



JOINT STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN INLAND NAVIGATION SECTOR ON THE FORTHCOMING EU STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE AND SMART MOBILITY

Inland Waterway Transport pays an important contribution to deliver the future policy and mobility goals.

The Communication on the European Green Deal (EGD) announced that the Commission would adopt a strategy for sustainable and smart mobility in 2020. A key objective is to deliver a 90% reduction in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 to support the EU's aim to become the first climate neutral continent. The Strategy should also aim to provide more affordable, accessible, healthier and cleaner transport alternatives and contribute to mitigating the impact of transport on our natural environment, including by reducing air, water and noise pollution. As part of the European Green Deal, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy will give direction to this aim and show a roadmap towards the mobility of the future. The Strategy will set a pathway for the sector master the twin green and digital transitions, building a resilient and crisis-proof transport system for generation to come.

The sector previously welcomed the European Green Deal, in particular its aims to reduce transport emissions by shifting a substantial part of the freight carried by road today to inland waterway transport (IWT) and rail. IWT disposes over free capacities on the European network of waterways and already today has very low CO₂ emissions compared to road. IWT thus substantially can contribute to realize the European Green Deal.

IWT AS ENABLER TO DELIVER THE GREEN DEAL

Inland Waterway Transport is known as an energy efficient, safe and sustainable alternative to other modes and contributes to decongesting overloaded road and rail networks for goods and people. A better integration of inland navigation into transport chains improves the efficiency of the entire European transport network. Europe's new industrial future and circular economy heavily relies on inland waterway transport as a transport mode.

By shifting higher volumes to inland waterway transport, it can substantially contribute to realise the European Green Deal. The IWT is prepared to take over much higher volumes and to substantially increase its share in the coming years.

COVID-19 AND RECOVERY STRATEGY

Inland waterway transport in the past months seriously was affected by the **COVID-19 pandemic**. The socioeconomic impact of the crisis is vast and will have a long-term impact on the sector. As one of the essential and vital sectors for society and industry, inland waterway transport continued its services during the pandemic as much as possible. At the same time inland waterway transport is in full transition to attract new market segments and adapt to climate change. This requires a lot of flexibility, creativity and financial effort from the sector. On top of this, the pandemic led the passenger sector (day trip and cruising) into a full collapse in a couple of days and it is estimated that freight activities will be heavily affected. A possible reduction of transport activity of at least 25 % is estimated, based on GDP forecasts for the EU for 2020, and by comparing the drop in GDP and in goods transport during the financial crisis in 2009 with the GDP forecast for 2020.

The recent developments certainly will lead to a paradigm shift. Society and industry will have to face the impact of the pandemic in relation to the objectives of the Green Deal and climate change and take responsibility in each part of the chain. Decision makers are expected to facilitate this development with appropriate and long-term oriented measures.

The European Council in its conclusions of 21 July on the **RECOVERY PLAN AND MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK (MFF) FOR 2021-2027** acknowledged that the COVID-19 crisis presents Europe with a challenge of historic proportions and therefore adopted a financial recovery plan with an emphasise to mitigate the socio-economic damage.

The IWT sector welcomes these conclusions however expresses its serious concerns regarding the cut in the CEF budget which is considered an important milestone of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

ROLE OF IWT TO DELIVER THE EU STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE AND SMART MOBILITY

The IWT sector strongly supports the aim of a new EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility. Sustainability and a focus on modes that deliver these goals in line with the EGD is a prerequisite for future mobility.

To successfully address these challenges together with climate change and fulfil Europe's transport related, economic, environmental and societal goals **the EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility should address the following challenges**

1. **MOVING MORE TRANSPORT TO INLAND WATERWAYS – Creating smart, safe and sustainable mobility** by making inland waterway infrastructure and shipping fit-for-future and by integrating inland navigation into multimodal mobility of people and freight so inland waterway transport unfolds its full potential. This shall ultimately lead to an increase in the modal share of inland waterway transport, a reduction of road congestion, safer and more reliable transport, quality jobs and a more sustainable transport system as a whole;

- **Accelerating the shift from road to inland waterways and increasing the share of IWT in line with the EGD by providing the right regulatory framework**
 - **Realising reliable infrastructure by**
 - allocating sufficient CEF funding for waterway infrastructure which is the best investment in future mobility
 - adapting the TEN-T guidelines to support high-quality and climate proof infrastructure by dedicated European funds which cover research as well as investment in rehabilitation, development and construction.
 - better managing the capacity of inland waterways which should lead to a reliable, safe, cost-effective and climate resilient infrastructure network. This requires an integrated water policy, in which inland navigation is fully recognised as a valuable water use.
2. **ZERO-EMISSION INLAND NAVIGATION - Contributing to Europe's zero-emission and decarbonisation ambition** embedded in a coordinated transport and energy policy to pool resources among energy and transport actors to operate on renewables and supply clean fuel to transport, households and industries. Inland navigation is ideally placed to do so, as it is most energy-efficient, a pre-requisite for decarbonised and zero-emission systems.
- **Greening the fleet** by providing sufficient funding for the path towards energy transition
 - Enabling the transition towards zero-emissions and decarbonisation of the fleet while safeguarding competitiveness and safety;
 - Ensuring the availability of alternative fuels and an adequate alternative fuel infrastructure along the European inland waterways
 - creating tax incentives, in particular by means of tax exemption, to encourage inland navigation to make the energy transition to a zero-emission sector
 - **Digitalisation**
 - using digitalisation as an instrument to support the developments towards smart and sustainable jobs, fleet and infrastructure connected to other transport modes and sectors.
3. **SUFFICIENT FUNDING AND SUPPORT - materialising the sector's potential and concretising the objectives of the Green Deal** to reduce transport emissions by shifting a substantial part of the freight carried by road today to inland waterway transport (IWT) and rail. IWT has free capacities on the European network of waterways and already today has significantly less CO₂ emissions than road transport
- **Follow up NAIADES Action Programme**

As part of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy the European Commission is expected to release a new implementation strategy backed by sufficient financial means and funding for implementation of a dedicated programme for IWT as a joint effort by



the European Commission, Member States, River Commissions, International Organisations and other stakeholders.

IWT is key to deliver the EGD. The inland navigation sector is committed to support the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council in its efforts to address the upcoming challenges and to contribute to a new **EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility**.

July 2020

ANNEX:

Inland Waterway Transport: Rivers of opportunities to deliver

http://www.ebu-uenf.org/wp-content/uploads/IWT-2633-Publication-European-IWT-Platform_FIN.pdf