



# European Commission White Paper on transport COM(2001)370

## **PRIORITY 1 for the development of waterway transport** **Eliminating infrastructure bottlenecks**

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### **1. Current situation**

The attention for inland navigation is traditionally limited to 6 Member States: Austria, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The rivers and canals connected to the Rhine network indeed move the major part of the traffic and show in comparison with other modes significant reserve capacity for further growth. But no opportunities should be lost. Europe has more navigable water: Rhône in Southern France, Po in Italy, the lakes in Finland and Sweden, the British estuaries and last but not least rivers at Iberian Peninsula. They tend to be forgotten, since they are not directly connected to the main network, but in combination with short sea, these links are connected to the main network. Last but not least, the accession countries complete the potential with rivers of international importance.

Shippers are increasingly interested in shifting cargo over water for long and short distances. Waterways are a cost-effective, safe and environmentally friendly. Where appropriate infrastructure is in place, waterway transportation grows fast. Current growth figures exceed forecasts. But the successful development of transport on the TEN waterways is seriously hindered by deficient infrastructure. Vessels cannot navigate at full capacity at certain stretches. Container vessels are loaded at 2 layers instead of 4 because of too low bridges. This puts the profitability at risk. Infrastructure improvements should aim at seamless connections.

### **2. Developing "motorways of the seas" starting inland**

As partners in intermodal transport chains, inland navigation and maritime transport on waterways offer the advantage of turning "motorways of the sea" into a competitive reality starting inland close to production and consumer centers and to limit road hauls to a strict minimum. Sea-river shipping provides e.g. alternatives for traffic crossing sensitive zones such as the Alps and the Pyrenees. As such, the combination short-sea and inland navigation has no boundaries and covers all Europe.

The revision of 2004 of the TEN-T will concentrate on the entry of the accession countries to avoid traffic chaos in an enlarged Union. It is indeed important to upgrade the Elbe, Odra and in particular the Danube and to connect them in the long run in a pan-European framework. Seamless traffic flows are however only realistic when the major bottlenecks in western Europe have been first removed. Modernization of the network will absorb road traffic awaiting the big trans-Alpine rail projects operational by 2030.

### **3. Policy instruments: TEN-T guidelines & TEN-T financial regulation**

Decision 1692/96 under revision and global revision in 2004

- A quality net of European waterway corridors with multimodal connections

Financial regulation 2236/95 under revision (deadline amendments 24 March 2002)

- Non-discriminatory treatment of environmentally more friendly modes
- 20% for rail and waterborne traffic in EU (not limited to cross-border areas with candidate countries).

### **4. Impact on mobility: some examples**

Seine-Nord : triplication of current waterway traffic

Maasroute : reduction of 50% of truck haulages in area

Danube bottlenecks : 50% more waterway traffic

## **PRIORITY 2 for the development of waterway transport**

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### **RIVER INFORMATION SERVICES: INFRASTRUCTURE SOFTWARE**

#### **1. State of the art**

River Information Services (RIS) stand for information technology systems used on waterways. RIS aims at enhancing a safe and efficient transport process and at using the network to its full extent without forgetting connections to other transport modes. Member States and private partners participated in research programs co-financed by the EU under the framework programs for research and development. In the framework of the RIS projects, demonstrators were organized in Belgium, Netherlands, Austria, Germany and France. Applications of intelligent river information systems are now gradually being deployed in the different Member States. Similar developments are taking place elsewhere in the world.

#### **2. Deploying intelligent systems**

RIS consists of

- Traffic management: fairway information, traffic information, traffic management with compatibility to maritime services;
- Transport management: voyage planning, intermodal port and terminal management, cargo and fleet management, value added services.

In order to obtain maximal public safety and chain efficiency for users and their goods, RIS must result ideally in harmonized information services to support traffic and transport management on European waterways. It is of utmost importance that individual systems evolve in a harmonized way. Compatibility and interoperability between all current and new systems must be ensured to achieve efficient cross-border waterway transport and effective interaction between different services.

This objective is full part of the TEN priorities. Moreover, the Pan-European Minister Conference on Inland Waterway Transport of 5-6 September 2001 invited to establish a pan-European RIS by 2005 based on standards to be drawn up. The International Navigation Association (PIANC) established "Guidelines and Recommendations for River Information Services 2002". Together with the results of the research projects, they include the current level of international knowledge and experience to support the harmonization process.

#### **3. Policy instruments**

Decision 1692/96 under revision and global revision in 2004

- Reference in inland waterways article that EC coordinates deployment plan for RIS upon basis of standard guidelines.

New legislative proposal for pan-European RIS coverage

- Guidelines to achieve open, interoperable systems enhancing deployment in a harmonized way based upon the results of the research projects and the PIANC guidelines and recommendations for River Information Services 2002.
- One single vessel ID number for optimal vessel recognition by RIS.

