

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1 | SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT | 3 |
| 2 | STATUS QUO OF THE COMMUNICATION SCOPE OF EACH WATERWAY ADMINISTRATION BEFORE THE START OF THE SERIES OF WORKSHOPS..... | 4 |
| 3 | TARGET GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS | 5 |
| 3.1 | Who are your main target groups?..... | 5 |
| 3.2 | How do you define stakeholders in the framework of a communication strategy? | 6 |
| 4 | PR TOOLS | 7 |
| 4.1 | Events | 7 |
| 4.2 | Folders and brochures | 7 |
| 4.3 | Press releases | 7 |
| 4.4 | E-Newsletters..... | 8 |
| 4.5 | Website..... | 8 |
| 4.6 | Social media..... | 8 |
| 5 | MATCHING PR TOOLS AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS | 9 |
| 5.1 | Purpose of PR tools..... | 9 |
| 5.2 | What communication gaps needed to be filled?..... | 9 |
| 5.3 | How do you plan to go about filling these gaps?..... | 10 |
| 6 | CASE STUDY: How Do You Plan To Collect The Data For The Internet Platform Of The Danube Ports..... | 11 |
| 7 | CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK..... | 12 |

1 SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of the report “comprehensive communication strategies for national waterway administrations” is to identify and define target groups and their order of importance for communication and lobbying activities to be performed in order to promote the exploitation of the project results. The purpose is twofold: to identify stakeholders and target groups to whom the “messages” of inland navigation in the Danube region will be disseminated, as well as to create common actions, messages and images which are part of a toolbox – a synergy with the PLATINA project - for the use of the waterway administrations involved in NEWADA.

This document is foreseen as an output of Activity 6.2 “Communication and Lobbying for Danube Development” within work package 6: Integrate responsible stakeholders and foster cooperation. The Communication and Lobbying for Danube Development work package of NEWADA – and more specifically Activity 6.2 - is in charge of ultimately establishing a coherent and coordinated communication strategy and to create communication action plans for the respective waterway administrations. According to the description of work, 5 partners should report on comprehensive communication strategies for their respective waterway administrations. This document shall thus contain information on the following:

- The status quo of the communication scope of each waterway administration before the start of the series of workshop
- Target groups and stakeholders defined by each of the respective waterway administrations
- The availability of tools to reach out to those and eventually the creation of new communication channels when necessary
- A case study on the approach to implement the country data in the Internet platform www.danubeports.info
- Co-operations

2 STATUS QUO OF THE COMMUNICATION SCOPE OF EACH WATERWAY ADMINISTRATION BEFORE THE START OF THE SERIES OF WORKSHOPS

What are the national PR and communication channels commonly used in your waterway administration?

As a public organisation, the way we are portrayed in the public arena really matters. The world is no longer a straight line from company to stakeholder or user, i.e. or target groups. We - our organisation – hold a position in a network full of stakeholders. We therefore need to find the perfect position to make ourselves so valuable that the network cannot do without us.

3 TARGET GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

How do you define target groups in the framework of a communication strategy?

It is fundamental to identify your target audience and to tailor every message according to the target audience?

3.1 Who are your main target groups?

List them by order of importance and explain your choice

3.1.1 Shipping and logistics companies

They are the clients of the waterway. In their status as clients they are at the core of our communication strategy. Without the clients, a company has no purpose. One of the main tasks of a company – and here of via donau - is to cater to the needs, interests and wishes of its clients.

3.1.2 The Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (bmvit)

The Ministry is the owner of via donau. A company has duties towards its owner. Since via donau is a company owned by the bmvit, it must respect the interests and wishes of the Ministry and implement those.

3.1.3 The general public

We mean here that we want to speak to “everyone”. Until now, via donau has used a complex message that was addressed to experts, shipping and logistics companies. This has led to involuntarily neglecting the public and we are now focussing on a broader message that can also reach the general public. With the rise of the issue of environmentally friendliness, we want to seize the chance to speak to the general public and transmit a modern and environmentally friendly image of a company that works for everybody.

3.1.4 Ports and terminal operators

They are a very important part of the infrastructure and as such are an also important – but not most important target group. They play a critical role in the field of inland navigation and therefore via donau works a lot together with them. A good example is the Platform of Danube Ports where via donau tries to integrate the data of all Danube ports and keep those up to date.

3.2 How do you define stakeholders in the framework of a communication strategy?

Stakeholders are people who have a stake in an institution or issue that pertains to our work. Generally speaking, our main stakeholders are decision makers; key players whose participation and supporting is paramount to the success of the project. They are in the case of via donau:

3.2.1 The Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology (bmvit)

The Ministry is the owner of via donau. A company has duties towards its owner. Since via donau is a company owned by the bmvit, it must respect the interests and wishes of the Ministry and implement those.

