

INTEGRATION OF THE DANUBE REGION INTO THE EUROPEAN HARMONIZED EDUCATION PROCESS

Mobility of workforce within EU borders is already a fact in the maritime, air and even road transport where standardised education and mutual recognition of the necessary licences allow proper functioning of appropriate transport services.

This is hardly the case of the inland navigation sector where education and training is not yet standardised and where despite consistent efforts paid for the development and recognition of harmonised standards for education, training and certification of inland personnel no tangible results have been so far accomplished.



To streamline European wide efforts for harmonization of education, training and certification in the inland waterway transport system dissipated over several initiatives running in parallel, the European Commission launched the Marco Polo initiative for the development of European standards for inland navigation intended to optimize the Internal Market for inland waterway transport and remove barriers that prevent its increased use and mobility of labour force.

The consultative structure coordinating the harmonisation process has launched on 26 March 2013 a public consultation on recognition and modernisation of professional qualification in inland navigation seeking feedback from stakeholders on key issues and challenges identified by the European Commission as part of the impact assessment for this new initiative. HINT partners had a significant contribution to the success of



this initiative, being responsible for the translation of the questionnaire into Romanian, Slovakian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian and extensive dissemination of the public consultation to national stakeholders. The concentrated efforts of partners involved were highly appreciated by the European Commission which officially acknowledged that replies received from HINT project countries accounted for 48% of the total number of respondents who filled out the questionnaire in the entire European space by the end of the public consultation (21 June 2013).

Under appropriate guidance of responsible parties, HINT partners will further contribute to the European wide initiative by the development of a common promotion strategy of harmonized standards for education, training and certification of personnel in inland navigation and organization of promotion and dissemination workshops introducing the standards and highlighting the findings of the impact study carried out by DG Move and CCNR to national stakeholders and decision makers in all HINT consortium countries.