

Seminar EBU 2012

10th Anniversary EBU

Sailing ahead –

17 January, Palais du Rhin, Strasbourg

Address of Roland Hoerner, President of EFIP and Managing Director of the Port of Mannheim

Dear Mr Vice President Kallas, (if already present),

Dear Mr President,

Dear Mr Secretary General of the Rhine Commission,

Dear Mr Paquet,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

It is an honour for me to be here and celebrate with you the 10th anniversary of EBU in this wonderful and historic setting of the Palais du Rhin.

It is wonderful to see how an organisation can build up visibility, credibility in only 10 years time. Congratulations for EBU and its members. But if EBU has achieved in being prominently present as stakeholder and to be a serious partner in European policy making, it is certainly thanks to the work of its dynamic and dedicated Secretary General, Mrs Hacksteiner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Very rightly the European barge owners focus this conference on quality of infrastructure. They are the users, they know as no other, how important good navigable inland waterways and well equipped and efficient inland ports are for enhancing the role of inland waterway transport in the European Union.

During the last two years EFIP has been following very closely the review of Europe's infrastructure policy. And let it be clear, this review is very important for us, this review is needed.

For the first time, inland ports are being considered as a serious player in the co-modal transport chain. We are present in the maps, both comprehensive and core. We believe the criteria for identifying ports as comprehensive or core are balanced and fair. Of course it would be nice to know exactly who is in, who not. So please, Mr Paquet, provide us with clear lists.

Moreover this review is an extremely important step in closing the infrastructure gap that exists between east and west.

But we are not yet there.

We need more clarity, not only on the status of our different ports in the network, but also on the role inland ports are to play in the multimodal corridors. We also need to strengthen the multimodality throughout the implementation. We have to look in that respect very carefully at definitions, governance,... foreseen in the proposals.

But we are confident that the Commission shares our ambition and that we can count on the Commission for further improving these proposals.

The problem at this moment will be to convince our national governments who (some more than others...), to our regret, believe that the way out of the crisis is the way out of Europe, or out of an "ambitious Europe". When it comes to transport infrastructure, they tend to believe that by solving the bottlenecks "only in their back yard" they will solve the transport problems that their companies, their industries are facing every day. In time of crisis, government tend to forget that a seamless European transport infrastructure network is the condition sine qua non for a successful economy.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope we can come to an ambitious European infrastructure network policy and I do hope that we will succeed in further enshrining the role of the inland ports in this co-modal network, and that we do not remain just an anchor on the TEN-T maps.

Inland waterway transport can only be successful if it is well integrated in the overall transport network; the role of inland ports as intermodal connecting points is crucial in that. It suffices to visit the port here in Strasbourg, to have a good example of a port that is fully playing this role of multimodal connecting point, combining not only inland waterway transport with road but also with rail. This is the way forward.

We therefore really hope that we can stick to the 32 billion EUR foreseen for this TEN-T policy and that we can raise the share of that budget that goes to ports and inland waterways.

Under the current financial perspectives, only 5 % of the projects is related to ports, and only 7,5% of the projects were inland waterway projects. In terms of budget, the results are even more outspoken: less than one percent of the budget spent was given to ports, only 9% was given to inland waterway projects.

Let me end with this. Today we celebrate the 10 years of EBU. Let me refer to the to the Transport White paper that came out ten years ago, more in particular to its title and say: it is **Time to decide!**

Thank you.