

## EBU-EVENT 12 APRIL 2018 BRUSSELS

### IWT AS KEY PLAYER IN THE MULTI MODAL CHAIN

Dear Minister Wüst,

Many thanks for hosting our annual event in your Brussels' premises and addressing us with your opening speech.

We very much welcome your support of Inland Waterway Transport, knowing that it is of key importance in your country. Following this first exchange we will be pleased to continue the dialogue not only via our national member association BDB but also directly from EBU side with you.

Dear Mister Hololei, Dear Mr. Wehrmann,

Thank you very much for accepting our invitation and sharing your views on the development of Inland Waterway Transport with us.

We welcome the close and increased cooperation between the two institutions represented by you which is in the interest of the industry.

With regard to the German priorities it is encouraging that you together with the industry are working on a Master Plan to enhance the competitiveness of inland navigation in order to increase its modal share. Besides we welcome the announced incentive schemes to support the modernisation and innovation of the fleet and the improvement of the infrastructure.

All these aspects are very much in line with our priorities on which I would like to elaborate a bit more.

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## MULTIMODALITY

In line with the declared Year of Multimodality we dedicated our annual event to this topic.

Disposing over 40.000 km of navigable waterways and over 250 inland ports Inland Waterway Transport IWT carries some 550 million t of goods a year and is of increasing importance in the field of cruising and passenger transport. Contrary to the congested roads the network of European waterways still disposes over free capacity, offering a huge modal shift potential. As such IWT is a crucial player in the multimodal transport chain. As environmentally friendly mode of transport it substantially contributes to the European and global sustainability goals.

In this respect we welcome the Commission's initiative to amend the **Combined Transport Directive** which is the only legal instrument at Union level to incentivise the shift from road freight to lower emission transport modes such as inland waterway transport. The objective of the initiative is to further increase the competitiveness of combined transport compared to long-distance road freight transport which should reduce the share of transport externalities from freight transport and thus directly contribute to sustainability goals as laid down in EU policies as well as COP 21. It is addressing mainly the container sector which is of increasing importance in the field of Inland Waterway Transport.

Unfortunately combined transport mainly is perceived as a combination of road/rail which is reflected the proposed amendment by non referring to NAIADES II in the overview of existing policies as well as an unequal treatment when it comes to incentives. We thus see room for improvement of this initiative which is not really tailored to the needs of our sector. Given its objectives it is essential to repair these shortcomings and focus on the broader scope from the very beginning by pointing out the potential and benefits and to create a level playing field for inland waterway transport.

It also addresses all players in the multimodal transport chain from shippers to port authorities and operators. Congestion in several seaports today is one of the major challenges to offer inland waterway transport the same treatment as maritime and thus fully tap its potential.

## DIGITALISATION

An important part of multimodality is digitalisation of transport. Within the Digital Transport and Logistics Forum (DTLF) the European Commission has launched a.o. the discussion regarding the electronic freight transport documents for which it opened a **public consultation**. As DTLF member EBU has been involved in the discussions and meetings so far.

EBU welcomes the initiative to establish a Framework legislative EU act establishing the obligation for

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Member State authorities to accept transport related information required for verification of regulatory compliance provided in electronic format .

**From the IWT sector's point of view the scope of the Framework legislative act however should be restricted to the B2A level, covering all documents related to the carriage of goods, mainly for the purposes of reduction of administrative burdens (including the withdrawal of EEC Council Regulation No 11/1960 (discrimination in transport rates and conditions)**

**and under the conditions of:**

- Only-once reporting and sharing of information within the entire multimodal transport chain
- Data protection: access to data by authorised parties only very crucial and critical
- Alignment of such legislative act with the DINA-Digital Inland Navigation Agenda exercise and interface between the two initiatives.

### **Vision 2030 and Inland Waterway & Ports declaration**

In a coalition with our partners from inland navigation and ports we released a declaration highlighting the common vision towards 2030. We are convinced that green, smart and congestion-free transport and logistics will only be a reality tomorrow if they can build on a solid policy strategy supported by sufficient and effective implementation tools. In this, our focus lies on the need of **coordination, investment, legislation and innovation**.

Where we as sector do have challenges in the various areas we count on the support by the various decision makers, both on the European Commission as well as Member States side.

Let me briefly zoom in a view of these aspects.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE - MORE EU BUDGET FOR TRANSPORT**

75% of inland waterway transport is cross-border - seamless infrastructure is essential for green & smart services as part of the EU decarbonisation strategy

- ☐ public investment plans to create bottleneck-free EU waterways amount to 15 billion.
- ☐ this requires a long-term and stable EU investment framework to create good navigation status and

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boost greening and digitalisation

☐ EU grants are a vital ingredient to enhance investments  
with a high EU added value and strong socio-  
economic return

Infrastructure remains the backbone of our industry. Due to budget restraints at Member State level in the past years infrastructure has been neglected in various regions, leading to badly maintained waterways in Europe. Properly maintained infrastructure without bottlenecks and missing links are crucial for the level of service of the sector on which huge industries are depending. With its TEN-T concept the Commission succeeded in tackling this problem to a certain extent, however we all know that the means dedicated to its financial instrument, the Connecting Europe Facility CEF, are much too low to solve all bottlenecks and missing links of cross border importance. In the past year the preparations for a new Multi Financial Framework started. EBU in a coalition with stakeholders started to prepare the lobby for MoreEUBudget4Transport which was firstly presented at the TEN-T days in Tallinn. At the moment we are preparing the Ljubljana Declaration which will be offered to the Ministers and the Commissioner at the upcoming TEN-T days in Tallinn. We believe that **more EU budget for transport is the best investment plan for Europe.**

With regard to Inland Waterway Transport it remains crucial that grants will be dedicated to its infrastructure. We welcome the recent announcement by Commission officials that this will be the case also under the new Connecting Europe Facility, given the high European added value of this infrastructure.

