



**EC Proposal for a decision amending the TEN-T guidelines**  
**EC Proposal for a regulation amending the TEN-financial framework**  
**INE statement and proposal for amendments**

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**General :**

Inland Navigation Europe has read the two Commission proposals with great interest. It fully shares its key principles of **promoting modes causing less damage to the environment in order to optimise the capacity of the trans-European network**. It is indeed necessary to give priority to infrastructure investment for railways, inland waterways, short sea shipping, intermodal operations and effective interconnections.

The Commission's proposal to enhance rail access to ports along with attaching priority to optimize the stretch Straubing-Vilshofen is a positive first step, but is far from sufficient to sustain the current positive development of inland navigation in Europe.

The EU cannot any longer postpone any important investments in inland waterways if it wants to realize its targets of forcing back road congestion and developing sustainable mobility. The budget for waterways in the total transport portfolio has been always minimal in comparison with its actual transport share on the major routes. It is impossible to replicate the success of e.g. inland navigation on the Rhine on other water routes without resolving significant missing links, deepening waterways and heighten low bridges. Industry needs these key conditions to continue to operate with success.

Just as rail and short-sea shipping, a continuous development of inland navigation and sea-river shipping requires so-called "motorways" or "corridors", i.e. an infrastructure "**quality net**" to organize seamless freight flows. The principles of non-discrimination between the modes are essential for the intermodal completion of the trans-European networks. The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament have laid down in 1996 the main missing links and bottlenecks of the European waterway infrastructure. Since then, virtually nothing happened for inland waterways, while road projects come to completion and considerable amounts are spent to solve rail interoperability problems.

With regard to the current waterway **bottlenecks**, INE calls upon the Member States and the European Parliament to support the European Commission's proposal to add "Straubing-Vilshofen" to the list of priority projects without putting aside other important and well known bottlenecks, e.g. Seine-Nord and the Maasroute, that hamper seriously an increasing use of the waterways' potential and that were laid down in the 2010 horizon for inland waterways.

Waterways must be deepened and locks must indeed be widened to enhance a smooth passage of vessels. Low bridges must be finally lifted to ensure the growth of cost-efficient container transport with 4 layers. The construction of new bridges should take sustainable container transport by barge into consideration. (see annex)

As for the **missing links**, INE insists on maintaining the horizon laid down for 2010 and puts forward as priorities to create a coherent European network:

- Maas-Rhine canal
- Integration of the Elbe-Odra-Danube network in view of enlargement of the EU.

It is important to take into account that the bottlenecks and missing links laid down in the TEN-T horizon 2010 have a **common European interest**. Although they might be situated locally, regionally or nationally, they have an impact on mobility in overall Europe. One bottleneck has a negative impact on the optimal use of the whole network.

INE also asks attention for **smaller waterways**. Although almost 50% of all goods and passenger traffic are carried on the TEN, it is clear that "highways" do not serve everyone. Small waterways feed the bigger network. Their impact should not be underestimated, given a new successful boost of smaller vessels. Therefore, it is important that Member States do not neglect, but also upgrade the quality of those waterways relevant for industry under 1350 tons.

The European Commission refers to the potentially negative **environmental impact** of new waterway projects, but studies show very clearly that the external costs caused by new waterway infrastructure projects are not higher than for other transport modes. Given the multifunctional character of waterways, it is important to take into consideration the positive environmental impact of new waterway construction with regard to the creation of green space, flora and fauna and maintenance of biodiversity. The construction of new waterways today is in full respect of wildlife and involves additional costs for creating natural riverbanks. This fact in combination with the environmentally friendly performance of waterway transport use raises no doubt about the less harmful impact of inland navigation upon society. INE therefore insists upon a scientifically neutral approach towards new projects, which examines the projects in terms of environment, positive mobility and land use planning. This should not only include the impact of the construction of the project, but also the effect of the infrastructure in use.

INE notes with surprise that the European Commission does not mention a deployment plan for the **"River Information Services (RIS)"**. Intelligent infrastructure plays also for inland navigation a significant role to optimize the capacity of existing infrastructure and to improve safety. Achieving maximum technical interoperability between systems for traffic management and information services is a priority. The Community must take up its role to ensure a coordinated deployment. INE expects the Commission to show more ambition when pointing out the needs for waterway infrastructure.

