



The Inland Waterway Transport sector is an important partner for our economy and deserves all the necessary attention at a political level. This is even more so for Belgium since it is situated in the Delta Area of the Rhine, Maas and Scheldt. In this area important seaports form a gateway to the European continent and distribution, logistic and transport activities play a vital role.

Since the liberalisation of inland waterway transport at the end of 1998, the volumes of goods carried by this mode on our waterways have continued to grow to reach a total volume of about 140 million tonnes and more than 8 billion tonne-kilometres in the past years. This good result is due to several impulse programmes of the Belgian government to create favourable conditions for inland navigation services and fleet modernisation programmes.

Recently the Belgian government decided on a new set of measures to promote inland waterway transport. With initiatives such as the modernisation of the inland waterway legislation, several administrative simplifications and fiscal measures with the objective to improve fleet modernisation and innovation, I want to continue stimulating the inland waterway transport. Not only because of its importance for our economy, but also because this mode still has a large potential to contribute to resolving the mobility problems that we meet in our very densely populated region.

Renaat Landuyt

BELGIAN MINISTER FOR MOBILITY AND THE NORTH SEA

Water meets water

One often hears "road traffic cannot be relieved by other means of transport". Meanwhile, more and more consumer goods appear on the water. Spa Monopole, a water producer, for example, started using water transportation for its overseas exports in its quest for sustainable solutions, thereby helping to decrease congestion and making a positive contribution towards a balanced transport system. This goes to show human activities remain unthinkable without water.

Spa Monopole annually produces some 500 million litres of Spa water and soft drinks and employs 630

people. Its market is mainly concentrated in Belgium and the Netherlands. However, some 2% is annually exported overseas. Spa has been using inland waterways for transporting its bottled water, 6 times a week, from the production site in Spa to Antwerp for overseas export.

- 100% reliability
- 5 times less CO2 emissions than single road transport
- real-time tracking of shipments

containers on a container shuttle service set up by Groupe Portier Industries in Liège to Antwerp.

The main concern for Spa was an ecological one – how to transport the drinks producing less emissions than by road. Multi-modal transport using inland waterways means 5 times less CO2 emissions than single

This amounts to some 9 million litres per year, transported in 500



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road transport. Spa also discovered a wide range of other advantages. By outsourcing its entire export logistics, transportation, storage and handling included, cargo movements across the modes became 100% reliable and shipments can be tracked in real time along the entire transport cycle.

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Butter on the water

Corman, world leader in butters and milk fats, decided to make use of inland waterway transport to find a way out of road congestion. It was not an obvious choice, because Corman's production site is not adjacent to the water. José Sente, logistics manager of the butter manufacturer, explains why the decision to opt for multi-modal transport became an instant success.



© Corman

Corman is not located nearby a waterway. Is it really cost-efficient to transport perishable food products such as butter over the water?

Our goal is to supply our customers with the best products, under the best conditions, securing transports at a realistic cost. Using inland waterway transport does not only provide us with an alternative to full road carriage, it also helps to avoid longer waiting times or higher road charges due to rising congestion. Before we started, we were inclined to see inland shipping as an old fashioned and slow means of trans-

port, but we have come to realise it is 100% reliable and cost-competitive on short distances.

Is sustainability becoming an important issue for competitiveness? Do your customers care about your environmen-

tal performance?

Our main customers are large international food companies. It is important for them to show they use products sourced from manufacturers respectful of the environment. We already invested in a water treatment plant to recycle used water and to return clean water to

“If we use a reefer container, it can remain plugged in during waterway transport, ensuring total security for perishable goods like butter”

nature. Diversification of transport is another example to show we take our commitment with regard to sustainability seriously.

Would you recommend inland shipping to other companies who are not in the immediate vicinity of a waterway? What is the key to success for it to work?

Using inland waterways in combination with other transport modes does not really entail more constraints, but rather requires clever planning. We simply place our transport orders by taking into account the extra day it takes from our plant to Antwerp. If we use a reefer container, it can remain plugged in during waterway transport, ensuring total security for perishable goods like butter. Therefore, we see no real inconvenience in transporting consumer goods over water.

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The European Commission reviews the EU transport policy

Sustainable mobility is at the centre of the long awaited mid-term review of the 2001 white paper on transport. Adjusting the EU transport policy to the new situation of EU enlargement and high oil prices affecting economic growth, the European Commission wants to optimise the use of transport within and across the different modalities to attain competitive and sustainable mobility. Freight transport is expected to grow by 50% until 2020, adding to the traffic gridlock and requiring new solutions to keep Europe moving. The Commission goes for a more pragmatic approach and puts transport policy at the heart of the Lisbon Agenda with measures focusing on efficiency, innovation, logistics, mastering energy and greening transport. The review contains a collection of 44 actions for the period 2006-2009, including the implementation of the EC plan NAIADES to promote inland waterway transport.



“Mobility is essential for free movement of European citizens and economic growth. The EU will continue to boost the use of waterways while stepping up efforts to make transportation more efficient and greener. That is why I want to focus on logistics, green propulsion and intelligent transport systems which use the latest technologies.”