Unfortunately we since many years face serious problems on the Danube, mainly on the common stretch between Bulgaria and Romania. After several declarations signed by the responsible ministers finally in February the dredging of the mentioned section has been commissioned and works should start in April in order to allow regular shipping in the summer.

Bulgaria in the past years failed to carry out the necessary works which lead to significant losses and increased logistics costs of our members. This lead to an average blockage of navigation on this stretch on 92 days per year and even 143 days in 2011, involving up to 168 pushers / 1250 barges / 975000 tons.

Consequently the sector is considered as unreliable by the shippers which leads to a reverse modal shift. The last is contrary to the policy aims of the European Union.

**Where today congestion costs us 130 billion € a year, with very little investments in waterway infrastructure the problem could be solved to a high extent.**

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## INNOVATION

As the previous speakers already emphasised, low emission mobility is high on the political agenda and the sector is challenged to investigate into new innovative concepts to further improve its environmental record. A number of front runners from the industry meanwhile invested into new concepts. EBU is promoting innovation in all areas involved and specifically in greening of the fleet. For this reason it advocates a voluntary renewal scheme of the fleet through the establishment of a European Inland Navigation Innovation Fund (EINIF) by combining EU and MS funding in order to avoid a standstill of innovation in the sector. Inland shipping is carbon-efficient. A 3 billion funding scheme for clean vessels would reduce external costs by 22 billion.

With the EU goal to shift freight by 30% from road to rail and water by 2030 and by 50% by 2050 to ensure sustainable mobility, the long-term goal is to turn inland waterway transport into a synchro-modal partner in the hinterland of seaports and in continental. It is crucial to improve access to innovation programmes for small and medium sized business. Greening of inland waterway transport also has to be considered a common responsibility of the entire logistics chain. From Sea-Ports, Sea-Terminal Operators, Port Authorities, Barge Operators, Inland Terminals, Shippers and <last but not least> the Industry.

The sustainability goals in various EU policies as well as the agreements reached in the Paris Conference 2015 to reduce CO2 emission is a joint challenge of all players involved in transport. Inland waterway transport as multimodal player can substantially contribute to these goals when the right framework conditions are met.

Under the new Research and Development/Innovation agenda Inland waterway transport requires an intra-modal approach as well. Inland shipping under the new framework should no longer be combined with maritime transport but have its dedicated programme.

## LABOURMARKET AND EDUCATION

Inland Waterway Transport is a people's business. Over 42.000 people are employed on board of inland vessels and are offered exciting and interesting career perspectives.

With our social partners we have succeeded in establishing a very strong social dialogue and concluding a specific **Working time agreement allowing to apply European norms on board of IWT vessels, offering workers excellent conditions.**

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The tasks Social Partners are facing now will change fundamentally as new challenges emerge rapidly in the area of automation and digitalization. The European Social Partners are committed to addressing them in an open spirit and continuing to create an Inland Waterway Transport sector offering attractive career perspectives.

#### *Professional qualifications*

We welcome the last year adopted directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation which is intended to increase workers mobility in the sector. EBU in fact together with its Social partners laid the basis for this proposal by initiating the harmonisation of competencies required for crew members working on management level and operational level of a vessel. The new regulation should contribute to attracting and keeping more qualified and young people to the sector. We will continue to focus on the labour market and cooperate with educational institutions to train and attract young people, a major concern of our sector.

#### *Social security:*

The Social Partners in Inland Waterway Transport besides are in need to have a clear frame for determining the applicable social security law. We count on the European Commission to initiate a single social security rule for international transport in all EU Member States with navigable waterways. According to the social partners the deciding factor in determining the social security legislation should be the vessel operator's seat. The experiences with the application of this principle in Rhine navigation in the last decades have been overwhelmingly positive and should be followed.

## **COOPERATION**

Last year we succeeded to enforce the cooperation with our sister organisation ESO by establishing the **European Inland Waterway Transport Platform**. This platform puts an additional layer on top of the two associations representing the inland navigation industry at Union level and aims to strongly contribute to all important policy and technical areas of importance to the sector. We consider this cooperation as crucial in strengthening the inland waterway transport sector in the future and playing an even more important role in the entire logistics chain.

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## CONCLUSION

Inland Waterway Transport is the fastest grower after road transport. As emphasised in our Vision we aim to keep it growing with

- an ambitious Inland waterways & ports agenda for Europe with effective actions towards 2030 as successor to the NAIADES II action plan
- strong cooperation between the inland waterway institutions and creation of a knowledge platform and a permanent basis for CESNI
- and integration of inland waterway transport in all relevant EU cross-sectoral policies to maximise various synergies

for which I count on your support.

Paul Goris, President  
12 April 2018

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