3.2.2 The manufacturing industry

They produce the goods that will be transported on the waterway. This economic segment plays a crucial role for inland navigation. We have to provide the framework conditions that will guarantee a profitable use of the waterways for this group. However, this sector just like other traditional sectors has been in decline in the past years – not only in the field of inland navigation but generally speaking since goods are now being produced in low cost labour countries.

3.2.3 Waterway authorities

In Austria the Supreme Navigation Authority is responsible for licensing, buoyancy services, and aids to navigation as well as police shipping regulations. Hence, strong cooperation between the Supreme Navigation Authority and via donau is essential. .

3.2.4 Interest groups

These are associations of individuals or organizations formally organized, that, on the basis of shared concerns attempt to influence public policy in their favour. In our case, the interest groups we work with are the IGÖD (Association of Austrian Public Ports), the Austrian Chamber of commerce, the “Industriellenvereinigung”, a lobbying organisation thriving to promote Austria as a business location and the ICPDR, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River which enjoys an international status but is active on national level.

3.2.5 The media

They are the watchdog of our work. They shape the public’s perception and opinion. They supply the public with information which will be used to shape opinions. via donau tries to keep good relations with the media and to cooperate with them. This applies primarily to answering media queries in the shortest time as well as the organisation of press conferences and public events.

4 PR TOOLS

What communication channels are you currently using?

Here are some commonly used PR tools.

4.1 Events

These are information events held on an annual or biennial basis, or events on smaller scales such as workshops giving an overview on the situation of IWT in our country. These are simple ways to keep in touch with the stakeholders and to inform the target groups. via donau both organizes events and participates in inland navigation-related events. On a biennial basis, we co-organise the Danube Summit an international event dedicated to the ongoing development of freight transport logistics services and transport infrastructure along the Danube Corridor. It is the primary Conference and Exhibition for the Danube region, bringing together all parties involved in both the public and private sectors. On a biennial basis as well, we organise a joint stand at the transport logistic fair in Munich. On national level, we also run the floating exhibition Donau On Tour which tours many Austrian municipalities located along the Danube riverbank. Furthermore, we seek synergies in many other projects on national level and in EU project-related events.

4.2 Folders and brochures

Folders and brochures are basic PR material that we are expected to produce. They are our first connection to our targeted audience. It is important to keep them simple. If we want to tell a long story we can use events to do so or write a lengthy article about a topic we want to focus on. Company folders should give an overview about the activities of our company, our objectives, and a contact.

Such folders will be used for national and international events and distributed at thematic forums and conferences. The Corporate Communications Department at via donau is in charge of the layout and publishing of the via donau company folder or project brochures and is closely involved in the development of print dissemination tools.

4.3 Press releases

These ad hoc texts will document milestones and events and appear on our websites. An important yet inexpensive medium, they spread our message and are directly targeted to the press. Journalists are thankful for us to save them research time. We publish press releases for large events or when via donau is directly involved or concerned by a political or legal decision. In order to react to attacks against the River Engineering Project to the East of Vienna – a project that is often subject to controversy – we release periodic statements. About 50% of our press releases pertain to this project. There is a press section on our website as well as an email address run by the Corporate Communications Department (presse@via-donau.org) which receives email inquiries from the press. We have also developed a media inquiry sheet to deal with journalists' queries.

4.4 E-Newsletters

Electronic newsletters are a standard communication channel to inform on the latest news which are typically sent out on a monthly basis. Newsletters are essentially marketing tools which enable us to reach our target audience by mouse-click and to raise our company profile. We send out newsletters on a monthly basis or when we have 4 to 5 pieces of news on the website. Newsletters are an interesting info channel because they get a lot of attention from people who do not necessarily visit our website on a regular basis. According to the latest statistics, we have a total of 708 newsletter recipients.

4.5 Website

Our website is our “Internet presence” which makes us gain visibility. A basic PR tool, it can be enhanced and updated regularly. The via donau website is constant with regular news and updates. It is important to think about the fact that we – as public organisations need to keep the information flow current and accurate. Our web presence is important but it is not our main priority. Our goal however is to be a service platform providing as many answers as possible and keeping our readers well informed and up-to-date with the latest developments on the field.

| country | pages | % |
|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| Austria | 543.833 | 33,22 |
| United States | 68.042 | 4,16 |
| Germany | 64.760 | 3,96 |
| EU | 18.706 | 1,14 |
| Great Britain | 13.447 | 0,82 |
| France | 4.521 | 0,28 |
| Hungary | 4.407 | 0,27 |
| Netherlands | 3.976 | 0,24 |
| Romania | 3.444 | 0,21 |
| Russia | 2.984 | 0,18 |
| Bulgaria | 2.029 | 0,12 |
| Slovak Republic | 857 | 0,05 |
| Others | 906.195 | 55,35 |
| total | 1.637.201 | |

4.6 Social media

via donau has now started to work more intensively with social media. We now have a You Tube channel and a group page on Facebook. Up to now, the Head of Corporate Communications is the sole person dealing with social media. The other individuals who will be taking care of the social media aspects of our communication strategy are still to be explicitly defined and time and resources still to be allocated.

