

Press release

GRAIN TRANSPORTS ALONG THE DANUBE ARE INCREASINGLY ENDANGERED AFTER THE RECENT BOMBINGS OF THE UKRAINIAN DANUBE PORTS RENI AND ISMAIJIL NEAR THE BORDER TO ROMANIA.

EBU IS INCREASINGLY WORRIED ABOUT THE CONTINUATION OF THE TRANSPORTS OF GRAINS AND OTHER ELEMENTARY NECESSARY MATERIALS FROM UKRAINE ON THE DANUBE.

IWT's role under the Solidarity Lane

Inland waterway transport has played and plays an important role under the EU-Ukraine **Solidarity Lanes initiative**. Regarding Ukraine's **grain and oilseed** exports alone, **more than 29 million Mt were exported via the Solidarity Lanes between May 2021 and the end of February** this year. Around **50% of this travelled via the Danube**. The Solidarity Lanes are also helping Ukraine to import what it needs: food, fuel and humanitarian aid.

After last week's bombing of the Ukrainian port and terminals infrastructure of the Reni port and the Zatoka bridge, most of the vessels have withdrawn to the Romanian waters. Yesterday's bombing of the port of Ismajil, which is situated more or less at the border with Romania, the situation will be driven to the point: Involved barge owners and operators that so far were carrying out these vital transports for the future supply of many parts of the world population, no longer can guarantee the safety of their crew on board of the vessels.

For the near future, the grain shipments therefore will be determined not only by the already existing and - given the impact of the war on UA - increasing shortage of personnel but increasingly by the acceptance of the crews to operate in these ports.

"EBU is strongly concerned about the risk of the crew members under these circumstances and condemns the devastating attacks of the Russian aggressor on this vital infrastructure. This endangers the future export of Ukrainian grain and oilseed. In particular with the current harvest ahead this could have a huge impact on the food supply on the world market" Philippe Grulois, EBU's president emphasises.

The Danube, which is able to absorb much higher volumes of transports on the river, is supposed to support the European Union and Ukraine under the Solidarity Lane. The involved barge owners remain determined to play their role in the support of Ukraine under this very difficult situation. EBU calls upon the European Commission to mitigate the involved risks as much as possible and to undertake all measures to safeguard the safety of the crew members, carrying out this vital task. In particular the European Commission is expected to take over all insurance covers under the current situation and to solve the still hampering administrative blockades (unnecessary phyto sanitarian, veterinarian and custom checks).

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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

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