

Press release

EU COURT OF AUDITOR'S REPORT ON INTERMODALITY CONFIRMS EBU'S CONCERNS REGARDING MODAL SHIFT: THE TRUCK CONTINUES TO RULE

The European Barge Union (EBU) endorses ECA's special report on intermodal freight transport. It confirms EBU's criticism that the EU is still far from getting freight off the road. Despite an EU support of over €1.1 billion to intermodality projects between 2014 and 2020, the truck continues to rule EU's freight transport.

The report confirms EBU's criticism that overall, EU's regulatory and financial support on intermodal freight transport was not sufficiently effective as there was still no level playing field for intermodal freight transport in the EU due to regulatory and infrastructure barriers. This means that intermodal freight transport can still not compete on equal grounds with road transport. ECA concluded that the Commission did not have a dedicated EU strategy on intermodality. Instead, intermodality was part of broader strategies on greening freight transport and modal shift.

According to the findings of the report trains and barges currently cannot compete on equal grounds with trucks and lorries. Efforts to move freight off the roads have not been effective in removing the regulatory and infrastructure barriers that penalise other modes of transport. It concludes that

- the proportion of EU freight transported by road (about 77 %) is still on the rise
- some EU rules to promote other modes of transport are outdated or counterproductive
- the European infrastructure network is not yet fit for intermodal transport.

We endorse ECA's recommendations that the Commission:

- (1) set targets regarding the modal share along the Core Network Corridors and report on them;
- (2) prepare regulatory changes to improve the competitiveness of intermodal transport;
- (3) lay the groundwork for a coordinated assessment by member states of intermodal terminal needs;
- (4) assess the modal shift potential in cost-benefit analyses for EU-funded projects

EBU's President Dr. Philippe Grulois emphasises, that *"these recommendations, together with dedicated support to shippers and logistics operators to stimulate intermodality should lead to the objective of a shift away from the road towards sustainable modes like Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) which is able to absorb much higher volumes and to deliver the ambitions of the EU Green Deal"*.

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Press contact:

Theresa Hacksteiner
Secretary General EBU
T: +31 653336366
t.hacksteiner@ebu-uenf.org

About EBU

The European Barge Union (EBU) represents the inland navigation industry in Europe. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators of 9 European inland navigation countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Romania and Switzerland). Besides it represents the interests of a number of international organisations dealing with IWT and Short Sea Shipping. www.ebu-uenf.org

Brussels Avenue Grandchamp 148, 1150 Brussels. Belgium
Rotterdam (corresponding address) Handelsplein 92, 3071 PR Rotterdam. The Netherlands
PO Box 23210 3001 KE Rotterdam. The Netherlands

T. +31 (0)6 53 33 63 66 E. info@ebu-uenf.org I. www.ebu-uenf.org
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