

Address Manfred Reuter
Official Closing Ceremony of Port Net
27.09.2007, 16.00

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for inviting me to this official closing conference of Port-Net. Since I was already involved in the initial application of Port-Net I have something similar like an overview of the project. Although I could not attend most of the meetings and workshops, I followed the progress of the Port-Net by the direct contact with my colleagues.

Now, after nearly 3 years of activities I can draw the very positive conclusion: The European integration process is still ongoing and Port-Net contributes to this process by bringing together port people from all over Europe: From Ports from east and west, from north and south, from developed and less developed as well as from large and small countries. Furthermore, Port-Net did not only bring these people together, Port-Net initiated many discussions on up to date policy question of the maritime sector. And, Port-Net tried to offer at least some answers. Overall, Port-Net created a functioning network on port and logistic questions.

However, going more into detail, Port-Net consists of the three main components

1. “EU-ports-policy”
2. “intermodality” and
3. “touristic aspects”.

Concerning the first component “EU-port-policy” I must say that Port-Net had quite a lot of luck. During the application of Port-Net there were still no signs visible, that the controversial discussion of Port-Package I could be reanimated. But, right at the beginning of Port-Net activities the former commissioner Mrs. Palacio brought this topic on the European agenda again. Since that time the whole maritime sector and the Commission were involved in discussing Port-Package II. Port-Net contributed to this discussion with several workshops, discussing the main topics and disseminating knowledge of what is going on the European Commission level to member states and ports in a direct manner.

Several workshops and studies of Port-Net dealt with the topic “intermodality”, the second component. Port-Net participants had a lot opportunities to learn from best practice examples in the UK, Belgium and Netherlands as well as Italy, Poland and the Baltics.

But, besides operational efficiency the productivity of Ports depends also on their network relationship to other ports. Therefore, another focus concentrated on the challenges of the Motorways of the Sea concept. Port-

Net tried to shed some light on the complexity of the corresponding formal EU-requirements and brought some potential partners together.

The third component “ports and people” concentrated mainly on the cruise business, where trends in the Baltic sea were combined with the experiences of the Mediterraneans, who have a much longer history of cruise business. Thanks a lot especially to all the experiences from and hospitality of Malta and Genua.

Summing up, my overall impressions are that Port-Net fulfilled nearly all expectations partners and also the EU-secretariat had originally. To my view the main success of Port-Net is the creation of a network of ports and logistic people from all over Europe.

Looking into the future, the success of Port-Net should be kept by extending the project. **Hamburg Port Authority is ready to work as a leadpartner again.**

Although we learned quite a lot during the last years, Port-Net II, of course, should not be a copy of the initial project. To my view two aspects should be important:

First, Port-Net II should be more practical in the sense the participants at workshops should use their network now for producing more real output. I know this is a challenge for all participants and also for the resources at home. But while Port-Net I had mainly the idea to create a network, the network must now prove to be able to produce sensible output. Second, and this is very closely related to the first aspect, it will be necessary to find out those questions, which are relevant for ports and which have a realistic chance to be answered by the experience and knowledge of partners. As a first idea, environmental challenges will be quite important in the next future.

With these explanatory notes I would like to finish my short address. Again thank you all very much for filling up Port-Net with life. Let us go together for Port-Net II.

Thank you all for your attention.