

## SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

### SEMINAR 2008

## FREIGHT LOGISTICS IN EUROPE TO STIMULATE WATERBORNE TRANSPORT “TOGETHER AGAINST CO<sub>2</sub>”

3 MARCH 2008 BRUSSELS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to welcome you on behalf of the **European Barge Union EBU** to our second seminar today in Brussels.

The seminar this time will be dedicated to Freight Logistics in Europe and – more specifically – how waterborne transport will be stimulated within this scope. Given the fact that inland navigation is the most environmentally friendly mode of transport, we would like to tackle the environmental challenge and – together with the decision makers at European and national level – fight the emission problem.

Before I give the floor to today's key note speakers I would like to reflect briefly on recent developments in the field of transport and freight logistics.

The European Commission has recently released its first progress report on the implementation of **NAIADES**. Meanwhile, the European Commission has also come up with its **communication on Freight Logistics**, to which the NAIADES action program is closely related. The synergies between the two action programs must seriously be taken into account when it comes to further realization of the concrete measures.

With the NAIADES communication the European Commission introduced an ambitious action program to promote and to stimulate inland waterway transport.

**It is considered positive** that the European Commission in its communication on freight logistics acknowledged that **transport is the backbone of trade and economy**.

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. Its development may therefore contribute significantly to the attainment of transport policy objectives, in particular shifting the balance between modes of transport.

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In this context, inland navigation also offers numerous possibilities in terms of innovation, growth and capacity, environmental friendliness, safety and security. Inland navigation disposes of sufficient capacities in order to absorb the increasing freight streams in Europe and to free Europe from permanent road congestion.

According to the communication on freight logistics alternative and environmentally safe modes of transport must be encouraged and better integrated into the transport systems. This brings about a sustainable balance in the transport sector that will prove to be better for the economy and environment in Europe. Taking into account the policy announced by the European Commission, inland navigation as such, as well as part of the intermodal transport chain, can play a major role in contributing to the competitiveness of the European economy.

### ***Freight transport logistics***

Inland navigation plays an important role in the intermodal transport chain. As an alternative to road transport the further development of intermodal concepts deserve full support. Choices of transport modes are often based on traditional patterns. To make full use of accessible capacities, the alternatives to the traditional transport systems are still underestimated. The improvement of awareness in this field is an important starting point and can lead to shifting to more environmentally friendly modes like inland waterway transport.

Therefore inland waterway transport is in need of better integration in the logistic chain. To realise this aim it is of high importance that existing and new ports are developed as intermodal ports. They must offer the possibility of smooth operations and handling of cargo from or on inland vessels and providing sufficient and good connections with road and rail. The efficiency of port infrastructure and excellent fairway conditions, such as sufficient height of bridges along the rivers and canals, largely determine the efficiency of intermodality and freight logistics.

### ***Infrastructure***

We welcome the introduction of the “green corridor” concept within the freight logistics communication, referring to freight transport corridors that are characterized by low impacts on the human and natural environment. Within this concept the waterborne transport model will be an essential component.

The quality of infrastructure is a key to logistics in freight transport. Optimization of the current infrastructure depends on the proper maintenance of infrastructure as well as on the removal of the major bottlenecks and the realization of the missing links.

Therefore the proposal's focus on the quality of the existing infrastructure as a key element in any approach to promote intermodality and transport logistics deserves full support. EBU advocates the improvement and proper maintenance of existing infrastructures and removal of bottlenecks according to the TEN-T list which enables an optimal use of existing capacities.

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We therefore highly appreciate Mrs. Peijs' appointment as European Coordinator for inland waterway projects. She is supposed to facilitate the realization of the inland waterway priority projects Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube (project nr. 18) and the Seine-Scheldt link (nr. 30) which are essential to the further development of the inland waterway transport.

### ***Environment***

Inland navigation is an environmentally sound mode of transport. Emission standards, fuel quality, noise protection and treatment of ship waste have always been a major concern of EBU. Currently, new methods to further reducing emissions in the next decade are being discussed by ship operators, engine producers and authorities.

Inland navigation as part of the transport chain has a positive impact on the environmental performance of transport. The low CO<sub>2</sub> emission of inland vessels compared to other modes of transport, together with the recent measures to further improve the environmental performance in terms of emissions and lowering the sulphur content in fuel, contribute considerably to mitigation.

Regarding the Commission's proposal on lowering the sulphur content in fuel (COM 2007/0018) EBU welcomes the proposed time frame of 31 December 2009 in which the fuel directive is scheduled to come into effect. Contrary to the Commission's proposal, EBU advocates lowering of the sulphur content from 1000 to 10 ppm in one single step all over Europe.

Today's seminar is intended to focus on the different developments in the field of transport and logistics, against the background of the environmental challenges, as referred to in my brief introduction.

As the European Commission observed in its first progress report on NAIADES, the political perception of inland waterway transport has been strengthened. Consequently, we must continue this path in order to fully exploit the possibilities that waterborne transport offers within the freight logistics agenda.

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**Meeting the challenges of the growing freight transport in Europe inland waterway transport is offering sustainable solutions.**

**We are ready for it!**

**Therefore we expect the right decisions without delay!**

Brussels, 3 March 2007

The European Barge Union EBU is the European association of barge owners and barge operations in which the national inland navigation interests of eight different European countries are represented. The association has its seat in Brussels and in Rotterdam.

EBU 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 deals with

- 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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