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THE INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT SECTOR WELCOMES THE STRENGTHENING OF INLAND WATERWAYS AND THE SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE MODES IN THE TEN-T REVISION

The Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) sector, represented by EBU, ESO and the IWT Platform, welcomes the Commission proposal setting out the new guidelines for the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T), in particular the acknowledgement of the important role of Inland Waterway Transport in line with the EU Green Deal.

TEN-T supports the increase of modal share of IWT and the greening of the sector

Infrastructure is the backbone of the services and reliability of our sector. IWT thus needs a reliable, safe, cost-effective and climate resilient infrastructure network. With over 40,000 km of navigable waterways and 250 inland ports, inland waterway transport currently carries some 550 million tonnes of goods per year and is of increasing importance in the field of cruising and passenger transport. Societies and major industries in Europe are depending on a seamless supply of their goods via waterways. Contrary to the congested roads, European waterways dispose of free capacity, offering a significant modal shift potential in line with the EU Green Deal.

We therefore welcome the chosen approach by the Commission with a focus on the *“Good Navigation Status”* that should allow to address the shortcomings in the implementation of the current TEN-T guidelines and take on board climate resilience within a river basin approach. Furthermore, we are pleased that the Commission acknowledged the need for *“mooring and rest places”* as a vital component of our infrastructure.

Besides, the revision is focusing on the introduction of an alternative fuel network along the European waterways. In its energy transition, IWT is strongly depending on the availability of sufficient alternative fuels and energy supply in both sea- and inland ports and along the entire network of navigable waterways.

The European Commission also acknowledged the shortcomings in the sea ports regarding the handling capacity of the entire hinterland chain, which since many years causes huge congestion problems and costs to the IWT sector. By imposing the need for *“dedicated handling capacity for inland waterway vessels”* in the seaports, this is considered to contribute to shift more freight towards inland waterways.

Press contact:

Ms Theresia Hacksteiner, Secretary General of EBU: t.hacksteiner@ebu-uenf.org

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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 nine European inland navigation countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Romania and Switzerland). It also represents the interests of a number of international organisations dealing with IWT and Short Sea Shipping.

Website: www.ebu-uenf.org

ESO

The European Skippers Organisation is the voice of the independent Inland Waterway Transport entrepreneurs. ESO looks after the interests of the barge owners at European level with representatives from six European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, the UK and Poland).

Website: www.eso-oeb.org

European IWT Platform

As an executive body of EBU and ESO, the European IWT Platform aims at a stronger positioning of inland navigation in European and national transport policies by an intensified contribution to various governing bodies, working parties and standard setting committees like CESNI and ADN. The European IWT Platform cooperates with the European Institutions, the River Commissions, the UN ECE, as well as with national administrations and relevant stakeholders.

Website: <https://www.inlandwaterwaytransport.eu/>