SERVOLA
Green pro AMEM-proposal arguments

The AMEM Servola Intermodal Project is a novel, holistic and bespoke proposal for a future orientated, highly competitive expansion of the Trieste deepwater harbour, which could be technically realised within the shortest possible time and in a very environmentally friendly way.

A Very Large Floating Structure (VLFS) forms the core of the AMEM recommendation for a revitalization of the area presently covered by a foundry and a coke gasification plant widely known as Ferriera Lucchini.

In order to cope with the fierce competition between European deepwater container terminals as a consequence of container vessel newbuilds getting bigger and bigger (20 000 TEU and more) a VLFS will be moored off-shore the industrial complex in Servola with a minimum of constructural work on-shore. The puzzle like modules of the floating terminal could be manufactured in the shipyards of Trieste (ATSM) or Monfalcone (Fincantieri) and towed to the Bay of Muggia with a minimum of emissions to the atmosphere. The ramp connecting the on-shore railway track and the terminal, again could be made of steel and manufactured by local companies – shipyards or steel constructors.

Apart from the inherently green aspect of the VLFS proposal, this project would create jobs in the Province of Trieste as well as in the neighbouring regions. Not to mention the demand for steel plates for the caissons.

VLFSs will not only be extremely environmental-friendly, they can be economically priced as they can easily be adjusted to the demand (capacity of the terminal).

VLFSs will be, in addition, earth-quake resistant and will offer a serious alternative to conventional quays especially if sea levels are expected to rise.

The most striking advantages of a VLFS are:

The protection of the environment and the relatively short time to build such a structure. This will allow Trieste to catch up with its competitors in Italy and abroad, as time is running short! In other words – a VLFS adds up to the competitiveness of the harbour of Trieste!

The VLFS idea will do away with all the transport on roads, as the major portion of the equipment would be transported by sea.

A very striking feature of the AMEM proposal is – in addition – that it can be realized without any interference with the future of the "banchina" in Servola. It is totally independent of the very sensitive issue of disposing the highly contaminated soil in the area of the foundry and the coke gasification plant. This could be done totally independently from the new terminal with the advantage to create a high quality/high price construction site for not only transport related businesses on the shore of one of the most beautiful bays in the Adriatic and a lot of aquaculture!

Last but not least the VLFS will definitely eliminate the possibility of disposing the contaminated material (landfill) in a quay made from concrete!

The AMEM proposal is both – attractive to the investors in the terminal and attractive to the inhabitants of Servola which have been suffering from severe pollution so many years!

It goes without saying that the AMEM proposal is inherently environment-friendly , as it is based on an intermodal (sea-rail-sea)concept. Greater use of freight rail offers a simple, inexpensive, and immediate way to meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions without harming the economy. Because railroads are, on average, three or more times more fuel efficient than trucks, railroads have a smaller carbon footprint: every ton-mile of freight that moves by rail instead of truck reduces greenhouse gas emissions by two-thirds or more.

Freight transportation demand is expected to rise sharply in the years ahead and the three major railroad companies (FS, ÖBB/RCA and RZD) involved in this project are committed to even greater environmental excellence in the years ahead.

Rail freight (22g CO_2/tonne-km emission) in combination with deep-sea shipping (8.4g CO_2/tonne-km) and short-sea shipping (16gCo_2/tonne-km) will become the most attractive means of transport in the future!

In order to further improve the energy balance of the floating container terminal one could think about wave or tidal energy. This adds new dimensions to the challenges for the engineers designing the caissons!

Trieste – being an outpost of Central Europe – has the unique chance to become a world class deepwater container terminal as close as possible to the industrial heart of Europe!

Vienna, June 2014 John Kuehmayer