

# **INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT (IWT) IN AN ENLARGED EUROPE**

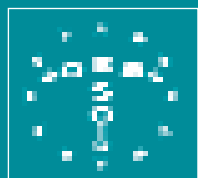
**TOP 10 PRIORITIES 2004-2010**

## Offered by

European Barge Union (EBU)



European Skippers Organisation (ESO)



## FOREWORD

Freight transport plays a key role within the policy guidelines of the European Union regarding the future developments of society, recognizing that the effect of imbalance between modes led to situations, which are at least not in favour of the Community. While Europe suffers from severe congestion problems, solutions are to be defined and implemented in order to find a new balance between transport volumes and sustainable development of society towards the background of an enlarged European Union. Measures to be taken within this model in order to improve the current situation are to be found in promoting underestimated modes of transport.

Where transport has been defined as a key area for integration of the European Union with Central and Eastern European countries, the enlargement of the European Union is a big challenge which offers advantages for the implementation of the new transport policy. Recently, a study launched by the European Commission on the current situation of the inland navigation sector and its prospects in the enlarged European Union - "PINE-Prospects of Inland Navigation within the enlarged Europe" - has been completed and submitted to the European Commission. It is stressed in this report that the common transport policy of the European Union attaches major importance to the development of inland waterways as a mode of transport. Inland Waterway Transport represents not only a genuine alternative to road transport but also a real possibility of linking up with other modes of transport.

Inland Waterway Transport has proved to pay an important contribution to the demands within the European transport policy. Moreover it is able to meet the challenges of competitiveness, security and environment, while at the same time offering capacities in terms of infrastructure and fleet. Its development therefore may contribute significantly to the attainment of transport policy objectives, in particular shifting the balance between modes of transport.

The European Associations EBU and ESO, representing the inland barging industry, aim to contribute to the debate on European Transport policy in favour of Inland Waterway Transport and therefore call for support to realize the implementation of the priority actions.

Brussels, Rotterdam, November 2004

The Presidents

## EU aims

- to improve integration of inland waterways into the European transport system
- to create favourable conditions for the future
- to encourage businesses to use the mode

## Inland Navigation claims

- to reduce European wide congestion problems
- to support sustainable development
- to offer integrated transport solutions
- to be environmentally friendly, safe and secure

## Top 10 priorities of Inland Navigation to be supported by the European Union and national governments

1. IWT policy - Masterplan for freight transport
2. Excellent Infrastructure and extended European waterway-network
3. Economic development
4. Innovation
5. Education and training
6. Safety and security
7. Social circumstances
8. Environmental investments
9. Pan European institutional cooperation
10. Harmonised rules and regulations

# 1

## IWT policy - Masterplan for freight transport

The main economic challenge facing the European Union is to realize its growth potential. Therefore it is necessary to support sustainable growth. Freight transport plays an important role within the internal market. However it faces huge problems all over Europe where mainly road congestion is threatening the economic development within the European Union. The solution is to be found in modal shift and sustainable development by facilitating the use of intelligent transport solutions. The economic development in Europe thus depends on a strong and balanced transport policy which needs to be fully recognized by European decision makers.

With the enlargement of the European Union, Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) will play an even more important role in the internal market. Many of the new Member States have navigable waterways which are used for freight transport. In the framework of the policy announced by the European Commission, IWT as such, as well as part of the intermodal transport chain, can play a major role in the integration of the new Member States and realizing their economic growth potential.

An overall review of the role and future of Inland Waterway Transport in the Enlarged European Union needs to consider the overall economic and political framework in which IWT is working. Within that overall framework, the role of IWT competing with or complementing other transport modes requires an analysis of EU transport and other policies and the instruments created to implement them.

Therefore a “Masterplan for freight transport” needs to be set up in which a strong and coherent policy marks the future development of the European transport industry.

- **European Forum for Inland Navigation involving European policy makers and inland navigation stakeholders**

## 2

### **Excellent Infrastructure extended European waterway-network and information systems**

The future of Europe lies on the water. Water and waterways play an important role in our society. In the European Union, 50 % of the population lives close to the coast and in the river valleys of the 15 largest European rivers.

The functioning of freight transport depends on an excellent infrastructure. The proper maintenance of the existing waterway infrastructure, the removal of the major bottlenecks and the realization of the missing links is a *conditio sine qua non*. To use the possibilities of waterborne transport the main industrial centers and areas must be linked by waterways.

Modern logistics management requires extensive information exchange between the supply chain partners. The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) within the processes of the inland waterway sector is not developed to the same level. However, so-called River Information Services (RIS) have emerged within Europe. The development of RIS makes inland navigation attractive to modern supply chain management and supports a.o. traffic management tasks.

- **Coherent European Master Plan for improvement and extension of waterway infrastructure**
- **European stimulation funds to remove the bottlenecks (as declared in the priority list within the revision of the TEN-T guidelines) and to realize the missing links within the pan European network**
- **Proper maintenance of waterways by national authorities**
- **Implementation of River Information Services (RIS)**

## 3

### **Economic development**

Competitiveness and innovation are essential to the economic development. Inland Waterway Transport contributes to the economic development in an enlarged Europe mainly in the new Member States, which to a large extent are linked by the waterway network. In order to maintain Europe's competitiveness the involved authorities must support and encourage alternative transport modes which can lead to a sustainable economic development in the entire European Union.

- **Level playing field in a liberalized market with fair competition**
- **Creation of favourable conditions for the further development of the industry on European level**
- **Stimulation funds to encourage alternative modes of transport**

## 4

### Innovation

New developments in Inland Waterway Transport are marked by innovation. Recent examples of best practices proved to be able to develop new concepts that can contribute to smart transport solutions both in the field of logistic concepts as well as in the field of safety and environment.

