

SETTING A STRATEGIC RESEARCH AGENDA FOR PORTS

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The theme of the workshop is port performance and the Horizon 2020 agenda of the European Commission. In my intervention I would like to promote the idea that the link port performance and the Horizon 2020 agenda is the development by the key industrial partners and other actors of a strategic research agendas (SRA), which will identify challenges and priorities aligned with the objectives of the Horizon 2020, indicating activities from R&D to pilot and sustainable exploitation with due attention to the value chain and the socioeconomic impacts.

Such SRAs are developed by the ETPs (European Technology Platforms), and in the case of other sectors, and would be useful for ports as well.

This SRA needs to have a clear ambition: to ensure a sustainable growth of the port industry in the coming years that is appealing to the users.

Ports need research and innovation that enable them to face the main challenges. This is to develop pro-business models that enable them to serve trade and transportation, matching the demands of the society as well as environmental need. And attract human capital, who will be employed serving these needs.

To do so, the port sector needs to develop different types of research. Innovation, and operational issues, including information and communication technologies (ICT) are as important as organisational issues. Handling of cargoes, stacking of containers, trans-loading methods are as important as safety and security issues, in turn as important as core issues of the organisation of a port.

More specific, applied and basic research need to go hand-in-hand. Even during the EPP Review conference, speakers mentioned explicitly the need for basic research to enhance the reliability of the sector, to identify essential qualifications and proper training parameters for port labour, to collect data that will be meaningful for inland ports to develop organisational models. The Port Performance-Indicators Selection and Measurement (PPRISM) was also about basic needs, i.e. to measure performance that have not been addressed, and there are clear indications that it has contributed to the creation of a culture of performance.

The research agenda is worth dealing with all different sectors. For the moment we are over-focused on 'container trade'. We could learn a lot through research, currently missing about passenger terminals, cruise, and non-containerised cargoes.

All these are not to say that past activities and EU frameworks and programmes have not helped in advancing research. R&D programs have been present since the early days of the EPP, the 1997 EU Green paper on ports and maritime infrastructure. Short Sea Shipping, and action taken place in the context of the European policy to promote it have also helped.

Yet, when comes to research at EU level, the port sector lacks aggressiveness. An observation that is not disubuted is that the involvement of the ports was limited in FP6 and FP7. This is not to say that there are not few projects with some involvement from ports. I don't have specific figures on the participation of the port and terminal operators in the previous research FPs. However, a brief search on the available sources of information has shown rather limited participation, no more than 10 projects involving around 10 Ports and Terminals, during the last 10 years.

The problem is clearer in some member states, a fact that unfolds the links between other aspects of port policies and the development of a research agenda.

Thus more actors from the port sector need to be part of proposals for research at European level.

The latter needs to be in line with the strategic objectives of the EU Transport White Paper (WPT) as, to the best of my knowledge, new calls have to be targeted to address a strategic EU objective. The table below presents an extract of key actions and mission statements of the WPT.

- (1) **By 2030**, 30% of road freight over 300 km should shift to other modes such as rail or waterborne transport and by 2050 this should rise to more than 50%, facilitated by efficient and green freight corridors. To meet this goal appropriate infrastructure will also be developed.
- (2) **By 2050** reduce EU CO2 emissions from maritime bunker fuels by 40% (with a goal if feasible of 50%).
- (3) and comparable reduction in oil dependency
- (4) **By 2050**, ensure that all core seaports are sufficiently connected to the rail freight and, where possible, inland waterway system
- (5) By 2050, make sure that the EU is a world leader in safety and security of transport in all modes of transport.

The vital consept though is summarised in the world 'Synergies'. Ports need to develop research not "addressed to" other actors involved in port life, but "to be developed with" these actors. Involvement of actors within the port, at the foreland, at the hinterland are worth to be part of partnerships developing and implementing such research agenda of coordination and collaboration, with the latter being better

positioned to address issues emerging in modern supply chains wherein ports are vital parts. This is a typical case of clustering, it needs leadership and trust, so port actors have to move forward and assume this role that will result in benefits for all.

In this context, horizontal issues supporting/connecting (sub)systems are one part of the agenda, with vertical issues (for example, integration of supply chains and intermodality).

Finally, the SRA is worth involving issues related to the completion and proper functioning of the Internal market as well action allowing for generic international collaboration

A deployment strategy to implement all these, is to include mechanisms to mobilise private and public funding as well as a communication strategy.

To conclude, it is important that SRA addresses the main RTD themes and research areas of the sector for the short-, mid- and long-term.

But it is also important to engage stakeholders and SRA being the outcome of a consensus among all stakeholders on their ambition and the long-term vision of the whole port sector. Today's event is thus welcomed as it has the credentials to built up towards this consensus.

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