

## Newsletter EBU event 21 June 2021



The European Barge Union (EBU) wants to highlight in this newsletter the following topics:

- [Hybrid EBU Event 21 June 2021](#)
- [Video of the event](#)

### EBU EVENT 21 JUNE 2021:



## **Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) key to deliver REEN DEAL and contribute to the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy**

Some 200 participants joined the EBU 2021 hybrid event, at which the hosts for the first time after the COVID 19 lockdown welcomed representatives of the European institutions, river commissions, industry representatives and stake holders in Brussels.

### **Commissioner Valean announces ambitious actions to support IWT**



In their key note speeches both Commissioner for Transport **Adina Valean** ([video](#)) and Director General of DG MOVE, **Henrik Hololei** ([speech](#)), pointed to the very important role of IWT in the framework of the recent EU policies. In acknowledging the high modal shift potential they emphasised that even though inland navigation is one of the most CO2 efficient modes per transported tonnes of goods, one of the big challenges for the sector is to move further towards the zero emissions vessels. In its Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (SSMS) the Commission seeks to increase the share of Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) by 25 % by 2030 and by 50 % by 2050. “The Commission will put forward an ambitious action plan, NAIADES 3, to focus on these targets” Commissioner Valean announced in her speech. NAIADES 3 will look to future challenges and opportunities meaning that the Commission is working on a busy agenda for IWT in the coming years.

### **Support for IWT from the European Parliament**



MEP **Caroline Nagtegaal** in her key note [speech](#) highlighted the important potential of IWT. As the author of an own initiative report of the TRAN Committee she calls upon the European Commission to shift much higher volumes to the inland waterways. In the attempt of the sector towards energy transition she calls for availability of alternative fuels and financial support for the barge owners and operators in their innovation efforts for which a collective push in the right direction is needed.

MEP Marian-Jean Marinescu criticised the lack of political will and investments so far in favour of IWT. He pointed to the need for a change of approach to fully tap the potential of inland waterway transport. In particular with regard to the Danube navigation where a lack of investments in the waterway infrastructure in the past years led to a detrimental decline of volumes carried on this important European waterway.

### **Call for right framework conditions**



EBU's President **Paul Goris** in his [speech](#) emphasised that the sector is supporting the objectives of the Green Deal and awaiting the announced NAIADES 3 action plan. "IWT is prepared to take the necessary steps towards

zero emission and to take over much higher volumes of freight on the waterways if the right framework conditions are met” he stated. That means

- more investment in infrastructure by the Member States and much more funding out of CEF for waterways
- an increased share of Inland waterway transport by a full integration in the multimodal chain, creating the right regulatory framework and correcting imbalances such as the long lasting port congestion
- Supporting the energy transition of the sector via tailor made funding for the large scale deployment of green technologies for the fleet, reliable alternative fuels and digitalisation”

Both Director General **Henrik Hololei** and **Daniel Mes**, member of the cabinet of Commissioner Timmermans of DG CLIMA confirmed to be well aware of the specificities of the sector that needs a tailor-made approach. For this purpose financial opportunities should be facilitated by public authorities at regional and national levels, by the river commissions, as well as at EU level to make the business case.



**Panel members focus on innovation needs of the sector and modal shift towards IWT**



According to Bruno Georges, Secretary General of the Central Commission of the Navigation on the Rhine, the greening is to be considered as existential challenge of the sector. Therefore actions are needed, reason why his organisation commissioned studies to elaborate the support with regard to financing and funding the transition of the European fleet. The findings of these studies led to the conclusion that the transition of the fleet, an ongoing process in the coming decades, will impose high costs on the sector, which requires funding support and new financial instruments.

Friedrich Lehr, President of the European Federation of Inland Ports EFIP, emphasised the important role of inland ports as facilitators of an increased modal share of IWT and the greening of the sector. Inland ports are boosting green transport and acting as true intermodal transport networks by the introduction of an alternative fuel infrastructure and connectivity to other modes.



Finally, Heinrich Kerstgens and Martin Staats as sector representatives, pointed to the need to act now on the environmental and climate change challenges. The low water levels which in the past years led to a lack of reliability of the sector. The sector itself is coping with the environmental challenges by designing new vessels that cope with low water situations and are sailing almost on zero emission.

To increase the modal share much higher investments in infrastructure are needed, which remains the backbone of transport. The sector needs planning certainty for infrastructure works in order to carry out the necessary renewal and maintenance works on the European waterways. Although fully accepting that these works have to be undertaken in respecting all ecological measures Mr. Staats expressed his concerns that the Commission announced an

infringement procedure on Germany in its effort to speed up the implementation of its delayed infrastructure projects. Finally he called upon the Commission to take regulatory measures in order to realise the intended modal share of IWT.



## VIDEO

Here you can watch the video of the event



**Ebu hybrid event 21 June 2021**

Downloadlink:

<https://vimeo.com/user116563587/download/568856711/06655dd3e9>



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