Cities and cruises: the search for mutual benefits

Port cities know that they can gain benefits from cruise liner calls (economic spinoffs connected with the capital brought in by the cruise operators, and with the expenditure of the tourists and crews; visit of tourists envisaging to come back, etc...). However, these benefits are often less than the expectations which the cities judge to be legitimate against the notable efforts which they have made for the cruise operators (construction of port terminals, quays, etc...) and to the impacts that they are subjected to (occupation of spaces, congestion, etc...).

The cities can significantly increase the economic spinoffs on the local level if, for example, they succeed in:

a • developing a local centre capable of proposing, with advantageous rates and a suitable level of quality, all the services which the cruise operators expect from ports;

b • increasing the average sum spent by the passengers and crews by proposing perfectly suitable "commercial“ offers (by typology, information, opening times, places) answering to the specific requirements of the passengers visiting the city;

c • creating alliances with other cities in order to develop itineraries and thus the flows.

Nevertheless, one aspect remains often very problematic in this “struggle“ for added value: that of the “economic control“ of the expenditures connected with shore visits. We well know that the cruise operators offer excursions on land (even giving the passengers the possibility of making purchases), frequently through the intermediary of connected operators, in order to preserve the value chain of their companies. Obviously this can mean a loss of opportunities for the cities. The problem has always existed; however the situation of the cities has somewhat improved a short time ago with the increase of the number of passengers who wish to explore the city by themselves, without buying the excursions proposed on board. Nevertheless, the possibility for the cruise operators to recuperate sales margins from the integrated excursions (but also from the “controlled“ shopping) remains a strategic element of their activity.

Should the cities abstain from competing with the cruise operators for inland excursions?

In fact, as the cruise sector’s operators unanimously assert, the cities should not be authorised to try to attract the average 40% of the passengers who could opt for the purchase of an integrated excursion on board, by proposing seductive offers destined to take the passengers away from the companies. The cruise companies, who have even exposed their arguments to the E.U., consider that the cities should only be authorised to carry out their own publicity campaigns, against those of the cruise operators, for the passengers who have definitely decided not to purchase integrated excursions, under the risk of destroying an activity which benefits everybody. What does this mean concretely? It means for example avoiding that the cities should be able to promote their excursions directly on board the cruise liners, or avoiding that free buses possibly proposed by the cities should be able to arrive directly alongside the quay to take passengers, thus competing with the organised excursion coaches. Yes or No, can the arguments advanced by the cruise operators be considered unacceptable?

To take a closer look, the position of the cruise operators is wholly justified, if the high cost of the investments and the notable rigidity of the offers are considered, besides the fact that the economic spinoffs for the port regions remain nevertheless considerable. Moreover, the cities can always count on the 60% of “free“ passengers who represent a large number of potential visitors. By signing appropriate agreements, the cities and the cruise operators can thus develop mutually profitable strategies.

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River, port, city: the challenge of modernity

River port metropolises are especially exposed to fluctuations of the economy and modifications of their environment. Here, the imbrication of urban and port realities are often denser than elsewhere. The evolution of the stocks of certain raw products, the variations in the dynamics of international and world trade have a direct impact on port traffic and the local economy. Apart from this, climate warming and its secondary effects notably in terms of unforeseeable events – storms and floods – directly interfere with the organisation of the City Port territory and on conducting the development policies to be implemented.

River metropolises have now however to find a better articulation between the presence of the river, urban layouts and their spatial and economic development. For local stakeholders, both public and private, it is firstly necessary to develop abilities of anticipation and innovation. In matters of urbanism, the floodable city can become a reality and the river be tamed in order to structure an innovatory urban project. On the architectural level, the presence of the water will be put into value by installations providing views over the river or advantaging its accessibility by the citizens. Finally for economic development, the river will become the support for efficient urban logistics with a high environmental quality, whilst the river and port environment will favour the emergence of new energy sectors taking advantage of the industrial know-how of port cities.

Picking up the gauntlet of modernity, the river port city of tomorrow will reconcile making the river safe, enhancing it and putting it into value. Its construction is in progress.

