

SWARE

Joint Policy Recommendations

on the overarching challenges within the EU member states on sustainable heritage management of waterway regions

December 2019

The SWARE project helps to move towards a better balance between protection through revitalization and the sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources. A special recommendation is the revitalization of inland navigation. As economic development of inland waterways continues, the need to maintain that balance increases. There is much potential to integrate natural and cultural heritage of waterway regions into social and economic policy.

During the course of the projects' exchange of experience phase, the partnership identified:

- 1) Policy opportunities within the European member states, which can be strengthened by European action and programmes;
- 2) Sustainable strategies that can greatly contribute to the prosperity - economic and social - of the European inland waterway regions and the standard of living of its inhabitants.

The EU institutions are responsible for the drafting and implementation of an overarching policy on an interregional level. It is to them we aim our attention when making these recommendations, which more than often comprise integral policies (sustainability, green and blue, housing, urban development, social inclusion, inland navigation, etc.). It is important to allocate not only priority, but also funding to programmes that take the recommendations below into account. It is in our view that the EU can greatly contribute to strengthening the partner regions.



Recommendation I: on EU cooperation policy, structures and programmes

- 1) [The SWARE partnership] recommends strengthening the interregional cooperation projects that stimulate the exchange of experience and contribute to influencing policy change. This can be done by continuing funding for programmes such as INTERREG Europe. Regions may differ greatly in their geographical scope, but they have the same chances and opportunities in and along the waterways. Cooperation therefore is necessary. [...] recommends the support for common, cross-region and cross-border touristic promotion and cooperation by regional authorities and funding through cooperation programmes;
- 2) [...] recommends a common EU-strategy and EU-guidelines for sustainable heritage challenges, leaving room for regional interpretation, that stimulates initiatives to improve the quality of life in inland waterway regions. In this perspective [...] recommends the support for shorter, fewer, clearer and simplified rules to deregulate and empower the regions;
- 3) As sustainability impacts several sectors, [...] recommends to stimulate and fund cross sectorial approaches and good practices within cooperation programmes.



Recommendation II: on dissemination and EU-awareness

- 4) [...] recommends to make use of regional knowledge and experiences, and to highlight and broadcast these on a European platform. In light of this [...] recommends making better use of the already existing policy learning platform to intensify peer reviews and sharing of good practices and experiences.

5) [...] recommends to make the more than 500 million European citizens more aware of regional impact in inland waterways. And make them more aware of the territorial resources and heritage present in those regions, by supporting and funding good local and regional initiatives.



Recommendation III: on investing in the future

6) [...] has identified many opportunities for youth in relation to the sustainable heritage management of waterway regions. In this perspective [...] suggests to support local and regional initiatives that initiate in connecting youth and the management (and experience) of inland waterway regions;

7) [...] recommends to invest, through support and funding, in blue/green jobs for starters, in an expanding economic pillar, in investing in the revitalization of navigation along the inland waterways which would stimulate people and stakeholders to build on a system of touristic and cultural purposes and goals under the motto: Water Unites. Moreover, in investing on the valorization of regional water heritage in relation to the UNESCO recommendations about the civilization of water;

8) [...] recommends to stimulate programmes educating students through didactic initiatives in the classroom and in the field;

9) [...] recommends to change the point of view of seeing panoramas “from” water and not only “towards” water. That means that navigation is important as a vehicle of cultural tourism;

10) [...] recommends to link the adaption of climate change to the sustainable heritage management of waterway regions initiatives.

It is recognized that there is not one governance structure or model for inland waterways that fits the needs of all regions and countries. However, waterway regions are cross-border in nature and therefore it is important to stimulate the usage and protection on an interregional scale.

By the SWARE partnership,

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