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The EC introduces the SPIN Thematic Network

The European Commission DG-TREN initiated the Thematic Network to develop a European Strategy to Promote Inland Navigation (SPIN).

Stemming from the white paper on transport, the objective of the SPIN Thematic Network is to develop a Common European Strategy to increase the share of inland navigation in the transport of goods and to encourage the acceptance and implementation of the strategy. The vision is

that Inland Waterway Transport fulfils its proper role in an integrated and sustainable European transport system. The objective is to obtain a more balanced use of the overall transport system and to maximise the use of environmentally friendly waterborne transport, especially in inter-modal door-to-door logistic chains.

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Via donau explains the concept of the SPIN Thematic Network

Manfred Seitz of via donau leads the Technical Secretariat of the Thematic Network. He stresses the importance of the network:-

Ultimately, the interaction between forces of supply and demand in the freight market provides the main explanation for the current market share of inland navigation. As the goal of the common European IWT-strategy is to increase the share of inland navigation and to contribute to a sustainable European transport system, this market mechanism defines the mission of an effective common European IWT-strategy.

This mission will take into account the role of the shippers' perception of the

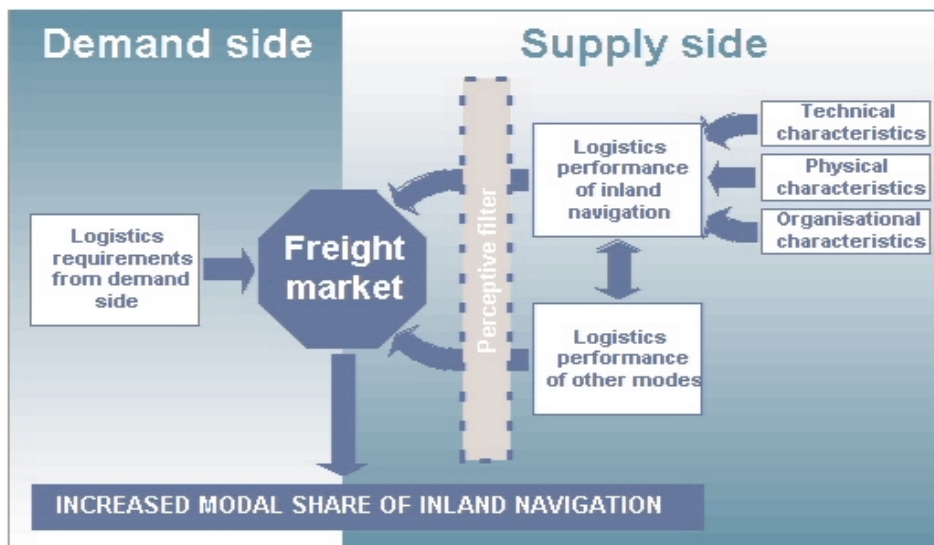
logistics performance of inland navigation. Therefore, one of the strategy directions will be to improve the awareness and knowledge level of logistics decision makers.

The model below illustrates that the transport modal split results from the trade-offs and decisions that are made within the freight market. The freight market can be seen as the confrontation of demand-side logistics requirements with the supply-side logistics performance of the respective modes of transport. The transport mode that is capable of meeting the

demand-side requirements best will capture the larger modal share. In this way, the logistics performance of inland navigation should always be seen in light of the performance of competing modes.

In turn, the logistics performance of the inland waterway system is in itself influenced by a series of different system characteristics:

- **Technical characteristics:** in terms of load unit and barge dimensions, transshipment techniques, information systems and standards, etcetera.
 - **Physical characteristics:** all infrastructure-related issues that affect the navigability of waterways and ports, such as water levels fluctuations, bridge dimensions, curves, number of locks, width of river bed, ice and wind.
 - **Organisational characteristics:** all aspects that deal with the functioning of the freight market, including market structures, market transparency, human resources, cross-border operations, educational programmes, etcetera.
- These issues provide the basic directions for the Strategy to be developed.



FDC explains the organisation of the SPIN Thematic Network

Richard Idiens of FDC has the role of Project Coordinator for the SPIN Thematic Network. He expands on the scope of the project:-

A consortium of five partners will lead a network of inland navigation experts in working groups to identify the issues and propose strategies for their resolution. The partners are AVV from NL, PBV from

Belgium, VBD from Germany, via donau from Austria and FDC from France.

The Transport Research Centre (AVV) is an advisory unit within the Netherlands Ministry of Transport, Public Works and

Water Management and is charged with the responsibilities to support research and policy. It operates across the full transport spectrum (road, rail, water and air transport).

