



Newsletter



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TODAY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION RELEASED ITS WHITE PAPER:

The inland navigation agrees on target, but wants more ambitious measures

The inland navigation sector agrees on target, but wants more ambitious measures. The inland waterway transport sector read the new white paper on competitive and resource-efficient transport with great interest. The European Barge Union (EBU), the European Skippers Organisation (ESO) and Inland Navigation Europe (INE) are pleased with the target of -60% emissions by 2050, but nonetheless feel that the Commission document could have been much more ambitious with regards to the decarbonisation target for transport.

More goods and passengers on the inland waterways is indeed the only way to emit less carbon from transport and to relieve saturated land transport networks, while the exemplary resource efficiency of the sector provides a safe investment against soaring energy prices. However, the Commission's modal shift goals for rail and waterborne transport are limited to distances over 300km. This is despite the fact that the growing congestion problem is concentrated on shorter distances and this is exactly where the bulk of inland waterway transport is taking place. Since it is important for sustainable mobility that busy roads in the economic core areas of the EU are relieved, the inland navigation sector wants to hear that those actors who shift to water under the 300km threshold will also be supported by EU policy.

To shift to low-carbon and congestion-free inland waterway transport, a fully functional multi-modal trans-European core network should not only connect seaports to the inland waterway system. It should also address the investment backlog in waterway infrastructure and connect inland ports which are the intra-European nodes connecting important cities and industrial centres via water. The inland navigation sector looks forward to a new trans-European network design which can generate traffic in a sustainable way. EU financing must prioritise resource-efficient and congestion-free transport infrastructure.

Finally, the inland navigation sector is happy to see the preparation work of a new EU framework for inland waterway transport confirmed. Addressing the existing market and governance failures as well as providing an appropriate budget for switching to alternative fuels are necessary to maintain the performance of inland waterway transport and its important contribution to the decarbonisation target. EBU, ESO and INE look forward to working together with the Commission on an ambitious inland navigation policy. The European Barge Union will organize on 4 May in Brussels its annual seminar with central focus on a future-oriented inland navigation policy.

The following documents are available under **European Commission Mobility and Transport**:

Press release :Transport 2050: Commission outlines ambitious plan to increase mobility and reduce emissions

The White Paper

Commission staff working document accompanying the White Paper

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