

The following activities must be given priority to strengthen the role of the Danube waterway

1. Improved fairway conditions in the Danube sections east of Vienna and around the Wachau region not contained by dams

Reliable fairway conditions are indispensable for a competitive inland navigation system. This constitutes the basis for the secured development of inland navigation companies as well as a basic requirement for spatial planning decisions. In the context of the establishment of the National Park Donau-Auen, a balance of interests was achieved between ecology and inland navigation pursuant to Article 15a B-VG (Federal Law Gazette No. 17/1997). To implement this project east of Vienna, an environmental impact study is being prepared.

2. Initiation of measures and projects to improve the fairway conditions along the critical Danube sections in Germany and Hungary

Securing fairway conditions is decisive for the efficiency of the Pan-European Transportation Corridor VII - Danube Waterway. The elimination of the bottlenecks in the neighbouring countries is set out in the EU/TEN guidelines. Austria is called on – together with the corridor management – to take more initiatives to intensify and harmonise national activities through multilateral agreements.

3. Implementation of the navigation and transportation management system DoRIS

The application of information and communication technologies is to be promoted through the inland navigation information system DoRIS (Donau River Information Services). This system supports public authorities in their task of waterway management and provides opportunities for cost-efficient logistical services. Austria plays a leading role in Europe as the operator of the DoRIS test centre and through its work in the development and implementation of the system. DoRIS is an innovation impulse for modernising waterway navigation and is to be implemented as soon as possible.

4. Support for the Danube countries in setting up and implementing River Information Services (RIS)

River Information Services constitute a major contribution to the rationalisation and enhancement of the appeal of Danube waterway navigation. It helps to make transport more reliable and planable, and meets the requirements of modern supply chain management. The know-how gained at the DoRIS test centre is made available to the relevant authorities and organisations in the Danube countries. A network of national development agencies in the Danube countries could help to promote transport on the Danube waterway.

5. The development of Austria's ports to intermodal logistics centres

Austria's inland navigation ports are to be enlarged into intermodal transportation hubs. The creation of a trimodal infrastructure and compatible information systems as well as new logistics services are important basic requirements.

6. Improvement of the interfaces between inland navigation and railway transport

The infrastructural and organisational links between inland navigation and rail are to be promoted with the aim of realising and marketing services that encompass various modes of transport.

7. Establishment of door-to-door liner services in intermodal transport

The aim is to create steady and reliable intermodal inland navigation services such as containers, swap bodies and RoRo transport. This would open access to the new, strongly growing transportation markets. The public subsidies for inland navigation projects are to be adjusted and improved in line with those for rail and roadway transport.

8. Improved framework conditions for Austrian navigation companies

The overall conditions for the work of Austria's inland navigation companies as well as the legal framework for transportation, the technical and nautical as well as training aspects must be improved in order to secure the companies' competitiveness in the long term. In this context, European harmonisation plays a major role. Public assistance programmes are to be designed to support the inland waterway sector.

9. Promotion of industrial locations concentrated in the immediate vicinity of the Danube waterway


The spatial planning and economic policies at the federal, Land and local levels are to take into account the advantages of concentrating industries in the immediate vicinity of the Danube waterway when planning the location of new industrial sites.

10. Information and communication work "Pro Danube Waterway"

In their public relations work, all transport-related organisational units of the federal government, the Länder and the municipalities are to give inland navigation due consideration with the aim of raising the general awareness among the population of the advantages of this mode of transport. A stronger positioning of the system of inland navigation and ports in the educational system would also help to considerably improve knowledge about this ecological and commercially attractive mode of transport, and thus reduce today's access barriers

If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at:
donau@via-donau.org

Contacts
via donau – Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH
für Telematik und Donauschifffahrt
Donau-City-Strasse 1
A-1220 Vienna
phone +43 1 595 48 96
fax +43 1 595 48 96 19
donau@via-donau.org
www.via-donau.org

An enterprise of the 
Austrian Federal Ministry for Transport,
Innovation and Technology

Editorial information
Sources: Herry/Trafico 2002; via donau
Photographs: © Wolfgang Bledl/gdwb@council.net
Text and design: via donau
Publisher: via donau, November 2003



The Danube – European Transport Corridor

A Ten-Point Programme to Promote Danube Navigation



The Danube Corridor links ten nations. More than 100 million people live and work in this dynamic economic region.

The upcoming integration of the Danube countries into the European Union is shifting Austria's position closer to the centre of Europe.



The significance of the Danube Corridor in the EU region

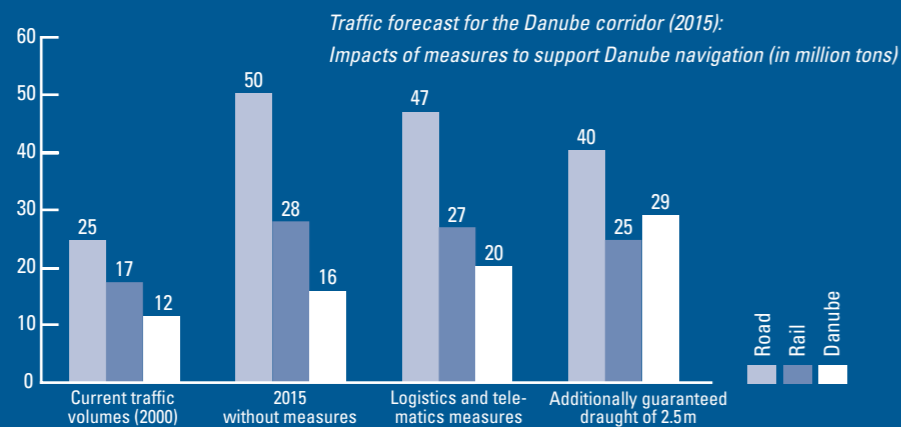
The enormous economic potential of the Danube region points to traffic growth far above the EU average.