Five topics for our debates:
- How can the risks of flooding be integrated in innovatory urban projects?
- What economic sectors in the port cities tomorrow?
- What role for the waterway in urban logistics?
- How can the river structure metropolitan territories?
- Architecture on the river bank, how to get the best advantage from the water?

Get the AIVP Service reflex!

- Organise benchmarking missions in the port cities which correspond to you including the composition of working documents, on site visits, meeting with decision makers, the organisation of logistics and control of the content. These missions are delivered to you on a turnkey basis. For this service, contact Bruno Delsalle: bdelsalle@aivp.org
- Set up in your port city a City / Port event on the subjects which interest you for a public which we will target together. Making the local economic and social stakeholders aware of the City / Port thematic, discuss national stakes implicating the port cities, addressing an international public to discuss your projects, are all possible objectives for these events. For this service, contact Corinne Monnet: cmonnet@aivp.org
- Propose that you host the photographic exhibition “Docks en stock, port cities throughout the world”. This exhibition can naturally be enriched with your own photographs. For this service, contact Greta Marini: gmarini@aivp.org

Now with 208 members, AIVP is actively represented in 47 countries in the world. This network is naturally in constant evolution. Ports, local authorities, and professionals attentive to the future of port cities decide to join us every year. Others decide to leave the network after a more or less long period during which they will have benefited from the wealth and exchanges of experiences which have been put into value there. These movements in the network of members are inherent in the life of any Association. AIVP can however pride themselves in the great fidelity in the continuity of active participation in their work which testifies to the quality of this network. Today the average period of membership is 10 years, and forty members of AIVP have been active in the network for at least 20 years. Nevertheless, the network has never ceased to expand with acceleration over the last two years which have seen 38 new members arrive and which ensures a constant renewal in our debates and exchanges of experience. With the 2011 AIVP Directory, one copy of which has recently been sent to you, the full strength of a worldwide network is available to you on your desk!
Genoa and La Spezia: the citizen, in the heart of the port

The arrival of Luigi Merlo in 2008 to the Chairmanship of the Port of Genoa coincided with the signature of a collaboration agreement between the Municipality and the Port Authority aimed at coordinating the planning activities of both bodies. In La Spezia, in the perspective of a renewed and lasting City / Port relationship, the new masterplan for the waterfront designed by the architect José Maria Tomas Llavador was presented in early 2010. It should enter its operational phase soon and proposes a joint City / Port project which targets especially the tourist attractiveness of La Spezia and the development of the cruise sector.

Genoa, new citizen port

In Genoa, the objective was to set up a stable, structured and systematic collaboration enabling the port and the city to reflect on the bases for a joint development and to advance on the respective plans, both coherent and shared. In this respect, the collaboration agreement laid down in 2008 accelerated whilst providing a flexible form of collaboration based notably on the relations of confidence between technicians.

This agreement thus facilitated the elaboration of a Local urbanism plan (Plano Urbanistico Comunale –PUC) currently being presented to the Genoese citizens. It also provides the port authority with a working framework suitable for the formulation of the Masterplan for the Port which has just started. This Masterplan will develop scenarios of evolution for the next 10 to 15 years in conformity with the new PUC. At the start of its formulation phase it will be accompanied by a participative process inviting the citizens to express themselves on a community blog put on line by the Port Authority. For the latter, it is questions of making the Genoese citizens understand the importance of being lastingly positioned in a more and more globalised transport market.

The dialogue with local populations is nowadays a process which should be continued over time. It is accompanied by concrete projects of creating a relationship between citizens, younger and older, and port work. The Port Center of Genoa (Genoa Port Center – GPC) is a first concrete step towards this, the fruit of considerable work towards awareness during which Hilda Ghiara, Academic Economist, designer and founder of the project, and Riccardo Degl’Innocenti of the Province of Genoa, have patiently convinced the port community of the importance of such a structure and of the interest in providing their own contributions. It has thus been possible to display the modern port through the people who work there daily. Concrete and constant interactions with the realities of the port as well as exchanges with the teaching body are today making this Port Center into an effective instrument for social cohesion.

