

Speech of Ana Leganel
DAPhNE Kick-off meeting
20th February 2017, Budapest

Dear ladies and gentlemen, dear project partners, dear guests,

It is a real pleasure for me as the representative of the Danube Transnational Programme to be here today at the kick-off meeting of the DAPhNE project. First, I would like to thank the LP for the kind invitation and also to congratulate you on your success. The efforts that you made for the past one year and a half to put together a successful application which was approved for financing together with other 53 applications out of 547 submitted have paid off. But this is already the past. We have to look to the future and what lies ahead will be even more challenging since you set out to substantially change the way Danube ports think and function. The integrated approach employed by the DAPhNE project in different ways, i.e. by involving all interested parties, both authorities and industry but also by addressing the ports issue from all angles, legislation, investment, administration, business strategies and infrastructure made DAPhNE a very convincing story in which the Danube programme strongly believes and which has already created high expectations. The 30 months period to bring about such a significant change is another challenging aspect but we have ALL THE TRUST that DAPhNE consortium will deliver what has been promised.

DAPhNE is genuinely significant for the Danube Programme because it comes as a response to a specific and quite stringent need of the Danube region that is “improving coordination and transnational integration among transport stakeholders to further develop multimodal hubs, terminals and links”. Furthermore, the project complies with all programme requirements with regard to transnationality – bringing together partners from 9 Danube riparian countries-, with regard to the focus on the actual change intended to be brought, to the contribution to sustainable development and the integrated territorial approach.

It is my duty though to give you a heads up. Things will not be easy in the next 2 years and a half but always remember that you are not alone. The Programme will be assisting you every step of the way and will provide advice whenever necessary. Additionally, related projects such as DANTE, DANUBE STREAM, Danube Skills, DBS Gateway Region and GREEN DANUBE have already volunteered to engage in a mutual support scheme as part of the Capitalisation Platform launched at Programme level. The

platform is intended to make the most of the projects potential by identifying synergies and building upon each other's work not only to avoid duplication of efforts but mainly to make things progress in the desired direction.

DAPhNE is destined for success. Its very name stands as a guarantee – Daphne does not simply relate to the nymph associated with fountains, wells, springs, streams, brooks and other bodies of freshwater but it was, according to Greek mythology, turned into a laurel tree – the wreath of laurel being for ages the symbol of victory crowning the heads of the triumphant.

For me, as a person born and raised in a port town, apart for the fact that I find ports very fascinating from afar and very dynamic from the inside, I see them as gates and gates should always be welcoming. Therefore, I invite partners, policy makers and stakeholders to work together to enable ports to properly receive all potential guests and at the same time ensure the leverage effect that transnational projects are meant to have.

In the end, I would like to wish you a smooth and successful implementation of the project!