

PRESS RELEASE

Financial agenda for Port-Net partners

THE increasing role of private investment in the international ports sector will be one of the key issues to be discussed by members of the European Port-Net initiative at a Port Financing Workshop to be held in Hamburg from September 12 to 15.

The workshop, organised in parallel with Port-Net's General Assembly 2006, will consider current trends in the financing of port infrastructure. The 35 participants, mainly from European port authorities, will have intensive discussions around this specific field of sustainable port development in Europe and a broad exchange of know-how is expected.

The issue of port financing is becoming ever more critical in the light of the European Commission's ongoing liberalisation policy and the dramatically increased demand for new port handling capacities and improved hinterland connections, especially in the container sector.

"The workshop will hear about and discuss finance options for port investments in the light of EU proposals on public funding and 'user pays' principles," said Dr Matthias Ross, of Hamburg Port Authority. "As it is the clear objective of the European Commission to encourage private investment in the port sector, the 'Public Private Partnership' (PPP) model will be discussed and experiences exchanged, especially with regard to their impact on the port's role as a catalyst for regional development."

Best practice cases from Hamburg and UK, the latter to be presented by a representative of the Haven Gateway, also a Port-Net partner, will highlight the increasing role of private investment in the international port sector, Dr Ross added. The workshop is being supported by one of the leading European private banks, which will give the inside view on project financing instruments and present a recent case study.

A follow-up Port Financing workshop will be held in Hamina, Finland, in mid-2007.

PORT-NET: notes for editors

Port-Net is an EU Interreg IIIC Network project with 20 partners from 12 European countries and Russia. Its objective is to identify and tackle the main challenges faced by European ports in order to create better operational structures and capacities as well as to achieve the best possible regional integration of ports. These targets continue to be achieved through workshops, presentations, studies and best practice tours. Previous events have taken place in Belgium, Great Britain, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands and Poland.

Three components differentiate the activities by topics. The first component deals mainly with the application and further development of EU policies. Improvements in the multimodal transport structure and maritime cargo challenges are the subjects under discussion within the second component. The final component focuses on tourism and urban development from a port perspective.

The lead partner of Port-Net is the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, represented by the Hamburg Port Authority (HPA). A full list of partners can be founded at www.port-net.net. A democratic network structure guarantees equal involvement and a proper consideration of the interests of all partners. Project co-ordination is executed by UNICONSULT, a port and transport consultancy from Hamburg.

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