

PRESS RELEASE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EUROPEAN INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT (IWT) PLATFORM: EBU AND ESO AIM FOR A STRONGER INLAND WATERWAY SECTOR IN EUROPE

EBU and ESO, the European inland navigation organisations, have decided to strengthen the representation of the inland navigation sector at Union level by a closer coordination and cooperation. Both organisations represent the sector of barge owners and operators at Union level.

The objective of the IWT platform is to carry out a number of tasks to the benefit of the entire sector and to increase the modal share of carriage of cargo and passengers by inland navigation vessels in the overall volume of European transportation. These tasks are accomplished in close cooperation with all decision-making bodies and authorities that decide that govern the inland shipping activities at European, national and 'Euregioinal' level.

New dimension of expertise

While the two organisations EBU and ESO will remain independent, the joint platform is intended to add **a new dimension of expertise to the benefit of the sector on inland navigation**. Some concrete examples are; expert contributions at a.o. the CESNI working groups in different areas, EC expert groups, UNECE Working Parties and CDNI. IWT Platform has established joint working committees bringing all expertise together, contributing to the decision making bodies in a coherent way.

The newly announced Platform Coördinator, Nik Delmeire, supported by the Secretary Generals Theresia Hacksteiner (EBU) and Gerard Kester (ESO), presented the ambitions of the IWT Platform as it will focus on a number of main areas to contribute to the sector's needs, mainly:

- encouraging innovation on vessels and technical progress with focus on environment, including all sustainability goals at Union level;
- increasing the attractiveness of the sector by offering increased career perspectives to the youth and encouraging young trainees and other maritime workers from outside the sector by training and education;
- Improving infrastructure in order to guarantee well maintained waterways and water levels benefitting European industry and economy;
- Stimulate a modal shift from road to inland waterways, in close cooperation with shippers, industry and authorities.

Inland Waterway Transport is the key to mitigate the environmental impact of transport and to contribute to European and international policy goals

In his opening speech the President of the IWT Platform, Paul Goris stressed that Inland Waterway Transport is the key to mitigate the environmental impact of transport and to contribute to European and international policy goals. “COP 21, the European Union’s environmental and sustainability goals, the Commission’s recent communication “A clean Planet for all”, climate change, and the human and social agenda are a number of developments which strongly effect the transport sector. Inland Waterway Transport is known for its positive sustainability record in various areas and is keen to keep this record”, Paul Goris emphasised.

Director General at the European Commission DG MOVE, Henrik Hololei, emphasised to support Inland Waterway Transport to fully exploit its potential. Inland Waterway Transport is considered as most environmental friendly mode of transport which still disposes of free capacity.

The European Commission, after the adoption of conclusions by the Ministers of Transport, will develop a follow-up programme to NAIADES II. This should be launched by the end of 2020.

Additional information

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