► PBV is a private non-profit organisation founded by the Flemish government. It is a consultancy for the shippers and conducts Policy research. PBV networks the industry and government agencies, sets-up and manages IWT-projects and education programmes.

The VBD is a research institute for shallow water hydrodynamics in Germany. VBD's services cover transport management and technology, whereby these are mostly addressed to Inland Navigation and short-sea shipping.

Via donau is an Austrian government organisation responsible for the development of the Danube waterway

by providing management, consulting and technical support for logistics and transport technology projects from the IWT-sector, shippers, logistics service providers.

FDC is an independent engineering consultancy, offering study, expert appraisal, technical assistance and programme management services, in particular in the field of navigation.

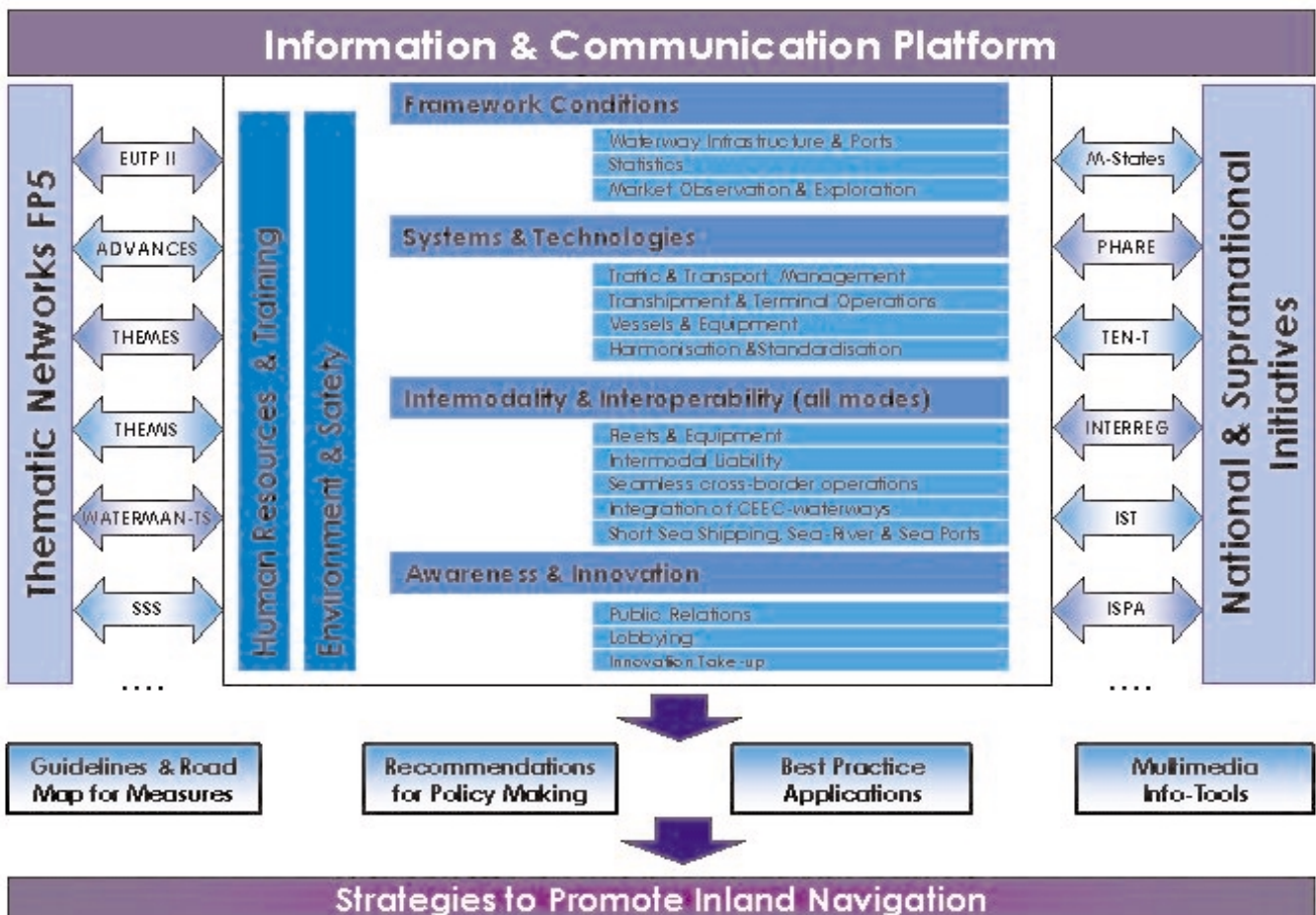
FDC provides the project co-ordination and via donau has the technical lead.