Innovation and new concepts in Inland Waterway Transport need to be encouraged and supported. Stimulation of innovation is important and necessary.

- **Creation of preconditions and incentives to assist fleet innovations**
- **Creation of framework conditions for R&D of innovative vessel technologies**

## 5

### Education and training

Inland Waterway Transport is a highly professional sector. It requires increasingly professional skills in the nautical and technical field as well as regarding security, ICT and logistics. The education needs to be adapted to the advanced demands in order to realize and encourage a future-oriented profession. Standardization of education and training concepts comparable to standards in maritime transport can contribute to further professionalization mainly in the field of transport of dangerous goods. Programmes of recruitment, education and training need to be developed to attract young people in the sector and maintain the necessary skills.

- **Standardization of training and certification**
- **European and national recruitment programmes**

## 6

### Safety and security

Most of the dangerous goods all over Europe are carried by inland navigation due to the sector's advanced safety standards. The sector has a very positive safety record and takes full responsibility towards the protection of society. ICT applications such as River Information Services RIS can further improve the safety level. Initiatives to encourage a broad introduction of ICT applications can support the implementation on board of inland vessels.

The nature of Inland Waterway Transport guarantees the most secure transport in general. In order to avoid distortion of competition security measures on a European level are welcomed on a mandatory base. Additional measures to safeguard security need to be taken strictly based on the principle of proportionality in order to maintain this natural advantage.

- **Harmonisation of technical and safety standards based on the highest existing standards**
- **Implementation of RIS on board of vessels by stimulation programmes**

## 7

### Social circumstances

Inland navigation is dominated by a large number of SME's, in many cases family owned and operated enterprises. Due to the nature of this sector work and privacy goes hand in hand. The definition of the concept of working time in this regard is of great importance. The specific circumstances and specific legislation of the Inland Waterway Sector have to be taken into account, particularly relating to the crewing of the vessels. The working time concept has to meet the needs of the modes of exploitation provided in this legislation based on the Mannheim Act.

- **Revision of working time directive taking into account specific position of inland navigation**

## Environmental investments

Economic growth, in order to be sustainable, must be environmentally sound. Inland Shipping is the most environmentally friendly mode of transport and will keep its sound record and advantage compared to other modes. The sector is committed to move forward on emission-low concepts in order to maintain its environmentally friendly image.

The benefits from inland shipping 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, maintainance and use of infrastructure, accidents and other relevant elements.

Modal shift towards inland shipping therefore does not only contribute to an improvement of the environmental performance of the transport chain but to developing a sustainable transport system in general.

The innovation towards cleaner and more efficient engines has a large positive effect on inland shipping. Because inland ships use engines comparable to road transport the effects of these innovations are comparable.

Installation of engines with reduced emission and consumption of low-emission fuel lead to a constantly positive environment performance of inland navigation when inland vessels are compared with other carriers.

- **Stimulation of the necessary investments that lead to a quicker installation of new engines in inland vessels.**

## Pan European institutional cooperation

Inland navigation on the main rivers in Europe is governed by freedom of navigation under the relevant Acts. They are considered as base of the prosperity of the countries along these rivers.

European Inland Waterway Transport is currently regulated by different regimes, which leads to disparities in legal instruments and regulations with different content.

To dissolve the disparities Inland Waterway Transport is in need of a strong institutional and political frame to guarantee the further development of this mode. The solutions is to be found in a European organization for Inland Waterway Transport with autonomic competences, disposing of the necessary means in general and financial terms to implement a coherent European Inland Waterway Transport policy.

- **Pan-European organization for Inland Waterway Transport**

## Harmonised rules and regulations

Within Europe, there are still different sets of regulations and technical requirements for Inland Waterway Transport. This situation creates unnecessary administrative and financial burdens. In order to bring about integrated legal regimes and uniform law covering Inland Waterway Transport, harmonisation of existing treaties, conventions and bilateral agreements applicable to national and international waterways is needed.

The guiding principle is a further integration of existing rules of safety and technical equipment on the basis of reciprocity based on the highest existing standards.

- **Harmonization of technical regulations**

All other modes of transport have been subject to uniform international private-law rules for decades, and clearly inland navigation, as a cross-border mode of transport par excellence, needs harmonised and uniform rules. The entry into force of international conventions is therefore necessary for IWT in order:

- to achieve European policy objectives
- to prevent the development of new inland waterway legislation in the future EU Member States and other Danube countries and thus further fragmentation of IWT law
- to complete the missing link in the international transport chain.

- **Ratification of relevant international conventions**

## EUROPEAN BARGE UNION EBU

The European Barge Union EBU was founded on 14 December 2001 by 8 national organisations representing the national inland navigation interests in six different European countries. Meanwhile national associations from new Member States of the European Union have joined. The association has its seat in Brussels, Belgium and in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

EBU represents the interests 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. Therefore EBU is actively involved in

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

## European Skippers Organisation - ESO

ESO was founded to attend to the interests of inland shipping and ship owners at European level at social economical and infrastructural domain. The foundation, gathering nine national inland shipping organisations from the main European Inland shipping countries, took place in November 1975 in Brussels, ESO is Brussels based.

ESO acts on behalf of the affiliated organisations as interlocutor with the European Commission and CCR(a.o.) and interferes with national governments as far as the interests of inland skippers in European respect is endangered or threatens to be.

Specific attention is paid to:

- harmonisation of legislation and conditions between the different European countries;
- a fair market position for ship owners and skippers towards shippers;
- level playing field, equal conditions and fair competition between the different transport modes;
- co-ordination between regional and national governments regarding infrastructure-policy, where in particular smaller infrastructure needs extra attention.
- the interest of the family owned enterprises with regard to social circumstances.

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