

STATEMENT BY EBU PRESIDENT PAUL GORIS AT THE IWT EVENT UNDER GERMAN EU PRESIDENCY, 20 NOVEMBER 2020

Inland Waterway Transport pays an important contribution to deliver the future policy, mobility and climate goals.

The sector previously welcomed the European Green Deal, in particular its aims to reduce transport emissions by shifting a substantial part of the freight carried by road today to inland waterway transport (IWT) and rail. IWT disposes over free capacities on the European network of waterways and already today has very low CO₂ emissions compared to road. IWT thus substantially can contribute to realize the European Green Deal.

IWT AS ENABLER TO DELIVER THE GREEN DEAL

Inland Waterway Transport is known as an energy efficient, safe and sustainable alternative to other modes and contributes to decongesting overloaded road and rail networks for goods and people. A better integration of inland navigation into transport chains improves the efficiency of the entire European transport network. Europe's new industrial future and circular economy heavily relies on inland waterway transport as a transport mode.

By shifting higher volumes to inland waterway transport, it can substantially contribute to realise the European Green Deal. The IWT is prepared to take over much higher volumes and to substantially increase its share in the coming years.

COVID-19 AND RECOVERY STRATEGY

Inland waterway transport in the past months seriously was affected by the **COVID-19 pandemic**. The socioeconomic impact of the crisis is vast and will have a long-term impact on the sector. As one of the essential and vital sectors for society and industry, inland waterway transport continued its services during the pandemic as much as possible. At the same time inland waterway transport is in full transition to attract new market segments and adapt to climate change. This requires a lot of flexibility, creativity and financial effort from the sector. On top of this, the pandemic led the passenger sector (day trip and cruising) into a full collapse in a couple of days and it is estimated that freight activities, mainly in the dry bulk segment, will be heavily affected. A possible reduction of transport activity of at least 25 % is estimated, based on GDP forecasts for the EU for 2020, and by comparing the drop in GDP and in goods transport during the financial crisis in 2009 with the GDP forecast for 2020.

The recent developments certainly will lead to a paradigm shift. Society and industry will have to face the impact of the pandemic in relation to the objectives of the Green Deal and climate change and take responsibility in each part of the chain. Decision makers are expected to facilitate this development with appropriate and long-term oriented measures.

Corresponding address:

Handelsplein 92 • 3071 PR Rotterdam • The Netherlands • T +31 (0) 653336366

Email: info@ebu-uenf.org • Internet: www.ebu-uenf.org

The European Council in its conclusions of 21 July on the **RECOVERY PLAN AND MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK (MFF) FOR 2021-2027** acknowledged that the COVID-19 crisis presents Europe with a challenge of historic proportions and therefore adopted a financial recovery plan with an emphasise to mitigate the socio-economic damage.

The IWT sector welcomes these conclusions and the current agreement between Council and Parliament on the MFF.

ROLE OF IWT TO DELIVER THE EU STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE AND SMART MOBILITY

The IWT sector strongly supports the aim of a new EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility. Sustainability and a focus on modes that deliver these goals in line with the European Green Deal is a prerequisite for future mobility.

To successfully address these challenges together with climate change and fulfil Europe's transport related, economic, environmental and societal goals **the EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility should address the following topics**

1. **MOVING MORE TRANSPORT TO INLAND WATERWAYS – Creating smart, safe and sustainable mobility** by making inland waterway infrastructure and shipping fit-for-future and by integrating inland navigation into multimodal mobility of freight so inland waterway transport unfolds its full potential. More EU, regional and national programmes should be initiated stimulating concrete cooperation between the shipping sector, IWT sector, Rail sector and local logistic service providers with waterborne terminals. This shall ultimately lead to an increase in the modal share of inland waterway transport, a reduction of road congestion, safer and more reliable transport, quality jobs and a more sustainable transport system as a whole.
2. **ZERO-EMISSION INLAND NAVIGATION - Contributing to Europe's zero-emission and decarbonisation ambition** embedded in a coordinated transport and energy policy to pool resources among energy and transport actors to operate on renewables and supply clean fuel to transport, households and industries. Inland navigation is ideally placed to do so, as it is most energy-efficient, a pre-requisite for decarbonised and zero-emission systems.