Given the long-term character of new project realization, the Commission should certainly not wait until 2004 to include more waterway projects. The proposal in the new financial regulation of border bottlenecks with candidate countries is far from sufficient. Enlargement must be prepared as from now with a strategic planning. A global, pan-European approach is necessary. Moreover, resolving border bottlenecks should not be restricted to candidate countries alone. How can we generate more traffic in an enlarged Europe, if even the bottlenecks in the EU have not been satisfactorily resolved?

When adopting the new proposals, the first candidate countries will be joining the EU. The same mistakes regarding the TEN made in the past should not be repeated in an enlarged market. First, it is impossible to accommodate international freight flows by a patchwork of national projects. Secondly, Europe cannot afford the risk of missing sustainable solutions with a major impact on positive transport growth.

Finally, Member States must take up their political and financial responsibility with regard to their commitments of 1996 (see annex) if inland navigation is to become a competitive alternative to road transport without forgetting the socioeconomic win-back effect, since finally full use will be made by the liberalized sector of the available capacity. It is the logical consequence of a policy opting for sustainable mobility. Relieving congestion, optimizing safety and fostering environmentally sound development is an investment in Europe's future. Investments in waterways cover even more public needs than mere transport needs because of their multi-functionality (agriculture, energy winning, flood management, drinking water and tourism).

In that respect, it is unacceptable that the European Commission proposes **discriminatory terms for financing** rail against waterway projects. Improving waterway infrastructure is as urgent as rail after years of insignificant investment in Europe's rivers and canals. There is enough evidence that investing in waterways results in considerable added value for both the economy and society. So, there is no objective reason for laying down discriminatory rules.

### **Proposal for amendments by INE to improve the EC proposals**

With the aim of further clarifying and improving the EC proposals and their application, Inland Navigation Europe is proposing the following key amendments to the recitals and articles, based on its comments.

## **EC PROPOSAL FOR A DECISION AMENDING THE TEN-T GUIDELINES**

### **Recital 4**

The Commission white paper on the European transport policy calls for an integrated approach combining inter alia measures to revitalize the rail sector, in particular for freight services, to promote **actively the use of inland waterways and** short sea shipping, to encourage greater complementarity between high speed rail and air transport, to promote the development of interoperable intelligent transport systems to ensure increased network efficiency and safety.

### **Recital 17**

Bulgaria, ... have concluded association and Europe agreements and applied for membership in the EU. The transport administrations of 11 of those countries, with the support of the Commission, performed a transport infrastructure needs assessment, **which is to be integrated with the TEN assessment.**

(The EU must rely for policy on one single transport assessment and GIS system. Partial solutions and duplication of efforts are a waste of scarce resources and impede a cost-efficient integrated approach.)

### **Article 1(5)**

- Modify article 11.3:

#### **The network shall:**

- **play an important role in multimodal traffic,**
- **comprise the infrastructures and the facilities allowing the integration of inland waterway with road, rail and short-sea shipping,**
- **permit access to waterways under 1350 tonnes,**
- Inland ports ...

- Modify article 11.4:

**The network shall offer users a high level of quality and safety owing to its continuity and to optimal international and cross-border use. It will therefore include the deployment of an interoperable intelligent traffic and transport system "RIS (river information system)" to optimize the capacity of existing waterway infrastructure and improve safety through traffic and transport management aiming at interoperability and interconnection with other modes and nodes. To this end, a deployment plan shall be established by the European Commission in cooperation with the Central Rhine Commission, the Danube Commission and the UN/ECE.**

**Article 1(10)**

Complete annex III

**18. Danube river improvement at Straubing-Vilshofen in Germany, at Wachau and Vienna-Bratislava stretch in Austria**

It is important to lift all barriers in this area, a solution limited to Straubing-Vilshofen will only shift the problems to some distance downwards (the problems related to the Danube in the CEECs must be tackled under the ISPA program) – Studies forecast a growth of 50% or 12 million tons transported by barge if the bottlenecks in Germany and Austria are lifted.

