



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PIANC USA at the PIANC 2015 Annual General Assembly

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA. PIANC USA leaders recently attended the [PIANC 2015 Annual General Assembly](#) in Porto Portugal on May 18 - 20, 2015. This was the first year that PIANC returned to Portugal since the quadrennial congress held in Lisbon in 2006. Attendees representing the PIANC U.S. section included Section Chair The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works); U.S. Section President Major General John Peabody and five other U.S. Commissioners; as well as U.S. Section Secretary Anne Cann, Institute for Water Resources (IWR); Kelly Barnes, U.S. Section staff, IWR; and U.S. Section Commissioner Helen Brohl, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

The meeting included briefings on the current state of PIANC, a review of recent and upcoming international activities, briefings from each of the four major Technical Commissions, Working Group updates, and a presentation by the Ports and Harbours Association of Japan, winners of a PIANC planning prize. A great moment for the U.S. was the appointment of Mr. Ed Schmeltz (AECOM) as the new Vice President for the Western Hemisphere, replacing John Headland who stepped down earlier this year. Upcoming highlights include the PIANC-SMART Rivers 2015 in Buenos Aires, Argentina this September, and the AGA 2016 in Bruges, Belgium.

The meeting included interesting and educational briefings on navigation topics of local interest, ranging from an in-depth discussion of the history of navigation and flood control development along the Douro River and Porto, to the specific design considerations for the new cruise terminal at Porto. AGA delegates also had a technical seminar and tour of facilities at the Port of Leixoes (where the Atlantic Ocean and Douro River meet) and a visit to the port's new cruise facility.

Of special interest was the update on Working Group 181, the State and Perspectives of Waterborne Transport Infrastructure Worldwide. This Working Group is chaired by Nick Pansic from the U.S. Delegation and includes members from a dozen countries. Its three main goals include defining the "State of the Waterways and Ports" by summarizing current data on global transport infrastructure, conducting a worldwide inventory of the future needs for waterborne infrastructure, and providing guidance on how best to deal with emerging trends and technological advances in the waterborne transport infrastructure arena.

Key points taken away from the conference include new ways to engage with and support PIANC in order to expand leverage of the dozens of cutting edge technical reports and initiatives that PIANC facilitates for waterborne transportation challenges and issues. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) sits on about 20 of the 34 technical working groups that produce these technical papers.

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