#### **4. Optimization results**

A sound pan-European coverage for RIS will boost safety, optimize operations and increase the attractiveness of waterway transport in door-to-door packages. RIS is also an opportunity to market European technology.

## **PRIORITY 3 for the development of waterway transport**

### **ENCOURAGING PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS FOR WATERWAY BRANCHES**

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#### **1. Current situation**

The European waterway network does not cover whole Europe. Transport by waterways is by nature an intermodal partner. A modal shift depends largely on the availability and quality of transshipment installations to enable integrated solutions for door-to-door concepts. Therefore, intermodal connections are very important to enable swift transshipment from/to other transport modes. Existing multimodal infrastructure requires upgrading and new infrastructure must be built to attract new cargo.

#### **2. Encouraging transshipment facilities**

Promoting waterborne transport is one of the priorities of transport policy. Developing alternatives to road for freight transport is a fundamental part of the EU strategy for sustainable development as laid down in the presidency conclusions of the Gothenburg Council. The necessity of shifting the balance between the modes is confirmed in the Commission's White Paper on transport in an attempt to combat congestion, which is stifling mobility in Europe. The Commission refers explicitly to the need of establishing links to rivers and installing transshipment facilities.

Authorities can successfully foster a modal shift by enhancing investments in public berths in inland ports and along the waterways. Transport users and operators are more and more interested in shifting cargo, but will only invest when the initial higher costs are compensated. A private public partnership ensures a stronger commitment between new infrastructure and cargo. The fact that the private partner shoulders an important part of the investment implies a substantial risk with a consequent strong interest in the commercial success of the project, hence a real modal shift result. The infrastructure should remain in public hands to retain control and steer the modal shift process.

#### **3. Policy instruments**

TEN guidelines 1692/96 and financial regulation 2236/95

The TEN framework enables infrastructure aid, but its procedure, appropriate for big infrastructure links, deters market players for smaller infrastructure investments.

New legislative proposal on PPPs for waterway branches

- Concerns investments for modal shift attracting new cross-border flows from road to waterways
- Financial participation by EU, Member States and private partners
- Penalty for private partner if cargo shift agreed in contract terms is not obtained
- Flexible administrative framework easily accessible to SMEs, industry and semi-public companies
- General monitoring by the Commission, local implementation by national/regional authorities.

#### **4. Results**

The program implies a kick-off public investment, but results in a higher positive spin-off effect by the market. There is a mechanism to measure and steer modal shift development. A European framework program monitors cross-border shifts and avoids distortions of competition.

## **PRIORITY 4 for the development of waterway transport**

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### **BOTTLENECK EXERCISE TO FOSTER MODAL SHIFT WITH ALL PARTNERS**

#### **1. Current situation**

Freight cannot be shipped to every place in Europe. Therefore, seamless connections are necessary if we want to combine the most efficient use of each transport mode. An essential element in the development of waterway transport is its integration in European logistics chains and its ability to fulfilling users' requirement. Administrative hurdles differing from country to country often prevent shippers from opting for waterways. These barriers can be taken away through exchange of experiences between shippers, ports, operators and public authorities.

#### **2. Taking away administrative barriers**

A European wide exercise carried out by the European Commission, States and industry, which identifies concrete bottlenecks that hinder the development of waterway transport will offer a list of obstacles that can be tackled at the appropriate level (European, national, regional, local and/or commercial). Instead of discouraging shippers from using waterways, such a dialogue between the interested partners will function as a catalyst to thrive towards a better performance of door-to-door waterway transport. The partners can put forward concrete recommendations and best practices and suggest as well voluntary action towards more uniformity in administrative approaches of countries. The ultimate goal is to attract more cargo to Europe's waterways.

The European Commission has set up such an exercise for short sea shipping involving major stakeholders from the industry. Meanwhile, Member States have appointed "focal points" representatives of national maritime administrations who participate actively in the dialogue. This ongoing process enables a regular inter-active exchange on concrete issues and bears its fruits. Not only best practices and pragmatic solutions are being elaborated. Public and private partners get to know each other better, which is important for further initiatives. The exercise is reported on the EU website and reach in this way more partners.

#### **3. Policy instruments**

Short sea initiative Commission

The existing short sea bottleneck exercise is a positive example to be followed for waterway transport.

Marco Polo COM(2002)54

The common learning actions in the Marco Polo proposal of the Commission provide a framework to set up such an exercise, since these actions aim at removing structural barriers standing in the way to efficient transport systems.

#### **4. Results**

A permanent, open dialogue between European Commission, Member States and market players will foster waterway transport as dynamic alternative in a sustainable transport chain by gradually lifting or rectifying barriers and practices that no longer correspond with user requirements for door-to-door transport.