



INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT EVENT 2015 3 March 2015 Brussels

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“POTENTIAL OF IWT AS SUSTAINABLE CARRIER OF FREIGHT AND PASSENGERS”

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Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen!

On the 1st January Latvia took over the rotating Council Presidency of the EU for 6 months. For Latvia it is a challenging and dynamic period.

The Latvian Presidency in its work is focused on three overarching priorities for the European Union: Competitive Europe, Digital Europe and Engaged Europe.

Although Latvia does not have inland waterways, we see that this industry is of great importance for the future development of balanced and sustainable EU transport and logistic chain. We believe Inland waterway transport is one of those transport segments which has a potential and a capacity to build up an impelling moment necessary to steer towards sustainable, competitive and linked EU transport network.

In the past years the European transport policy introduced the new frame for the Trans-European Networks and launched an action programme as next step to support inland navigation – so called NAIADES II package.

Latvia is committed to work actively to facilitate and materialize the advantages of inland navigation within the context of this new framework.

We are convinced that inland waterway transport can play stronger role for whole Europe as soon as the necessary conditions are set, in particular a level playing field in the form of harmonized technical requirements for inland waterway vessels.

With the newly elected European Parliament and the new Commission and in close cooperation with EU Member States we are working on to advance the existing legislative initiatives.

With this in mind in January Latvian Presidency has already started discussions in the Council working party level on the Proposal for a **Directive laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels** and we are committed to work actively with aim to reach a general approach in June's Transport Council.

There is one very important element of this proposal worth mentioning - creation of the CESNI-Committee for technical standards intended to be hosted by the Central Commission for the Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR). This step is important one and will allow separating the rules that refer to decision-making from those of more procedural or technical nature thus creating a framework for maintaining uniform common technical standards for all ships engaged in inland navigation on the EU inland



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waterways. In the view of the Presidency progress on CESNI issue is important to effectively proceed with the proposal for the Directive laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels.

The European Council in the last December has decided on a very ambitious goal to setting up a European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) so called Junckers Plan. Mid-January this year the Commission adopted the legislative proposal for the EFSI, which is the essence of Juncker's Investment Plan. For the time being the Presidency's approach to leave the proposal on the proportion between Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) regulation and Horizon 2020 unchanged was broadly supported by Member States.

Some Member States had concerns regarding individual budget lines, yet we are of the opinion that opening negotiations on various budget lines would certainly delay the progress significantly and put at risk current political commitments with no guarantee of reaching an agreement. Adoption of general approach is foreseen for next ECOFIN Council.

2015 Annual Growth Survey identifies transport as one of key sectors with particular emphasis on creating the single market. Within the common TEN-T network the heart of discussions will focus on the development, implementation and financing of the TEN-T transport network infrastructure. In this context allow me to inform you that the next TEN-T Days will take place in Riga on the 22nd and 23rd of June.

In respect to the European Commission proposal for a **regulation on requirements relating to emission limits and type-approval for internal combustion engines for non-road mobile machinery**, Latvian Presidency is of the opinion, that this is an important proposal which seeks to protect human health, environment and to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market for engines in non-road mobile machinery. Furthermore, objectives of the proposal are in line with the European Union's air quality policy.

Work on this proposal has already started in the Council under the Italian Presidency. Our intention as Presidency is to continue examination intensively with a view to achieve progress in the Council.

Nevertheless, we have already identified some key issues, like inland waterway vessels, replacement of engines and delegated acts that might impact on reaching fast progress in the Council. But Latvian Presidency will certainly give proposal the attention it demands.

I would like to thank European Barge Union for the invitation to the Inland waterway Transport Event.

Thank you for attention!