

PRESS RELEASE

COVID 19

INLAND NAVIGATION IS DELIVERING VITAL SERVICES TO THE EUROPEAN CITIZENS AND ECONOMY. THE FREE MOVEMENT OF VESSELS AND CREW MEMBERS MUST BE GUARANTEED BY MEMBER STATES IN ORDER TO KEEP ESSENTIAL FREIGHT FLOWS RUNNING.

CRUISING AND DAY TRIP INDUSTRY FULLY COLLAPSED.

Inland waterway transport is vital for supply of the European society and economy. It is therefore crucial to guarantee free movement of goods and crew members in Europe. So far the international carriage of goods is not endangered and IWT is still able to provide its services. The passenger- and cruising sector however meanwhile has fully collapsed.

In other segments the impact will have severe consequences as well. Problems however are imposed on the free movement of crew members of different nationalities on board of inland vessels which might have a serious impact on the functioning of the distribution of vital goods including pharmaceutical products to the society. Crew members and their employers are faced with control- and quarantine measures which no longer allow a proper functioning of staffing the sector.

EBU therefore calls upon all EU Member States to guarantee - in line with the **guidelines of the European Commission (C2020-1753 final)** - an unhampered safe movement of transport workers including crew members to ensure adequate movement of goods and essential staff.

To cope with the restrictions imposed by the COVID 19 measures the sector needs flexibility with regard to certain regulatory frameworks such as the Working Time Directive and the crewing regulations.

The European Union and the River Commissions are requested to support the sector by

1. Guaranteeing the free movement of crew members in line with the guidelines of the European commission including crew members from non-EU countries
2. Flexibility in the application of the working time directive and the crewing regulations allowing deviations to enable barge owners and operators to carry out their planned voyages.
3. No enforcement of these regulations or penalties if due to this specific situations the requirements are not fulfilled.

EBU's President Paul Goris welcomes the outcome of yesterday's informal high-level videoconference of EU Transport Ministers in which it was agreed to work closely together to minimise traffic disruptions, especially for essential freight including a clear list of actions in its intervention aimed at

protecting the proper functioning of the single market. “The inland transport sector indeed is being severely affected by national measures to contain the pandemic. We therefore call upon the Member States and the European Commission to support the sector and undertake all necessary short term steps to overcome the problems imposed. On the longer term financial compensation measures must support the sector in its revival strategy”.

Brussels, 19 March 2020

Additional information

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The European Barge Union (EBU) is the European association representing a majority of the inland navigation freight and passenger carrying industry on a Pan-European level. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators as well as (international) associations in the field of inland navigation and related areas.

EBU’s mission is to contribute to the development of a sustainable and efficient Pan-European transport system via a larger share of inland waterway transport.