

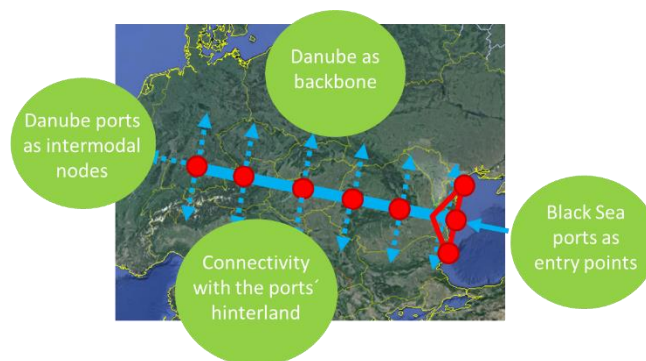
Danube Black Sea Gateway Region

Why ports, cities and regions have to cooperate for effective freight transport before other big players, such as Amazon, take the lead

Between 1985 and 2007 global trade volumes rose at around twice the rate of global GDP (Source: The Economist, April 28th-May 4th 2018). Also the Danube-Black Sea Region established closer economic ties with new markets in the Caspian region and the Far East. Rising trade volumes subsequently led to rising volumes of freight transport.

Big global players, such as Amazon, have already discovered the potential. They are setting up their own cargo hubs seeking to establish themselves as maritime freight forwarders world-wide. According to The Economist “the idea is not to own all the ships and rolling stock (...) but to control the platforms that make services available, and to bring the rest of the industry on board by simply being too big to refuse”. If we do not want to become dependent on other stakeholders’ interests, the Danube-Black Sea region, and with it all relevant stakeholders need to adequately prepare themselves for the new challenge!

The multitude of private companies in a fragmented market cannot be expected to be the promoter of an inter-modal network system that leads to higher efficiency at the macro-level rather than the level of the single firm they represent. This is why in 2013 the Working Community of the Danube Regions initiated the signing of a



Memorandum of Understanding supported by the whole Black Sea region, setting a first step towards cooperation. On May 17-18 2018, the partners of the related EU-funded project “**DBS Gateway Region**” are meeting in Galati, Romania, to bring the initial commitment into life and work on operational solutions on how to establish the Danube-Black Sea (DBS) region as an internationally recognised and effective Gateway Region for multimodal freight transport.

The partners aim high: they are working on the set-up of a cooperation platform that includes all relevant stakeholders in the region (covering all ten Danube riparian countries) and that serves four-fold:

- using the strength of a joint voice for accelerating necessary changes and the implementation of relevant measures (identified in a jointly developed Roadmap and related Regional Action Plans)
- positioning the “DBS Gateway Region” as a recognised brand and make its possibilities visible at the international market
- supporting the relevant stakeholders in the ports, cities and regions to offer joint services, widen the ports’ functionalities and guarantee multimodal hinterland accessibility in order to expand the ports’ catchment area
- cooperating with other initiatives inside and outside the region

“In a global world we have to establish closer ties between our regions to consequently pursue our goals. This means a more efficient and longer-term cooperation strategy which will also help to get more resilient against big players,” says Christian Popp, representative of the Regional Government of Lower Austria, Lead Partner of the project, “Let’s bridge reservations for the benefit of our regions’ population and economy!”

Information on the project is available at <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/dbs-gateway-region>