JACQUES BARROT, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Beer-boat carries more than beer

A practical solution for waterbound city distribution over small canals and waterways in a Dutch city's historic centre, not adapted to heavy and intense road traffic, has been found in converting a dredging barge to a city delivery vessel baptised the "beer-boat".



Faced with inner city delivery problems, the city of Utrecht simply changed its way of thinking. Instead of opting for common road solutions, we decided to make use of the existing asset of small canals to keep goods flowing.

The historic centre of the city of Utrecht in the Netherlands is not easy to reach as severe city planning restrictions limit its access to vehicles of over 1 tonne. As local pubs and restaurants required a solution for their incoming supplies, the city came up with the idea to convert an old dredging boat for use along the fine-mazed canals and waterways. The barge with a crane on-board, became a familiar sight on the canals of Utrecht and was baptised the "beer-boat".

This new transport formula is now broadening its horizons. In May 2005 a loading/unloading platform was installed by the city, and since then other products have joined the beverages in the hold: fresh produce, cold-storage and frozen foods supplied by GEPU, a Dutch wholesaler. By using the canals for this very specific transport, traffic jams on the Oudegracht are now a thing of the past!

Barkeepers and restaurants hire space on the boat for a competitive set tariff per hour from Monday to Fri-



© Gemeente Utrecht

and loading and unloading is flexible as it can be executed on either ground level or directly into the basements,

Maybe this initiative can serve as an example to other cities with old canals facing identical road congestion problems and requiring sustainable mobility solutions without losing cost efficiency out of sight.

day. The trip takes 30 minutes from the loading centre to the first destination, and there are 65 unloading points along the route. The beer-boat delivers goods and picks up empty bottle crates and barrels. Cargo is loaded onto pallets in rollcontainers,

thanks to the crane. As a result, there is less damage as barrels do not need to be rolled along anymore!

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European Commission plans Green Paper on Urban Transport

The European Commission will launch next year a consultation on how to improve mobility in urban areas, since 80% of the population in Europe lives in cities. Knowing that every citizen makes on average daily trips of 35km and congestion costs amount to up to 1% of GDP, action is definitely needed. Green transport to improve air quality will be high on the agenda. Public transport is at the forefront. There are waterbuses and watertaxis in the Netherlands and Ghent has the Elektroboat. With the great number of waterways crossing cities, freight also comes into the picture. Millions of truck movements are saved by shipping in and out construction material, waste, recyclables and recently consumer goods, but much more is possible.



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Shipping on Baltic Inland Waterways

The Swedish and Finnish Maritime Administrations and the Maritime Office Gdynia continue their cooperation on developing inland waterway transport in the Baltic Sea area in follow up of the INTRASEA Interreg project. They focus on the potential of inland waterways and the demand of industry, the transport of biofibres and the possibility to open up the waterway between Szczecin and Berlin for sea river ships. www.intrasea.com

Cereals swapped for construction material in France



Thanks to an agreement between the Carrières de Boulonnais, the cereal producer Roquette and Voies Navigables de France, some 24,000 trucks will no longer take the road in northern France. Construction material in one direction and cereals on the return trip jointly account for 600,000 tonnes a year. The two shippers also commit to attract youngsters to the waterborne sector by providing training and assistance in the set-up of new waterborne transport companies.

ADEME presents best practices on sustainable transport

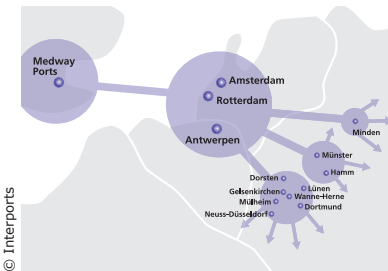
In March, the French environment agency awarded its prize for sustainable transport to PRD, Castorama, Conforama and Ikea, for jointly establishing a new logistic distribution centre in Chastres. In compliance with stringent HQE standards, river and railway transport are privileged and a lot of trucks will disappear from the roads!

Wallonia prize for Saint-Gobain Glass Benelux

OPVN, at its annual gathering in June, awarded Saint-Gobain with its yearly prize rewarding their intensive use of the waterways for transporting raw material. Sand is almost exclusively shipped in by barge, 170,000 tonnes in 2005, an increase of 180% compared to 2004. Each barge represents 20 trucks less on the road! Further plans to increase the number ship movements are currently being considered.



Networking ports for more mobility



Interports: sea and inland ports gather forces

The seaports of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp and the UK Medway ports enhanced cooperation with the canal ports of the Ruhr, the most densely populated EU area, in the INTERREG project Interports. They aim at targeted networking with shippers and forwarders by raising the attractiveness of waterborne logistics.

More on: www.interports.org

Dipcity: Inland ports make cities sustainable

The ports of Brussels, Liège, Lille and Paris joined forces in an INTERREG project to develop better plans to integrate existing and new activities attractively into the urban environment. Integrated city planning also goes hand in hand with in-

creased use of waterway transport to substantially improve urban mobility, for example by transporting a larger share of municipal waste by canal or river.

More on: www.havenvanbrussel.irisnet.be/code/en/dipcity.htm

Port of Constantza has a new website

The port of Constantza released its new Web Portal developing into an integrated information platform, facilitating electronical data exchange between port authorities and operators. www.portofconstantza.com



Water is the way to go!

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