

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT



Dear Colleagues and friends of PIANC,

At the beginning of this year, allow me to wish you, as well as your families and companies all the best on behalf of the loyal team in Brussels that, together with Louis Van Schel, doesn't spare its efforts to make our Association more accessible and to establish the best links between different networks.

As usual, looking back on the past year will first of all allow me to say goodbye again to my predecessor Eric Van den Eede, under whose lead many actions were undertaken in the course of 2011.

Amongst the big successes of our Association, I would like to thank alternately our German colleagues for the General Assembly in Berlin, for the technical seminar, as well as the interesting visits to the Waterway Cross Magdeburg and the Ship Lift Niederfinow, our Estonian colleagues for organising the NordPIANC meeting in Tallinn about navigation on the Baltic and Arctic Sea, as well as our American and Austrian colleagues for a very successful Smart Rivers Conference in New Orleans, that as from now will be entirely integrated within our Association, without forgetting the exceptional storm surge barrier against the hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico, which, after only 4 years, is in the final stage under the supervision of our colleagues of the US Corps of Engineers.

However, the past year has also seriously shocked our Japanese colleagues to whom we have expressed our deepest sympathy and admiration for their courage towards the disaster after the big earthquake that affected the whole northeast part of the country. Moreover, the demise of the beloved Robert De Paepe did not only touch our Belgian friends, but also all those that were able to appreciate the composure and continuous engagement of this big witness in PIANC's life.

Thanks to the flawless actions of the Japanese and German Section, we were able to welcome two new Platinum Partners with PENTA-OCEAN and HOCHTIEF. Iran has also joined us as a Qualifying Member and will organise an international conference on weirs and hydro-electricity in mid-February.

With regard to our publications, like Eric had already announced, we entered the first year of electronic publications and we started with the publication of a brand new hard copy Yearbook, in which there is room for the best experts of the host country of the year. Many new publications will be released in 2012. In 2011, five publications were released: three reports of MarCom (MarCom 53, 56 and 57) about the mitigation of tsunami disasters in ports (MarCom 53), about the application of geotextiles in waterfront areas (MarCom 56), as well as about the stability of pattern placed revetments (MarCom 57); another publication by an Expert Group of EnviCom, released as a free report, dealt with a sustainable waterborne transportation industry (EnviCom Task Group 2); the fifth report was released by InCom Working Group 125 and is dealing with guidelines and recommendations on River Information Services.

Personally, I had the pleasure in December, together with our Secretary-General Louis Van Schel, to meet in Antwerp with the President elect and the Secretary-General of IAPH, Sister Association of PIANC, with regard to the evaluation of the continuous co-operation between both associations and to congratulate the director of the Port of Antwerp for the start of the works of the new entrance lock of the Port.

I would also like to take the opportunity to remind you how I wish that PIANC becomes the global source of information about maritime and inland infrastructure, an idea that has already been discussed on the new blog of the Association.

This year will also be full of promising events: on February 20-24, 2012 in Chennai, India with the PIANC-COPEDEC Conference, followed by the Annual General Assembly hosted by our Spanish Section, as well as the Mediterranean Days, both in May in Valencia and between both events PIANC will be represented at the World Water Forum in Marseille in mid-March, as well as at the International Transport Forum in Leipzig.

Amongst the matters that we wish to focus on in particular in 2012 I would like to mention the practical development of a database on major maritime and inland navigation infrastructure projects, the identification of new developing countries within our Association and an increase of our publications.

I hope you will enjoy reading this new issue of our Magazine and I wish you a very happy 2012.

Sincerely yours,

Geoffroy Caude,
President of PIANC