**21. Realization of the connection Oise and Canal Dunkirk-Scheldt (Seine Nord)**

This is the essential follow-up to the upgrading of the Oise canal and the Dunkirk-Scheldt canal planned under the multi-annual program TEN-T program 2001-06 – an upgraded waterway link between the Seine and northern Europe will lead to a triplication of the current traffic by barge, according to the studies.

**22. Improvement of the Maas route as a Vb waterway with 3.5 m water draft (Netherlands)**

Studies have shown that the North-South upgrading of the Maas route can absorb annually 25 million tons road traffic growth in the period 2010-2050. This would reduce the truck haulages with a half in the whole area.

**EC PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION AMENDING THE TEN-FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK**

**Article 5.3 - Conditions for Community aid**

(a) projects which concern cross-border **rail** bottlenecks and/or missing links located in areas where natural barriers represent obstacles to the free circulation of goods and passengers and which strongly contribute to the reduction of imbalance between modes of transport and to the improvement of **rail** transport within the trans-European transport network as established by Decision No. 1692/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, and

(b) other projects which concern bottlenecks at borders, **inter alia** with candidate countries, where added value is particularly high in terms of safety improvement and congestion reduction, and

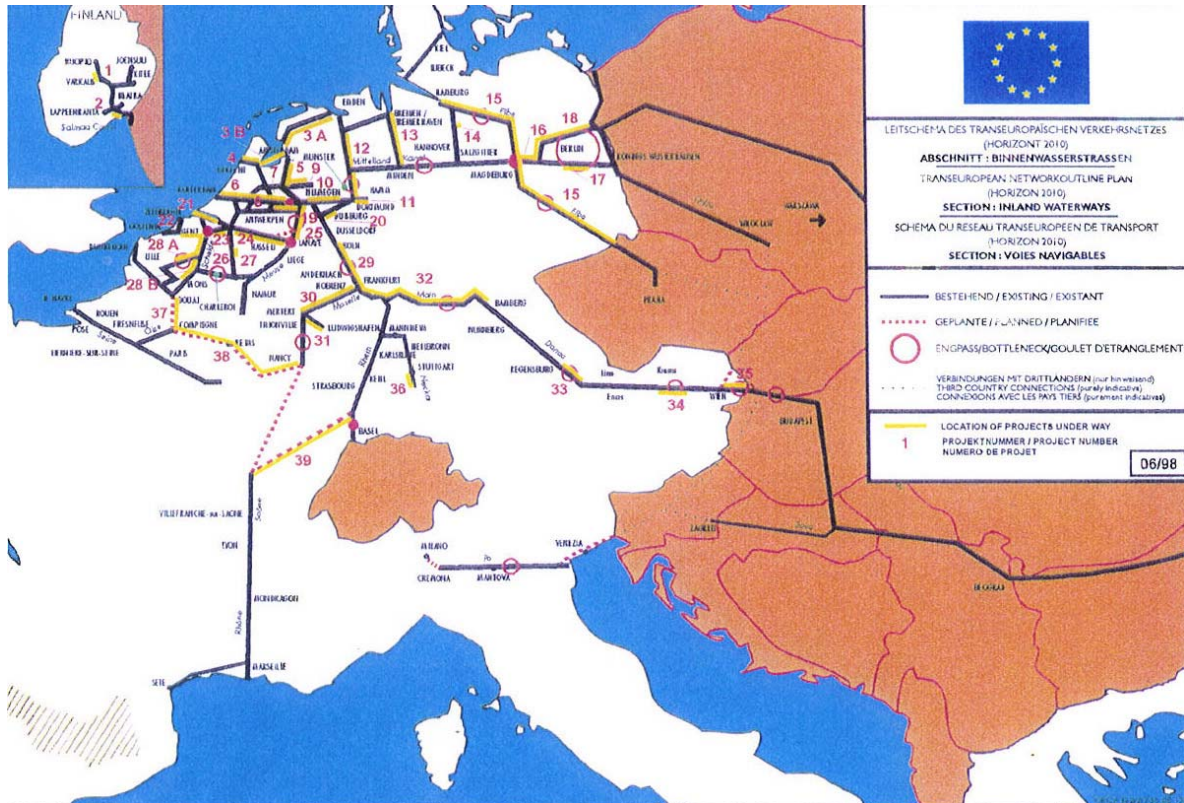
## FINAL REMARKS

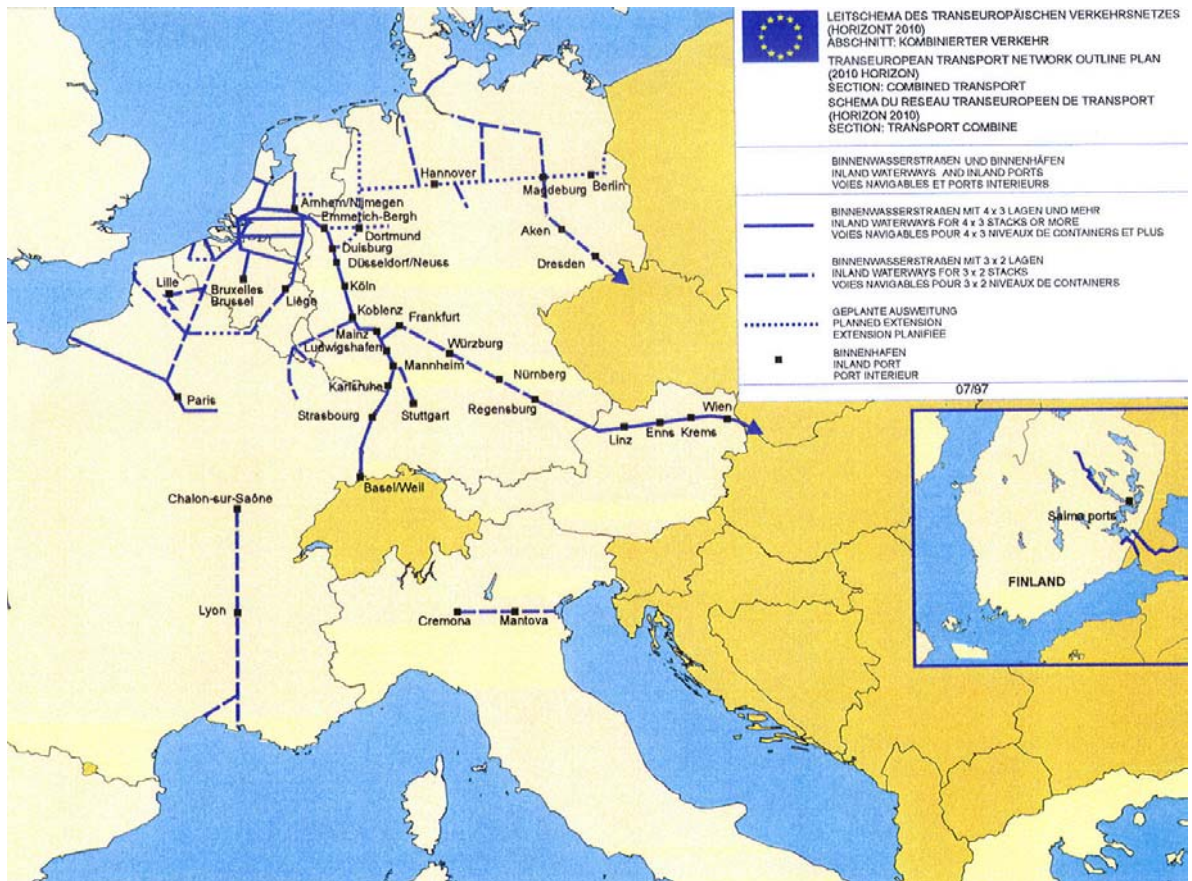
The TEN-T inland waterway maps should be updated and enlarged with the lake system in Sweden (Lakes Vänern and Mälären including canals), with the river Douro in Portugal-Spain and the river Guadalquivir in Spain.

11 December 2001

### Annexes:

Inland waterway maps of Decision 1692/96





Source: European Commission