
Lessons to be learned from the “FAILED OECD “Round Table Conference”.

“On April 15th 2017 I made a very long entry in this blog with ample information about the **“Round Table Conference”, suggested by OECD and held in Buenos Aires on April 10 th and 11th 2017.**

Now a year and a half later, with the country in a deep crisis, I wish to make a short recapitulation and pose the question:

If this suggestion of OECD would have been followed correctly, would Argentina be in this CRISIS?

The idea was to follow the examples of Chilean “Round Table Conferences” held in 2013 for the Port-plans of Valparaiso and San Antonio.

OECD strictly followed the examples, bringing recognized experts to the meeting, but the Argentine part, which was arranged by the Undersecretary of Ports and Waterways, only invited a few local employees of the terminal operators (concessionaires) and one engineer who had participated in the “think-tank” of PRO, the political party of President Macri, which had made a Plan for the Port of B.A., which he presented. (In other parts of this blog you can find the difficult situation of the Undersecretary in the article: *What lessons can be learned from the failed initiative of the Undersecretary of Ports and Waterways to form his Consultative Council?*)

This initiative failed, because the “Trustee” of A.G.P. (General Port Administration, an entity legally “in liquidation”, but resurrected by the government), was given a higher authority than THE UNDERSECRETARY OF PORTS AND WATERWAYS, which was against the Port-law 24093.

The OECD Round Table Conference” was held in Buenos Aires on April 10 th and 11th 2017.

Little previous information was given about the way this “Round Table Conference” would be organized, but there were vague indications that the good examples of Chilean “Round Table Conferences” of 2013 for the Port-plans of Valparaiso and San Antonio would be used as a basis.

Unfortunately the results in Buenos Aires did not match those good examples, which need a thorough analysis.

This has much to do with this blog, where in the opening page you can read that its objective was TRAINING.

I started it in 2007 with the intention to make it a continuation of the book "Containers, Ships and Ports, parts of a Transportation System", written in 2001.

I can give ample evidence that this objective had a good degree of success, with messages from UNCTAD, from a Supreme Court Judge on Maritime Transport issues in Venezuela and a senior member of an important Ships Agency in Mexico, who is also a teacher in a University.

Moreover I receive regularly letters from students in Peru and Colombia. In that book, I paid much attention to the propaganda made in 1998 by the General Port Administration (A.G.P.) about its "STRATEGIC PLANS FOR THE PORT OF BUENOS AIRES.

In 1998 many people in Argentina believed that Buenos Aires could be a HUB-PORT for the EAST COAST OF SOUTH AMERICA.

I emphasized that this "Plan" needed OPEN DEBATES.

Will it be taken into account in the discussions, that in a country with 30% poverty, the "light-motiv" (of the "leit-motiv" =leading motiv in German), of ROUND TABLES, MUST BE TO DECIDE ON THE PRIORITIES OF INVESTMENTS? AND: Will bad decisions be corrected?

To make a possible contribution to the "Round Table Conference " of the OECD, I wrote on April 7th that I was preparing the following entry in tis blog:

1) An article on the functioning of the ill-fated "Consultative Council of the Under-Secretary of Ports and Waterways (S.S.P. and V.N.) which can be found in: "Lessons that can be drawn from the failed Advisory Council of the Sub-Secretariat of Ports and Waterways".

The first part in Spanish has been published already and will be completed in the next few days.

2) A short story of what happened in 2008 and 2009, when the extension of the contract of the dredging-concession of Hidrovía S.A. was discussed. (The expiring-date of this concession would be in 2013, but was extended until 2021, without changing the "design vessel for channel safety". As a result, channels are now not deep enough, but also not wide enough).

3) The constant negative to discuss which of the Channels that connect the River Parana with the River Plate should be used by outgoing ships, loaded in the "Greater Rosario Zone", to reduce delays and reduce total costs: The Emilio Mitre Channel or the Martin Garcia Channel? For this part I, am preparing an extract of presentations I made in a "Seminar of Smart Rivers" and the "Seminar of Ports of Ariel Armero" in September and October of 2015. In both seminars I gave good reasons why Argentina should look for lessons in the organization of the C.C.N.R. (Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine). Special attention should be paid to a very interesting interview made by Carlos Velar last year, with the

outgoing Secretary-General of the CCNR, Hans van der Werf. I shall also mention an interesting publication in gCaptain with the title: Argentina's Rising Grains Production Strands Vessels in River Traffic. February 16, 2017 by Reuters. I used this article to draw the attention of Mr. Guillermo Wade of "CAPYM" (Cámara de Actividades Portuarias y Maritimas) who attends these matters and I wrote him "an open letter" about this, which so far remains without confirmation of receipt.

4) I shall also repeat my suggestion made in December 2015, that the S.S.P. and V.N. should complete in due form a study that started very well in 2007, together with the U.T.N. (National Technical University) to draw a "Master Plan for the Navigation System." This study started well, but had a very sad end, when the government decided in 2009, to put the "little war" with neighboring countries before the general interest of the country and the region.

These 4 points are part of my attempts to make it clear that in a country where OPEN DISCUSSIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED, THERE IS NO FUTURE. But unfortunately, what was done on April 10th and 11th, without any indication if this will get a "follow-up", is cause for doubts if my requests for "open debates" finally will be accepted. And with what I saw and heard on April 6th on the television, I do not think that I am very wrong. Maybe I have to keep my blog open and updated!

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