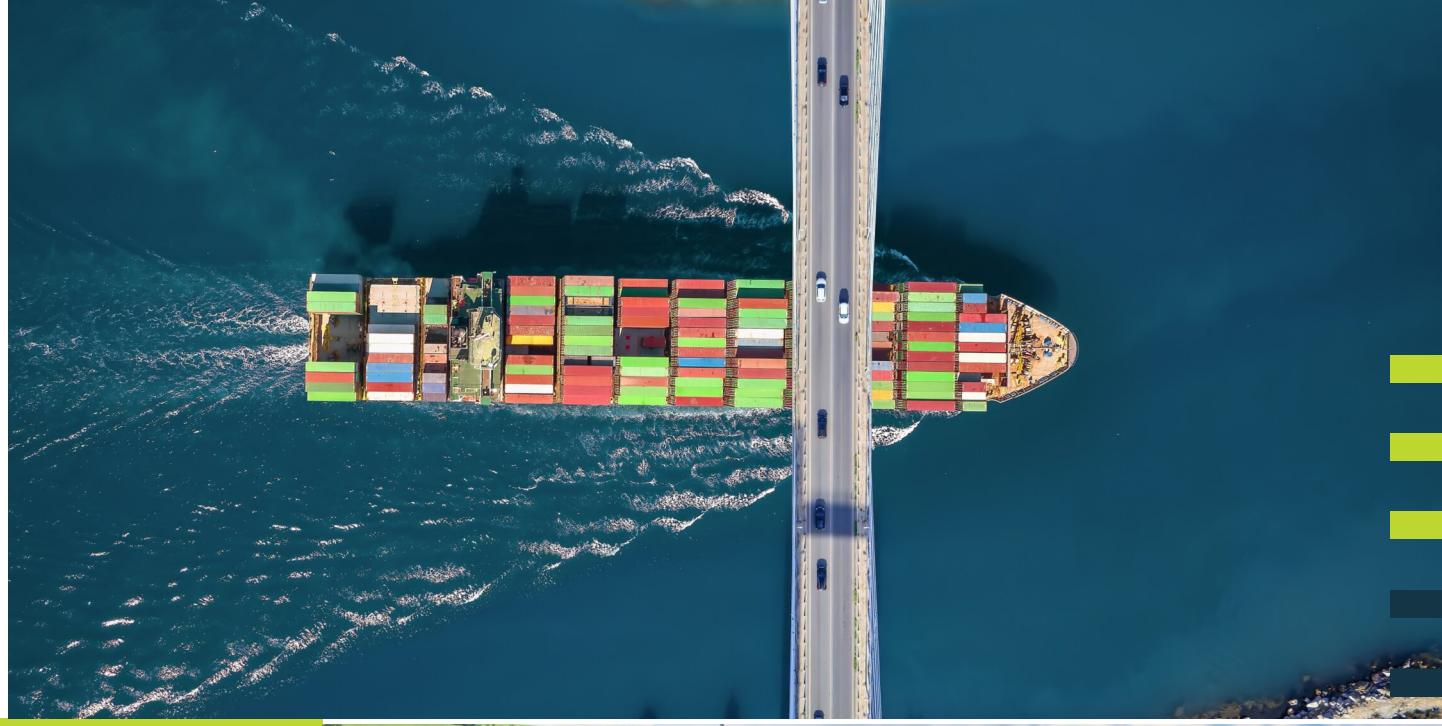
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EBU Event Brussels
02 December 2026

Inland Waterway Transport's pivotal role and challenges in shaping a competitive, sustainable and resilient European Transport and Tourism system



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Venue Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU, Av. de Cortenbergh 4-10, 1040 Brussels
Time 14:00 hrs

Inland Waterway Transport's pivotal role and challenges in **shaping a competitive, sustainable and resilient European Transport and Tourism system**

After a summer and autumn of extreme weather conditions severely impacting European industry and society, it is obvious that this requires a paradigm shift towards coping with climate change. While serious geopolitical tensions and a paradigm shift regarding the new world order are more and more effecting global economy and society, impacting all aspects of business and live in our region, Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) continued to provide its services as long as possible to supply industry and society in continuously challenging times.

At the same time river cruises, daytrip passenger vessels and ferries play a pivotal role in shaping a **more sustainable, inclusive, and resilient European tourism model.** With growing demand for eco-conscious tourism, inland passenger vessels present a low-emission, high-impact opportunity for regional development. Whether it's luxury multi-day river cruises or agile daytrip boats catering to local excursions, this sector is poised for growth—fuelled by clean propulsion technologies, rising interest in experiential travel, and revitalization of historic waterways.

To serve its clients as a reliable carrier, IWT, however, first and foremost is depending on the infrastructure network. The sector recognises the strategic imperative of **resilience of preparedness by design.** This will ensure that waterways and ports as well as relevant inland vessels, are adapted for dual-use purposes, serving both civil and defence logistical needs to enhance **European strategic mobility.**

Inland waterways and ports are of vital importance to the EU waterborne ecosystem. They function as **sustainable, resilient and strategic transport corridors and nodes for shipping and transshipment of goods, which are critical for the functioning of our economy.** In response to the European Commission's ambitious goals as announced in the Clean Industrial Deal and its subsequent Industrial Maritime Strategy and the European Ports Strategy the IWT and ports sector highlighted its vision contributing to the elaboration of a NAIADES follow up program for inland waterway transport.

The event will explore the opportunities of Inland Waterway Transport under challenging conditions and a changing environment to deliver on the EU policy goals.

Free registration: EBU Event 2026

Programme
02.12.2026 Brussels

14.00 **Registration**

14.30 **Opening and welcome**
Ambassador Franz WIRTENBERGER, Deputy Permanent Representative at the Austrian Permanent Representation to the EU

14.35 **Key note speeches by**
- Martin STAATS, President EBU, Managing Director MSG eG
- Apostolos TZITZIKOSTAS, COMMISSIONER for Sustainable Transport and Tourism, European Commission
- Jeannette BALJEU, Member of the European Parliament, TRAN Committee
- Petra LUGTENBURG, Director General Aviation and Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water management of the Netherlands

15.20 **Coffee break**

15.40 **RESILIENT INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT**
Moderator: Theresia HACKSTEINER, Secretary General EBU

Panellists:
- Torsten KLIMKE, Head of Unit Ports, Security and Inland Navigation, DG MOVE
- Markus BANGEN, CEO duisport Duisburger Hafen AG
- Didier LEANDRI, Président délégué général Entreprises fluviales de France, Board member EBU

16.40 **NEW LEADERSHIP AT EBU**
Interactive session to hand over leadership from Theresia HACKSTEINER to the new Secretary General, Lijdia PATER and Strategic Advisor Frouwke DE VRIES

17.00 - 19.00 **Farewell and Welcome Reception** honouring Secretary General Theresia HACKSTEINER and meeting with the incoming Secretary General Lijdia PATER and Strategic Advisor Frouwke DE VRIES.

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