and urge also the following specific actions:

- The River Commissions, the European Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe are called to continue their efforts for the mutual recognition of boatmaster licenses.
- The River Commissions concerned are invited to rationalize requirements for the specific knowledge and experience needed for the navigation on certain river stretches.
- The European Commission and the River Commissions are invited to continue their efforts, in close co-operation with their social partners, to harmonize job descriptions.
- Education and training institutes in the field of inland shipping are invited to actively co-operate and to create, together with the River Commissions, a European network aiming at the facilitation of exchanges on national educational programmes and vocational training.

3. Ministers welcome the ongoing harmonization of civil law in order to facilitate the full utilization of inland waterway transport in Europe. They urge all river states in Europe to adhere to the Convention on the Contract for the Carriage of Goods by Inland Waterway and invite the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine in association with the Danube Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, to revise the Convention on the limitation of liability in inland navigation with a view to enlarging its geographical application.

4. Taking into account the increased integration of inland waterway transport in Europe and with a view to maintaining the high safety and security level of inland navigation, the co-

ordination and exchange of information between national authorities should be further strengthened, with the purpose of facilitating inspection of vessels and to avoid duplication in controls. Ministers invite the River Commissions to take initiatives in this field in close cooperation with national authorities.

5. Ministers consider that the existing legislation should be rationalized and simplified, subject to maintaining the best levels of safety and providing for the possibilities offered by new technologies. Furthermore the administrative framework should be improved through streamlining formalities and procedures. For these purposes they call upon the European Commission, the River Commissions and all other organizations involved to undertake the necessary actions.

COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT OF INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT

6. Ministers recognize the need for the promotion of inland waterway transport as a commercially attractive and environmentally compatible mode of transport through coordinated action. They invite all the involved actors to contribute to the realization of the NAIADES programme, which covers for the first time all the areas of actions, and which should serve as a basis for action also at Pan-European level.

7. In this context Ministers invite the governments of the states that are not members of the European Union to also take the necessary initiatives in the interest of the realization of NAIADES in their countries. Ministers also invite the European Community to make full use of mechanisms to support these countries in financial and technical terms.

8. Ministers invite the shipping industry in close cooperation with freight forwarders, operators of other transport modes and ports to develop new markets and to expand reliable door-to-door transportation, inter alia by reducing delays in the transshipment of containers in seaports.

9. Ministers will ask their governments to identify opportunities and take appropriate measures to create better access to capital, including provision of public guarantees, for young entrepreneurs for first time investments, thereby encouraging entrepreneurship.

10. Ministers invite the industry to continue modernization of the fleet in order to further improve logistics efficiency and environmental performance. Investments in the fleet should aim to facilitate continued use of smaller waterways and improve the reliability of transport in the context of extended periods of shallow water levels.

11. Ministers call upon the European Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the River Commissions to reinforce environmental standards, in order to further improve the environmental performance of inland waterway transport compared to other modes.

12. The European Community is invited to increase support to research dealing with the introduction of new technologies in inland waterway transport, specifically with a view to further reducing fuel consumption and the emission of exhaust gases.

13. Ministers recognize the need to make the profession more attractive mainly for young people through improving working and social conditions. They strongly encourage social

dialogue between administrations, the shipping industry and employees at both regional and European level, also in order to develop rules regarding the employment and working conditions in the context of equal treatment of crew members.

14. Ministers invite the competent authorities to facilitate the establishment, in cooperation with the industry, of promotion and development centers and to nominate national focal points for promoting and supporting inland waterway transport and sea-river shipping.

15. Ministers will support the monitoring of trends and developments in the inland waterway transport market by encouraging national administrations to make comparable and compatible data available for market observation and market outlook analysis.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

16. Ministers, having in mind the AGN and the TEN-T network, note the intention of the European Commission to initiate a European development plan for improvement and maintenance of waterway infrastructure and transshipment facilities. They also support the recommendations issued in 2005 by the High Level Group on the Extension of Major trans-European Transport Axes to the Neighbouring Countries.

17. Ministers recognize the need to improve the multi-modal network by ensuring at the national level better balance for the investments between transport modes through, inter alia, guidance for financing maintenance and prioritizing improvement of waterway infrastructure. Reliability of inland navigation should be aimed at through harmonized fairway depths for interlinked waterway networks, respecting the need to integrate environmental protection in the development of inland waterways.

18. Ministers encourage (inland/sea river) ports to continue the modernization and promotion of their facilities as multimodal logistic centers, in order to ensure the development of waterway transport as a reliable link in the logistic chain.

19. Ministers consider that in case of the establishment of a framework for infrastructure charging and the internalization of external costs, such framework should be applied to all modes on an equal basis allowing a level playing field between transport modes. However, the consequences for traffic flows on inland waterways should be carefully considered.

20. Ministers recognize the importance of implementing River Information Services (RIS), based on the established framework of standards and general principles, in order to contribute to the safety and environmental performance of inland navigation, optimize the use of the infrastructure and facilities and facilitate market observation. They call all the actors involved to support the rapid implementation of these services, where possible through concerted actions.

21. Ministers invite the river commissions for navigation and environment of the Danube and the Rhine to establish procedures for a structured dialogue on environmental issues concerning inland waterway infrastructure projects and to support these processes, taking into account the conclusions of the “Study on the Development of Infrastructure and Protection of the Environment” elaborated under the auspices of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport. All riparian states are invited to actively commit to supporting this work.

III. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

22. Ministers invite the European Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the River Commissions and the European Conference of Ministers of Transport to actively promote and monitor the implementation of the various actions of this Declaration.

Signed on behalf of all participants,

on 14th September 2006,
Bucharest, Romania

The co-chairpersons of the Ministerial conference:

Radu Mircea Berceanu
Minister of Transports, Constructions
and Tourism
Romania

Karla Peijs
Minister of Transport, Public Works and
Water Management
The Netherlands

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