The forecasts of the Austrian National Transport Plan predict high growth rates – especially for road traffic – of up to 6% to 7% on a yearly basis.

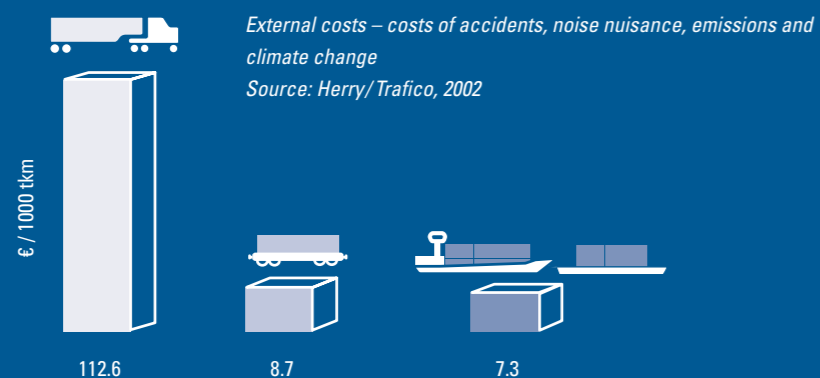
To achieve environmentally and socially compatible traffic growth, the share of traffic flows along the Danube waterway needs to be raised considerably.



Danube – Pan-European Corridor VII



Source: ÖIR, ALSO DANUBE Forecast. International and domestic traffic along Danube corridor



The advantages of inland navigation

The Danube has enough free capacities to increase the volume of transport by the year 2015 from currently 12 million tons to about 30 million tons on the condition that the appropriate development measures are taken. Danube navigation has much higher transport capacities in comparison to other transport modes. For example, a pushed convoy carrying 3,700 tons of freight corresponds to 93 train cars with 40 tons each or 148 trucks with 25 tons each.

Waterway navigation could help the Austrian economy to save up to EUR 30 million in transportation costs annually and thus improve its competitive advantage. The external costs of Danube navigation are much lower and could substantially contribute to the achievement of environmental goals (such as the Kyoto Protocol) and could also help to optimise the capacity utilization of the Austrian transport system for the benefit of the overall economy.

The challenges for Danube navigation

Freight transport volumes on the Danube are low not only in comparison with those along the Rhine, but also with other – albeit much smaller – western European waterways such as the Neckar and Mosel. This can mainly be explained by the disparity of the economic conditions in the catchment areas, the insufficient waterway depths in some sections, and the limited integration of Danube navigation in intermodal transport chains.

The upper section of the Danube is faced with frequent and irregular fluctuations in waterway depths, which unmistakably affects inland navigation's competitive position. An integrated project to eliminate the infrastructural bottlenecks on the Danube between Vienna and Bratislava has recently been initiated in Austria. The main objective of this project is to achieve both a fundamental improvement of navigability conditions and a preservation of the ecological equilibrium in the nearby National Park Donau-Auen. At the international level, more intense cooperation between the concerned countries – including cooperation with the European Commission – is required to eliminate the infrastructural bottlenecks. Important steps in this direction were the Memorandum of Understanding – Corridor VII and the TEN Guidelines. Within the framework of the revision of the TEN Guidelines, a High-Level Group (Van Miert)* identified the elimination of the bottlenecks in the Rhine-Main-Danube corridor as a priority project.

A further challenge is the integration of Danube navigation into intermodal transport chains. River Information Services (RIS) will play an important role in this respect. The efficiency and safety of supply chains will be improved through the seamless exchange of relevant logistics information by means of RIS. Thorough tests within the context of the Austrian DoRIS application have confirmed this. Additionally, the upcoming RIS Directive and European projects such as COMPRIS will significantly contribute to the further implementation and harmonisation of RIS applications in Europe.

The contribution of Danube navigation to transport policy

High capacity and attractive Danube navigation is a major step on the way to the establishment of a sustainable and effective transportation system, because it:

- Copes with traffic loads along the Danube corridor with a high degree of acceptance among the population
- Keeps negative impacts of traffic on the environment at a minimum (optimises environmental balance with respect to transport)
- Improves the competitive situation of the economy and secures jobs
- Uses existing infrastructure, boasts low investment costs and helps save public funds.

By improving the framework conditions for Danube navigation and achieving the potential shift of freight traffic to the Danube, it would be feasible to optimise the investments required for the road and rail infrastructure. The reduction in truck traffic on motorways would also improve transportation safety. The shift to the Danube waterway transport would help avoid 120 truck accidents per year. It would also reduce the number of deaths by round 10 and the number of seriously injured persons by ca. 60. Moreover, it would help to reduce emissions and noise.

Developing Danube navigation requires the close cooperation of public bodies and the private sector. Protective measures for sensitive areas must also be taken into account. An important instrument for increasing the attractiveness of the Danube is the role of *via donau – Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH für Telematik und Donauschifffahrt*. This enterprise offers support to the business sector in developing high-quality transportation and logistics products as well as support for specific technology projects and information services.

* High Level Group on the Trans-European Transport Network, 27th June 2003