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Urban summer beaches delivered by boat



Paris-Plage and Bruxelles-Les-Bains this year again offered a welcome alternative for stressed out office workers and children who cannot leave the city on holiday in the summer. Palm trees, deck chairs, parasols and 'hip' entertainment at the edge of the water have turned the urban beaches into places to be, which attract more visitors each year. Thousands tonnes of fine sand are necessary to realise these projects, but bringing the beach sand in by inland waterway vessel could not be easier. [More...](#)

Still one month to go to submit Marco Polo projects



The European Commission has opened the fourth and last call of the Marco Polo I programme. Marco Polo aims at funding operational projects bringing modal shift or innovation to rail, inland and short sea shipping. Dissemination and education projects can also obtain co-financing. The deadline to submit projects is 11 October 2006. Meanwhile, the successor of Marco Polo is ready to start in 2007 with an almost fourfold budget for the period 2007-2013. New is the special attention for sea motorways and traffic avoidance projects. Finally, neighbouring EU countries will be able to participate. [More...](#)

Intelligent energy for Europe



The deadline for submitting projects under the last call of the Intelligent Energy for Europe is 31 October 2006. Intelligent Energy for Europe co-finances projects relating to efficient energy use and renewables and contains a specific chapter for transport activities called "STEER". Approximately EUR 50 million will be made available to co-finance up to 50% of the project costs. Organisations from EU Member States, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein can apply. As of 2007, projects will be financed under the brand new Competitiveness and Innovation programme (CIP). [More...](#)

One of Europe's largest fish ladders inaugurated on the Rhine



France and Germany have opened another giant fish ladder at Gambenheim, located 15km to the north of Strasbourg, to enhance and monitor the migration of some 20,000 fish on the Rhine. The removal of obstacles to migration is part of the ecological target to restore the ecosystem of the Rhine and its tributaries. The salmon is an important symbol of a slowly recovering Rhine system. In 2000, hundreds of salmon already returned to the Rhine in order to reproduce in its tributaries. Also, Voies Navigables de France has recently published a brochure about its commitment to sustainable development. [More...](#)

German promotion short sea centre goes for more inland navigation



The German short sea promotion centre has been re-baptised Short Sea Shipping Inland Waterway Promotion Center to become actively involved in the promotion of inland waterway transport. The team has been reinforced with Christian Betschen and counts now 3 full time staff members. With this initiative, it follows into the footsteps of Belgium and the UK where all waterborne activities are already jointly promoted to strengthen synergies. [More...](#)

Serbian authorities test RIS for customs control



River Information Services in Serbia will be used in the future as a prevention tool against smuggling and illegal actions via the Danube river. The Serbian Customs Authority is entering a trial period for testing a number of the RIS applications and has established an operational link to the AIS pilot system in Serbia. This will enable the tracking and tracing of vessels located within the system range. One patrol boat has already been equipped with an AIS transponder unit.

Constantza main container hub Black Sea



The throughput of containers in the four Black seaports again reached a record high of 900,000 containers in the 1st half of 2006, an increase of 38%. The port of Constantza on the Black Sea maintains its leader's position in the region, handling in this period nearly 470,000 TEU containers. Today, these containers are transported to the hinterland mainly by railway and by road. Almost no boxes reach the hinterland by inland waterways. However, this is set to change. The larger the loads, the more it becomes attractive to use the Danube river as transport corridor. [More...](#)