5 MATCHING PR TOOLS AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

5.1 Purpose of PR tools

PR tools are used for the following:

- **raise awareness** – communicate new messages and change perceptions
- **inform** – let others know about our ongoing projects, activities, objectives, and their relevance,
- **engage** – get input/feedback from the community, challenge the community
- **promote** – ‘sell’ the project outputs and results.

Level of communication – select 4 main target groups and match

| Dissemination tools: | | Folder | Article | Newsletter | Website | Presentation |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| TARGET GROUPS | Shipping and logistics companies | inform, promote | raise awareness | inform | inform, promote | engage, promote |
| | Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology | inform | raise awareness | inform | promote | engage, promote |
| | The general public | inform | raise awareness | inform | promote | engage, promote |
| | Ports and terminal operators | inform, promote | raise awareness | inform | promote | engage, promote |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

raise awareness

engage

inform

promote

5.2 What communication gaps needed to be filled?

As a PR and Communications Department we are faced with new challenges every day. Since we are well established and enjoy a special status as a rather well-rated information platform which also enjoys a well respected status on national level, there are no real gaps in our communication strategy. However, it will be interesting and most probably highly profitable for us to look further into the use of social media. Another area that needs improvement is our contact to the general public. It has become clear that our corporate design is too neutral and our messages lack emotion and do not fully reach the general public.

5.3 How do you plan to go about filling these gaps?

We are currently in discussion with a social media specialist who has already come and given our colleagues a lecture on the wide range of social media. As mentioned above, a via donau You Tube Channel already exists, we have a Facebook group page and a Wikipedia entry. However, the persons who will be in charge of the social media aspects of our communication strategy – and whether it will be limited to the Corporate Communications Department are still to be explicitly defined and time and resources still to be allocated.

Regarding an improvement of our brand and our contact to the general public, we are currently looking into a change in our approach to brand and design. Through a communication and design analysis conducted by a branding agency, it has become clear that our corporate design is too neutral and our messages lack emotion. While we have been able to ensure continuity, we need to look into a more emotional approach in our message as well as to broaden the range of our target groups. While the experts and main actors in the field of inland navigation know us well, we are still lacking presence and acknowledgment in the general public.

6 CASE STUDY: How Do You Plan To Collect The Data For The Internet Platform Of The Danube Ports

The Internet platform, which has been operative since 2007 and was created by via donau will now be maintained and updated under the responsibility of the respective PR managers of the Danube waterway administrations involved in NEWADA. This will guarantee the accuracy of the data presented and is a major step toward the implementation of a communication strategy where we look at the ports as stakeholders who need to be competitive. The waterway administrations involved commit to administer the website and supervise the reliability of the data.

It is critical for us public relations professionals today to learn and work with new media outlets. We are surrounded by those: they can be blogs, social network sites as well as the Internet. These new communication channels of the digital age allow us to send messages to our target groups and to keep a close contact to our stakeholders. In a digital world we are compelled to use technology as it has become our main tool to send our messages to our target audience.

Social media outlets allow us – and our organisations – to engage in two-way communication and to receive immediate feedback. As a first step toward the use of social media outlets, we are making strong use of the Internet and have created the web platform www.danubeports.info.

Danube Ports Online is an Internet tool presenting the relevant technical and economical data about the most important ports of the Danube Region between Kelheim in Germany and the Black Sea. Each port profile provides information ranging from general data to details about port administration, handling and storage facilities and devices, terminal operators, maintenance and disposal, as well as prospects for the future.

7 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

The Communication and Lobbying for Danube Development Work package of NEWADA – and more specifically Activity 6.2 - is in charge of ultimately establishing a coherent and internationally coordinated communication strategy and to create communication action plans for the respective waterway administrations.

Nominated PR managers have been invited who communicate about or on behalf of Danube navigation to two of a series of Communication and Networking Workshops.

During the two workshops that have taken place, we have all been given an opportunity to present the situation of PR pro Danube in our respective countries, the tools available – if any yet – for dissemination and promotion activities and the challenges the PR Managers face in their work. Such workshops provide an opportunity to brainstorm effective ways of communicating about inland navigation issues amongst colleagues in a friendly networking setting. This document is a report on the outcome of the first part of our workshops as part of an overall effort to set up a common communication strategy for national waterway administrations. Looking at examples on national level will allow the implementation of a common strategy based on the outputs delivered by each partner.

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