The SPIN-TN project started in June 2002 and is planned for a 36-month duration. During this period the issues facing Inland Waterways Transport will

be addressed by a series of parallel running working groups each formed from different parts of the IWT industry.

Based on an overview of existing national and European projects in the IWT-sector, six problem areas, which have to be tackled by the common European IWT-strategy, have been identified by the SPIN consortium:

- Framework Conditions
- Systems & Technologies
- Inter-modality & Interoperability
- Awareness & Innovation
- Human Resources & Training
- Environment & Safety



PBV introduces the tasks facing the SPIN-TN working group on Framework Conditions

Hilde Bollen of PBV introduces the working group and its tasks:-

The strategy for the IWT-sector will contain solutions for following strategic issues related to framework conditions.

- Waterway Infrastructure and Ports

Existing and future bottlenecks in ports and waterway infrastructure of European importance will be identified and analysed. International infrastructure projects, strategic port development concepts, as well as innovative and more efficient infrastructure maintenance concepts are to be investigated and evaluated.

- Statistics

The aim will be to provide an inventory of the most important statistics regarding inland navigation, and to compile these into user-oriented information sets, combining efforts that have already been undertaken in this field. In this way, shortcomings are identified and recommendations for improvement will be formulated.

- Market Observation and Exploration

Depending on the future developments with regard to the European Inland Waterway Observatory, efforts will be aimed at integrating the various

information sources. Existing market studies on inland navigation will be disseminated and promoted further.



AVV introduces the tasks facing the SPIN-TN working group on Systems & Technologies

Cas Willems of AVV Transport Research Centre notes that the strategy for the IWT-sector will contain solutions for the following strategic issues:-

- Traffic and Transport Management Systems

A platform for exchange of information, RTD-assessment, efforts on harmonisation, RTD-dissemination and exploitation for activities of all successful proposals as well as for related national or regional initiatives is to be developed. Special attention will

be paid to the integration of technologies in River Information Services and to legal aspects of their implementation and operation.

- Standardisation and Harmonisation

A platform for promoting standardisation and harmonisation of systems and technologies, used in inland transport operations, is to be set up. The focus will be on the integration of user requirements for standards and on their implementation in the market through accompanying measures.

- Transshipment and Terminal Operations

The few projects that deal with innovation in transshipment for inland waterway operations need to be interlinked with similar projects in sea-ports (e.g. IPSI) and short sea shipping operations as well as projects for intermodal terminals.

- Vessel and Equipment

Existing results of studies regarding innovations in vessels and equipment need to be better disseminated to the leading experts and policy makers, in order to allow an open-minded discussion of their applicability.



Via donau introduces the tasks facing the SPIN-TN working group on Inter-modality & Interoperability

Gert-Jan Muilerman of via donau notes that the objective is to improve the integration of the inland navigation transport system into inter-modal door-to-door supply chains, and thereby assure competitive logistics performance levels. This should ultimately result in an increased modal share for inland navigation:-

This objective will be pursued by concentrating on following issues.

- Fleets and transport equipment

Results of existing FP4 projects such as UTI-NORM and UTI-NORM II and related projects and initiatives on inter-modal transport equipment will be used and summarised. Attention needs to be paid to the different requirements on fleets cruising European waterways, especially to the Rhine-Danube, Ukrainian and Russian waterways. This activity will provide an overview on the most critical issues as well as on the most promising solutions.

- Inter-modal liability

Efforts to settle liability issues of transport operations in inter-modal transport chains have to be enhanced. Recommendations from previous European research efforts will be taken into account. Moreover, co-operation with UIRR and its suggested inter-

modal liability rules needs to be established. All institutions, which seek to homogenise pan-European and international liability regimes, will be included.

- Seamless cross-border operations

As the majority of IWT-operations involve international transportation, seamless cross-border operations are important. This especially applies to borders between EU and CEEC and between intra-CEEC borders. Concepts and measures for improving border operations will be developed together with the major stakeholders. As there is a strong interaction of these activities with future River Information Services (RIS), the activities addressed will support RIS-applications for seamless border services.

- Integration of European waterways

The increase in transport between the

European Union and the countries in the pre-accession phase to the European Union, as well as the forecasted high traffic potentials, require a better use of waterways for East-West trade relations. This especially applies to the waterways Elbe, Oder and Danube. In addition to these waterways, measures for integration will be proposed for waterways in the Ukraine and Russia.

- Short sea shipping, sea river and sea-ports

Shortcomings in the integration of inland navigation in transport chains with short-sea shipping and sea river transport will be addressed. There are still many interface deficiencies, especially in seaports, which reduce the efficiency of inter-modal transport operations. These shortcomings will be analysed and measures for improvement will be proposed.

