

EBU CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE TEN-T NETWORK POLICY

INLAND WATERWAYS – A VITAL PART OF THE CORE NETWORK

The European Barge Union (EBU) represents the majority of the inland navigation industry in Europe. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators of meanwhile 8 leading European inland navigation countries.

EBU's main objective is to represent the interests of the inland shipping industry at a European and international level and to contribute to the development of a sustainable European transport system.

We are pleased to take the opportunity to comment on the Commission's Consultation regarding the Future TEN-T Network policy.

1. Principles, criteria and contribution to the "Europe 2010" strategic objectives.

It is necessary to find a new balance between the transport volume and the sustainable development of the economy towards the background of an enlarged European Union. Promoting a better use of all modes of transport and a better use of alternative modes to congested infrastructure with unused potentials can considerably contribute to new solutions and a new balance between economic growth and environmental protection.

Inland Waterway Transport pays an important contribution to the **decarbonisation policy** in Europe. Prioritisation and rebalance of cargo flows thus must lead to a better use of the existing resources in a more efficient and effective way. A future approach has to concentrate on **projects that benefit the entire transport system in economical and ecological terms.**

To exploit the full potential of inland waterway transport it must dispose over optimized interfaces, also in terms of electronic information flows and transport management solutions. Intelligent Transport Systems can enhance the efficient use of infrastructure. In inland navigation concrete results have been obtained by introducing the River Information Services (RIS).

The implementation of RIS in inland navigation is considered to contribute significantly to the **efficiency of transports** carried out on waterways.

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The environmental challenges as expressed in the overall European policy can be much better addressed by making full use of environmentally friendly modes and potentials such as inland waterway transport.

Inland Shipping is the most environmentally friendly and **least polluting** mode of transport. The sector is committed to move forward on emission-low concepts by **technical innovation** in order to maintain and improve its environmentally friendly image. The benefits from inland shipping however have to be considered not only referred to emissions. The benefits are a result of the overall concept and advantages of inland shipping in terms of congestion, maintenance and use of infrastructure, accidents and other relevant elements

The principles as set out in the consultation document in general seem to be adequate and practicable. EBU supports and advocates a number of preconditions to be met within the future TEN-T discussion:

1. The TEN-T policy must be directly connected to the European transport in order to reach the overall policy aims. This will enhance the effectiveness of the network and lead to a more integrated approach as well as complementarities between the different policy area.
2. The TEN-T policy in economic terms is estimated crucial to the development of Europe. However, stimulation of the competitive position of Europe in a sustainable way needs to take on board transport and infrastructure demands. Transport and cargo volumes follow the economic development and trade patterns. A proper infrastructure is needed to guarantee the smooth transport of cargo and passengers.
3. Building largely on the existing infrastructure and making use of existing potential will lead to an efficient transport system . Together with prioritisation and rebalance of cargo flows this must lead to a better use of the existing resources in a more efficient and effective way. A concentration on projects that benefit the entire transport policy deserves support (*network optimisation*).
4. The environmental challenges as expressed in the overall European policy can be much better addressed by making full use of environmentally friendly modes and potentials such as inland waterway transport (*de-carbonisation*).

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5. The future approach has to concentrate on the **interconnectivity** of modes within the transport and logistic chain. It is important to make the best use of the existing infrastructure and modes by better integrating them. For a better integration of modes **ports** are estimated to play a major role in the TEN-T policy. Both the seaports and inland ports will increasingly contribute to the distribution of the cargo flows and the interconnectivity (*enhance overall effectiveness of the network*).
6. A review of the existing TEN-T policy must be based upon solid financial perspectives, criteria and support. This means that the necessary financial means need to be allocated at both the European and the national level to the most efficient and effective infrastructure projects. The return of investment of waterway infrastructure projects is very high (*minimisation of investment*).

2. Sources, coordination and funding framework

The navigable waterways in Europe, which mostly are existing natural rivers, dispose over capacity to absorb a much higher volume of transports. In connection with the positive effects in terms of external costs and energy efficiency a switch to inland navigation offers huge advantages. Given the scarcity of free infrastructure and the de-carbonisation goals, choices of transport modes in the future will be based more upon energy efficiency, reliability, capacity and flexibility rather than on costs and distances.

Financial sources must be canalised towards infrastructure that meets the principles of de-carbonisation, network optimisation and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the network. Taking into account the cost-benefit relation it is favourable to support waterborne transport with substantial financial means to remove the existing bottlenecks and to realise the missing links in the European waterway system.

Making the inland waterway system part of the core network is of relevance to the realisation of the aims within the European Transport policy and supporting the “Europe 2020” strategic objectives.

The listing of a number of Inland Waterway Projects in the TEN-T Prioritylist is a first positive step. These projects are of high relevance to the transnational traffic flows. As infrastructure is the backbone of transport it is in concrete terms important to properly maintain the core network

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and to **fully implement the bottlenecks and missing links as listed on the existing priority projects**

1. Rhine/Meuse– Main – Danube axis (Project nr. 18)
2. Seine-Scheldt (Project nr. 30)

Within the core network of inland waterways a number of additional bottlenecks and missing links must be supported being on the

1. East-West Corridor:

- The realisation of guaranteed water depth on the river Elbe and Oder
- The regulation and guaranteed waterdepth of the canal system in Northern Germany

2. North-South Corridor:

- Linking the Saône to the Moselle and connecting the Marseille-Mediterranean to the Moselle-Rhine-Ruhr area

The inland navigation network can absorb huge additional cargo flows at relatively low investment costs in maintenance and removal of bottlenecks as well as realisation of missing links.

3. Conclusion

1. Inland Waterways as major part of the core network are linking East and West, old and new Member States. To fully exploit the potential of the waterways – mainly existing and natural infrastructure - the necessary financial support must be increased to remove the bottlenecks and realise the missing links. At least 20 % of the TEN-T budget should be dedicated to the navigable waterway network.
2. A funding framework as considered could contribute to coordinate both the European and the national resources but must be based upon solid and fair calculation methods and principals taking into account the best cost-benefit relations.
3. To reach the de-carbonisation objectives, prioritisation and rebalance of cargo flows must lead to a better use of the existing resources in a more efficient and effective way. ITS can enhance the efficient use of infrastructure as has been demonstrated by the implementation of River Information Services (RIS).

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The legal and institutional framework as set out in the document is certainly providing a proper basis for the future development of the TEN-T. It however will not replace the political choices that have to be taken at Community and national level in order to cope with the future transport demands.

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The European Barge Union EBU U represents the interest of inland navigation on a pan European level and deals with all questions, arising out of the future development of the inland navigation industry and inland waterway transport.

To realise this aim EBU is active in the field of

- the development of the European transport policy
- the improvement of the economic position of inland navigation
- the structured cooperation with national and international institutions
- the exchange of information and experience between the parties involved

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