

**CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS ON
THE WAY AHEAD TOWARDS INTEGRATED AND COMPETITIVE EU INLAND
WATERWAY TRANSPORT**

The participants to the conference:

A) General considerations

- (1) consider high the importance inland waterway transport has for the European economy and the sustainability of the European transport system, and for economic, social and territorial cohesion;
- (2) draw the attention to the multi-purpose use of waterways and the potential contribution inland waterway transport can make to diminishing external effects of transport through a more efficient use of energy and less emission of pollutants as well as through safer freight transport operations and reduced congestion on roads;
- (3) emphasise the availability of free capacity on inland waterways and the possibility to increase inland waterway transport with relatively low infrastructure costs;
- (4) underline the potential of inland waterways to facilitate the economically, socially and environmentally sustainable territorial management;

B) Challenges for the inland waterway transport sector

- (5) consider that it is necessary to optimise ports as key modal interfaces and to work towards better co-modal logistic chains through the intelligent use of different transport modes and systems, to improve navigability by removing existing bottlenecks along inland waterways and to establish intermodal connections to the hinterland, in particular links with rail;
- (6) acknowledge that infrastructure improvements can have environmental impacts which need to be reconciled and compensated for in accordance with the applicable environmental legislation;
- (7) are convinced of the potential regarding the technological development and modernisation of the fleet but which, however, is hampered by the insufficient financial strength of the sector;
- (8) esteem the further development and deployment of River Information Services (RIS) vital

as a tool for safe, efficient, innovative, high-quality, environmental-friendly and competitive inland waterway transport as well as for effective supply chain management; particular attention should be paid to the interoperability notably with SafeSeaNet, e-Maritime, e-Freight, and e-Customs;

- (9) point to the increasing shortage of qualified human resources of onboard personnel as well as of personnel in the field of ship operations, logistics and entrepreneurship;
- (10) consider further reflections necessary on how the current complex organisational structure of the sector could be further improved and decision-making facilitated.

C) Way forward

- (11) are persuaded that further action is needed to promote inland waterway transport in order to achieve its full economic and environmental potential in particular in view of full integration of inland waterways in the production and trade chains;
- (12) take note of the progress achieved since 2006 in the implementation of the NAIADES Action programme which will end in 2013 together with the PLATINA support platform which will come to an end in 2012;
- (13) support the declared intention of the White paper 2011 on Transport “Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system” which seeks to ensure the continuity of the initiated measures on inland waterway transport, to keep the momentum created by NAIADES, to transfer more traffic to inland waterway transport, improve navigability/remove bottlenecks and to cope with new developments and challenges in terms of competitiveness, climate change and resource efficiency;
- (14) call upon the Commission to present in good time a proposal for a follow-up framework programme "NAIADES II", which should in particular address the following components:
 - fleet modernisation,
 - strengthening of the market position of the sector,
 - human resource development,
 - River Information Services,
 - safety and environmental protection,
 - co-modality and logistics,
 - innovation and infrastructure;
 - the institutional and legal framework;
 - and the external dimensions.

- (15) This framework shall also support the implementation and compliance monitoring of the existing legal framework and the preparation of new rules and standards, further development and operation of technical and statistical databases, reinforced co-operation between all EU-stakeholders and administrations and support EU-wide thematic networks and expert groups;
- (16) underline that in addition to the co-financing of infrastructure and research and technological development projects financial means shall become available to promote the completion of the internal market of the sector, inter alia,
- to provide support to the implementation and compliance monitoring of the existing legal framework,
 - to support the preparation of new rules and standards, such as for safety and environmental protection,
 - to address the recruitment and training of personnel,
 - to support communication and dissemination activities for showing IWT capabilities to the industry, decision makers and the general public,
 - to provide for the further development and operation of technical support tools for the fleet, River Information Services and for logistics,
 - to encourage the co-operation between all EU-stakeholders and administrations and EU-wide thematic networks;
- (17) request the Commission to propose to equip the programme with adequate financial resources in order to enable the effective implementation of the programme,
- (18) call upon the Member States and the European Parliament to support this process.
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