



## COVID 19

### REQUESTED SUPPORT MEASURES BY THE IWT SECTOR TO OVERCOME THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND TO DELIVER THE GREEN DEAL

**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 and to support the sector in its recovery after COVID-19.**

So far the international carriage of goods is not endangered and IWT remains providing its services. The passenger- and cruising sector however already at the beginning of COVID-19 fully collapsed and the other segments are heavily affected by the COVID crisis. This is equally the case in the River Sea Shipping area.

The IWT sector is committed to protect the health and welfare of its crew members and is engaged in finding appropriate solutions regarding the safe changes of crew. EBU and ESU therefore welcome the **Green Lane communication of the European Commission (C2020-1753 final) – and its communication on the implementation of the Green Lanes under the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services (C2020-1897 final)** which call upon EU Member States to guarantee an unhampered safe movement of crew members to ensure adequate movement of goods and essential staff. EBU and ESO equally welcome the Resolution of the CCNR to support the sector in overcoming this crisis as well as all efforts undertaken by the Danube Commission.

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

#### **Effect of COVID on the sector and the Green Deal**

The COVID-19 crisis is expected to have a much longer impact on the sector than strictly limited to the health crisis. After the collapse of the passenger shipping (day trip and cruising) industry already at the very beginning meanwhile also the other segments are heavily affected by COVID leading to a new economic crisis in the sector.

To mitigate the negative impact on the sector an **EU wide recovery strategy** is needed to **overcome the economic crisis** and to keep up with the future European policies, in particular the Green Deal.

The IWT sector welcomes the European Commission's Green Deal which aims to reduce transport emissions by shifting a substantial part of the freight carried by road to inland waterway transport (IWT) and rail. IWT has a huge modal shift potential on the entire European network of waterways and already today has very low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions compared to road. It can substantially contribute to deliver the Green Deal.



The Green Deal however must take into account the huge impact of the crisis on the sector. The primarily by small and medium sized businesses dominated sector will need the support of the European Commission and the EU member states to mitigate any long-term repercussions from the pandemic.

**EBU and ESO therefore propose the following measures which contribute equally to the realisation of the Green Deal and the recovery of the sector after the crisis**

**fleet**

- Stimulation and support of the sector in its energy transition and innovation efforts by means of **funding** of innovative solutions out of an **EU recovery fund and national funding programs**
- Unbureaucratic approval of notifications of national support schemes with regard to fleet innovation
- Temporarily suspension or softening of regulations that are economically difficult to cope with and hamper the speedy recovery of the sector
- Review of the priorities of the work program related to the technical standards

**infrastructure**

- Strengthening the existing support and means for infrastructure works on the European network of waterways to guarantee the reliability of IWT
- Guaranteeing the unhampered availability of waterways as vital infrastructure in line with the TEN-T regulation
- Guaranteeing sufficient mooring and berth places on the EU network of waterways in particular in densely traffic areas such as the river Rhine

**Social**

- Protection of the health and safety of crew members by allowing temporary flexibility in the application of the working time directive and the crewing regulations
- Guaranteeing the unhampered change of crew members in terminals and ports

**The sector calls upon**

- **the European Commission to support the industry by dedicated measures and funding in these areas.**
- **the Member States to allocate a specific COVID-19 recovery fund as part of the new MFF and to submit national funding schemes for the realisation of the energy transition of the sector and the modal shift as foreseen in the Green Deal.**
- **the River Commissions to support the above measures.**

The sector itself is looking into the possibilities of using means of the so called reserve fund for **financial emergency aid** in order to support the barge owners and operators to overcome the crisis.

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The European Barge Union (EBU) is the European association representing 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, river-seashipping and related areas.

The European Skippers Organisation is the voice of the independent Inland Waterway Transport entrepreneurs. ESO looks after the interests of the barge owners at European level

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

[INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT – RIVERS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO DELIVER.](#)