Citizen strategies around the port of La Spezia

Contship La Spezia possess one of the most efficient container terminals in the South of Europe. Nevertheless, in the years following 2000, its positioning in the centre of the city and its tourist bay obliged the private operator to open a process of permanent dialogue with the local authorities and citizens more and more hostile concerning its development. In 2006, this strategy led to the creation of the “Porto Lab” project and the elaboration of a school diary through which the children can discover a different aspect of port activities every day. Daniele Testi and Mauro Solinas, the Marketing and Public Relations Managers of Contship explain that this initiative was, at the time, “a question of economic survival”.

Today the project has been extended to other Italian sites of the Group: Ravenna, Cagliari, Giao Tauro, and Salerno. It consists in bringing the citizen to the centre of the activity of a shipping Company, to explain to young people the operations by an in-depth visit to a terminal in the company of an allocated tutor, a voluntary member of the staff, who makes the connection between the schoolchildren, the teachers and the professionals on, the terminal. Work is also carried out previously with the teacher to prepare this visit. 24,000 children, between 7 and 12 years of age have been received since 2006. Over 50,000 agendas have been distributed.

Recently the Port of La Spezia have directly associated themselves with the Porto Lab project, a first in Italy. They have notably made available to Contship a fitted out bus (the Navebus) which enables the port terminals to be visited in situ. This association of the port with an initiative, initially purely private, shows the desire of their management to put the port into value as a major partner of the city and the citizens. Besides this, the Port have developed their own citizen actions: Port open day, concert and cultural event in the port, awareness actions regarding safety and security, etc.
Saint-Petersburg

The New York studio Workac have been selected for the reconversion of the 8 hectares of “New Holland Island”, the former naval port of Saint-Petersburg. The project combines the creation of a public park and the reutilisation of old warehouses to create a new cultural hub for the city. An interior promenade connecting the rooftops of the various warehouses will also enable the public to stroll around throughout the year.

La Rochelle: new head office

In 2014, the Port of La Rochelle will be endowed with a new head office designed by APB Architects for a cost of €4.5 million. The building will be energy self-sufficient with a bio-climatic façade which will dispense it from heating and air conditioning. It will provide 2500 m² with wide glass windows looking out over the port installations. The Port, the City and the agglomeration have worked together so that this space be open to the public with a freely accessible 250 m² terrace.

A stakeholder management approach

Although their interest is often recognised, big infrastructure projects have to confront numerous resistances. The absence of an efficient management of the stakeholders weighs heavily on the planning and execution of these projects, as far as sometimes even condemning them to abandonment. Through the in-depth analysis of four precise cases, Michaël Dooms proposes solutions enabling the decision processes to be improved by the real integration of the stakeholders concerned by these projects. It should be noted that Michael Dooms works since many years with the AIVP.

Dieppe: the dry dock is transformed

The port of Dieppe have undertaken the reconversion of a former dry dock into a dry port for yachts. Following the construction of a watertight wall, the dock has been equipped with shelves served by a lifting apparatus enabling the boats to the moved around. The total capacity of the dock is 300 yachts and it is one of the first examples of its kind in the world.

Indian Ports Global

The Indian Government have announced the creation of “Indian Ports Global” (IPG) in order to invest in ports and container terminals overseas. The countries of East Asia, Africa and Australia will be the privileged targets. The Minister says he wants to be inspired by the strategies of PSA and DP World. Certain people however remain sceptical, notably because the Indian ports are far from being at the level of the container terminals of Singapore and Dubai when their managements launched their overseas developments.

Busan: “Mobile Harbor”

“Mobile Harbor” has just been tested in the waters of the Port of Busan. The idea, developed by a Korean Research institute, is to utilise a giant barge to discharge very large container vessels without their having to be berthed. This notably enables the environmental impact on the city to be reduced and to discharge in ports which do not have the necessary depth of water to receive these vessels. A system, the impacts of which would be numerous for port cities, both on the environmental level as on the geo-economic level and also on the strategies of operators.

The floodable city?

At the time of debates on the densification of the city, construction in floodable zones, in spite of the regulatory constraints in France, is again in question. European examples such as those of Hamburg (Hafen City) or Nijmegen show that the integration of flood risks in a strategy on the scale of a whole territory can become an advantage for an urban project. A wager and radical choices on which numerous port cities are reflecting would they not permit all the advantage from the presence of the water to be gained?