PBV introduces the tasks facing the SPIN-TN working group on Awareness & Innovation

Hilde Bollen of PBV notes that one of the strategy directions will be to improve the awareness and knowledge of logistics decision makers:-

Strong perceptions are established in the minds of logistics decision makers about the logistics performance levels and the competitive strength of the inland waterway system. Market makers (e.g. shippers' and their perception of the logistics performance of inland navigation) do not always act on facts, but rather on the basis of their perception of the world. Improving the

information level of these parties would contribute to a better competitive position for inland navigation.

Information exchange will increase users' awareness of available technology and help the implementation of RTD-applications. Public Relations, including a communication plan and lobbying activities will

enhance the transparency of new technological possibilities, improve the acceptability of the available technologies and speed up the innovation at user-level. A platform to promote centres of excellence will be created to provide a reference centre for inland navigation.

VBD introduces the tasks facing the SPIN-TN working group on Human resources and Training

Branislav Zigic of VBD stresses the need for a clear focus on the shortcomings and necessary future policies and actions regarding the human element in inland navigation:-

This includes education, training, the human-machine interfaces from the viewpoint of users' ability and safety.

Even in neighbouring member states using primarily the same waterway professional education programmes for crew on inland vessels, differences occur in smaller or larger extent. This problem might increase considerably with the future integration of former EEC countries whose vessels are

already present on the integrated inland waterway network.

Special attention will be paid to the ability of crew to handle new equipment on board, which is sometimes based on new technologies or new design concepts.

That could require abandoning habitual procedures or crew behaviour.

Another area of concern will be the communication problems and solutions that could be applied to reduce the risk of misunderstandings

Recommendations for improvements in human resource management will be formulated.

AVV introduces the tasks facing the SPIN-TN working group on Environment & Safety

Cas Willems reflects on the environmental and safety impact of inland navigation, in comparison to other modes of transportation:-

Numerous studies and analyses already exist dealing with the environmental and safety particularities of Inland Navigation and the general advantages of the inland waterway transport in comparison with other land-based modes of transport.

European policies pay attention to the fact that inland navigation is a safe and environmental friendly transport mode, worthy to be developed further to

create a better position for inland navigation within the transport chain. This positive attitude has been laid down in the "Declaration of Rotterdam" as the result of the Pan-European Conference on Inland Waterway Transport; Rotterdam, 5 & 6 September 2001.

The activities of the working group can be directly linked to this declaration. The declaration recalls the permanent

The declaration expresses the important safety and environmental advantages of inland waterway transport and the common interest in fostering its growth and its integration into the multi-modal transport system, so that it can contribute to the reduction of congestion - especially in road transport - and ultimately make the transport sector compatible with sustainable development.

activities of the CCNR and the Danube Commission to improve the safety, effectiveness, efficiency and environmental sustainability of inland waterway transport and to contribute to a larger share for this transport mode in the total flow of goods.

Policies will be proposed with the SPIN-TN working groups and promoted through the strategy document to increase environmental friendliness of IWT (waste management, innovations in technologies for reduced fuel consumption and reduced emissions, etc.). Risk reducing factors will be investigated and guidelines for safety related policies will be developed.



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Abbreviation/acronyms list

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AVV | Adviesdienst Verkeer en Vervoer (Transport Research Centre for the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management in the Netherlands) |
| CCNR | Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine |
| CEEC | Central and Eastern European Countries |
| DG-TREN | Directorate-General for Energy and Transport |
| EC | European Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| FDC | France Développement Conseil |
| FP4 | 4th Framework Programme |
| INBISHIP | Common European Inland vessel concept |
| IPSI | Improved Port/Ship Interface |
| IWT | Inland Waterway Transport |
| PBV | Promotie Binnenvaart Vlaanderen VZW (Inland shipping promotion Flanders) |
| RIS | River Information Services |
| RTD | Research and Technology Development |
| SHICO | Integrated Shipcontrol system for small tonnage and fast shuttle ships |
| SPIN | Strategies to Promote Inland Navigation |
| SPIN-TN | SPIN Thematic Network |
| UIRR | Union Internationale des sociétés de transport combiné Rail-Route (International Union of combined Road-Rail transport companies) |
| UTI-NORM | Current State of Standardisation and Future Standardisation Needs for Intermodal Loading Units |
| VBD | Europäisches Entwicklungszentrum für Binnen- und Küstenschifffahrt e.V. Duisburg (European development centre for inland and coastal navigation) |
| via donau | Donau Transport Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH für Telematik und Donauschifffahrt-via donau (Development Agency of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology) |

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