

## **EC communication on the future of transport INE statement**

**Europe's vision of green transport and logistics servicing a sustainable economy will only materialise tomorrow if we build a solid policy strategy and equip our people with effective implementation tools today. Just adding water means preparing for the future:**

### **Less congestion**

Inland waterways offer an already existing network of 38,000km with free capacity. Rivers and canals guarantee an alternative solution to the congestion problem by providing cost-effective and reliable transportation opportunities. Knowing we can move 50 truckloads on one single vessel, thereby avoiding congestion and saving fuel, we have to consider the practicalities of adding water transport as a reliable alternative to supply chains. This is made even more viable when we realise that 50% of Europeans live close to the coast and in the river valleys of the 15 largest rivers.

### **Less carbon**

Low in carbon usage and running through the heart of European cities, waterways are underutilized and underappreciated assets for sustainable distribution, regional development and living landscapes. The EU has recently adopted a climate and energy package that sets a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20%. Today's new inland shipping engines already save up to 30% on energy and CO2 which demonstrates that waterway transport is the right choice against global warming. By 2020, savings in waterway transport will have gone further up significantly thanks to ongoing investments in new solutions.

### **Oldest transport, newest technology**

No form of transport is safer than inland shipping. Barges lead the way in safe transport, especially for dangerous cargoes, with extremely high standards of inspection, training and licensing. With RIS or River Information Services, an intelligent transport system that connects ship to shore, inland waterway transport becomes even safer but also provides ample possibilities to inform logistics choices and facilitate operations in a multi-modal supply chain.

### **Green corridors through cities and landscapes**

Over 70% of Europeans live in cities with a commensurate growth in traffic, making seamless logistics a paramount concern. Traffic congestion can be addressed through city port hubs, joint warehouses and shared transportation, all of which will combine to reduce vehicles on the road, energy consumption, and carbon emissions. Waterways are particularly suited to consolidating freight flows before the last mile as they have plenty of free capacity. True, waterways are not everywhere, but they do link most of the cities where Europe's businesses and consumers are concentrated. The availability of locations for industries and transshipment centres directly located on rivers and canals is vital for viable waterway transport. Such favourable transport relations reduce expensive transshipments and pre and post haulage. The importance of business locations is a signal to policy makers that rather than giving up waterside transshipment space to residential property development, a shared use of the in-demand waterfront makes more sense.



## The water way forward

### 1. Effective & sustainable distribution solutions (infrastructure)

Remove the bottlenecks on the congestion-free waterways and upgrade connections to ports and information systems so citizens and businesses can better benefit from inland waterway transport. All this can be done with relatively limited financial resources as inland navigation has already proven it has grown more than the other modalities on less investment in the past. Between 1995 and 2005, the EU invested some EUR 800 billion in transport infrastructure but only 1% of this was invested in waterways. Despite this low amount, inland shipping has managed to grow by 14.5%, more than any other transport modality. This growth cannot continue, as a connection is only as strong as its bottlenecks, unless investment picks up.

### 2. Much more than transport (integrated policies)

The promotion of inland waterways is a win-win solution for all concerned, reducing congestion and emissions in transport and logistics whilst more return on investment is generated with integrated landscape solutions encompassing environmental protection, regional development, leisure, tourism and flood control. Developing a long-term waterway infrastructure policy that creates reliable planning conditions for all players and slashes the traditional frontiers between transport and other policies to create as many of those win-win situations as possible is a must.

### 3. High environmental standards (the stick and the carrot)

An ambitious strategy on green competitiveness requires policy makers to create reliable planning conditions for all economic players, by striking the right balance between rules and incentives that spark off a shift of investments into sustainable products and services. As small businesses often get drowned in big community funds, it is important to take account of the needs of inland shipping research and innovation by tailored instruments.

### 4. Removal of red tape and distortions (good lawmaking)

To start multi-modal transport services, businesses have to find their way through a time-consuming, complex and costly labyrinth of administrative and planning regulations. Without decreasing protection and safety levels, streamlined regulation and funding guidance should make multi-modal transport as easy as single modal transport.

### 5. A future-oriented profession (raising awareness)

New logistics developments create jobs and challenging careers. Support for a campaign on the recruitment and training of navigation personnel would attract new talent in the sector, while life-long learning ensures excellence throughout the life cycle and empowers people to meet the challenges ahead.

### 6. Sound investment climate (access to capital)

Barge owners are dynamic and flexible small businesses but investments in modern ships are much more capital-intensive than any transport means. Creating an attractive investment climate would substantially lower the current threshold for forward thinking operators and starters to renew the fleet and expand the market for innovative freight concepts. Finally, the ever postponed publication of State aid guidelines would provide authorities and operators with a clear and predictable framework for starter and innovation incentives.

**Inland Navigation Europe (INE)** is the European platform of national & regional waterway managers and promotion bureaux, established in 2000 with the support of the European Commission. INE sees major opportunities to contribute to long-term strategies for sustainable transportation by moving more goods by water in EU regions with accessible and navigable rivers and canals. To capture this business, INE members share their experience and know-how with enterprises ready to rethink their freight logistics. INE is a neutral platform without commercial interests.