STRATEGY TO REALISE THESE CHALLENGES

To materialise the benefit of IWT in line with the EU and global objectives a strategy, program and implementation instruments are needed.

Corresponding address:

Handelsplein 92 • 3071 PR Rotterdam • The Netherlands • T +31 (0) 653336366

Email: info@ebu-uenf.org • Internet: www.ebu-uenf.org

The IWT sector thus calls for a dedicated programme as a joint effort by the European Commission, Member States, River Commissions and stakeholders as a follow up of the **NAIADES PROGRAMME for 2021-2017**.

This **program should address as main pillars modal shift, zero emissions as well as people and be backed by a**

- concrete action program and
- sufficient instruments, financial means and funding for implementation of a dedicated programme for IWT as a joint effort by the European Commission, Member States, River Commissions, International Organisations and other stakeholders.

MODAL SHIFT

- **Acceleration of the modal shift from road to inland waterways and increasing the share of IWT in line with the EU Green Deal by**
 - providing the right regulatory framework and
 - funds for concrete studies
- **Realising reliable infrastructure by**
 - allocating sufficient CEF funding for waterway infrastructure and dedicated European funds which cover research as well as investment in rehabilitation, development and construction.
 - which is the best investment in future mobility
 - adapting the TEN-T guidelines including **the Good Navigation Status** and thus support high-quality and climate proof infrastructure
 - better managing the capacity of inland waterways which should lead to a reliable, safe, cost-effective and climate resilient infrastructure network. This requires an integrated water policy, in which inland navigation is fully recognised as a valuable water use.

ZERO EMISSION

- **Greening the fleet** by providing sufficient funding for the path towards energy transition
 - Enabling the transition towards zero-emissions and decarbonisation of the fleet while safeguarding competitiveness and safety;
 - goal based technical standards to encourage application of new technologies, innovation and adaptation
 - dedicated funding for broad scale deployment of the innovation given the huge societal benefit of fleet innovation in terms of emission reduction
- **Alternative energy sources**
 - Access to research programs for testing and deployment of alternative fuels
 - Tax incentives, in particular by means of tax exemption, to encourage inland navigation to make the energy transition to a zero-emission sector
 - Availability and roll out of alternative fuels on the entire system of inland waterways

Corresponding address:

Handelsplein 92 • 3071 PR Rotterdam • The Netherlands • T +31 (0) 653336366

Email: info@ebu-uenf.org • Internet: www.ebu-uenf.org

- **Digitalisation**
 - using digitalisation as an instrument to support the developments towards smart and sustainable jobs, fleet and infrastructure connected to other transport modes and sectors.

PEOPLE

People are the main asset of our sector. The IWT sector lacks qualified people and aims to attract more people to its business. Therefore we need to create an attractive work place with high social, qualification, safety and security standards.

FINALLY,

In reaction to COVID 19 the European Union has adopted the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**.

The Inland waterway sector is characterised by small and medium sized enterprises using vessels and engines with a long lifespan, for which access to funding is a barrier. Investments in new technology are very high and dedicated funding schemes for barge owners at European level are lacking.

To accelerate the development and deployment of greening solutions the IWT sector calls for a strong support out of the RECOVERY PLAN. The objective should be to come to a win/win situation in which industry recovery leads to a sustainable development.

Dear Minister Scheuer, we count on you and your colleagues to make use of this instrument for both infrastructure and vessel innovation which we consider as a unique chance to get access to dedicated funding for realizing the energy transition in the sector.

IWT is key to deliver the EGD. The inland navigation sector is committed to support the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council in its efforts to address the upcoming challenges and to contribute to a new **EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility**.

20 November 2020

The European Barge Union (EBU) is the European association representing the inland navigation freight and passenger carrying industry on a Pan-European level. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators as well as (international) associations in the field of inland navigation and related areas.

EBU's mission is to contribute to the development of a sustainable and efficient Pan-European transport system via a larger share of inland waterway transport.

www.ebu-uenf.org

Corresponding address:

Handelsplein 92 • 3071 PR Rotterdam • The Netherlands • T +31 (0) 653336366

Email: info@ebu-uenf.org • Internet: www.ebu-uenf.org