

PRESS RELEASE

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE under German EU Presidency: “Inland Waterway Transport – key to deliver the Green Deal”

Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) pays an important contribution to deliver the future policy, mobility and climate goals

The German Federal Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure Andreas Scheuer on 20 November 2020, in cooperation with the European Barge Union, invited Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean as well as his colleagues from many IWT countries to support the IWT industry, future modal shift and greening of the sector..

Ambitious but realistic goals

Minister Scheuer in his opening speech emphasised the important role IWT plays in the entire supply chain of the European society and industry. IWT already today has an excellent sustainability record and is known for its energy efficiency. He pointed to the European Commission's “Green Deal” which will entail major challenges in the years ahead, but also great opportunities for the inland navigation industry and shippers.

The German EU Council Presidency aimed to draw attention to what IWT has already contributed Europe-wide to making freight and passenger transport more climate- and environment-friendly. On the other hand, it became clear that European and national support will be needed to cope with the greening challenges as defined in the EU Green Deal.

Green Deal as chance for IWT: strengthening IWT is to the benefit of ecology

[Commissioner Vălean](#) pointed to the important potential of IWT to contribute to the climate objectives. She promised to reinforce the EU support for the sector. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the EU has declared transport workers essential to our economies, requesting Member States that the workers are protected in doing their jobs, and are not required to observe quarantine when travelling for work. The Commission keeps recalling this, as without a smooth functioning of our supply chains, our economy will come to a halt.

EU also is working to kick-start the European economic recovery fund. In May a proposal of € 750 billion was introduced for ‘the Next Generation EU’. Its Recovery and Resilience Facility, with a budget of over € 500 billion, should support Member States to support inland waterways-related investments, both in economic and in environmental interest. This should make the sector more resilient to future shocks.

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IWT as enabler to deliver the Green Deal

EBU's President Paul Goris emphasized that by shifting higher volumes to inland waterway transport, it can substantially contribute to realise the European Green Deal. The IWT is prepared to take over much higher volumes and to substantially increase its share in the coming years. To materialise the benefit of IWT in line with the EU and global objectives a strategy, program and concrete implementation instruments are needed.

The IWT sector calls for a dedicated programme as a joint effort by the European Commission, Member States, River Commissions and stakeholders as a follow up of the **NAIADES PROGRAMME for 2021 – 2027**. This should be backed by a concrete action program. .

To accelerate the development and deployment of greening solutions he called for strong support out of the RECOVERY & RESILIENCE PACKAGE. "The objective should be to come to a win/win situation in which IWT recovery leads to a sustainable development" he emphasized in his plea to Commissioner Vălean and the Ministers at the conference.

Conclusion: The Inland Waterway Transport sector is ready to deliver the EU Green Deal, however counts on the European Commission Parliament and Member States to support the sector in the setup of a robust greening programme.

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23 November 2020

The European Barge Union (EBU) is the European association representing the inland navigation freight and passenger carrying industry on a Pan-European level. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators as well as (international) associations in the field of inland navigation and related areas.

EBU's mission is to contribute to the development of a sustainable and efficient Pan-European transport system via a larger share of inland waterway transport.

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