



## **INPUT FROM THE INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT SECTOR ON THE DANUBE RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN RBMP CONSULTATION**

**The International Commission for the Protection of the River Danube ICPDR launched a stakeholder consultation on the RBMP. The IWT sector, represented by the European Barge Union, the European Skippers Organisation and the Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) Platform are pleased to submit their input on this consultation.**

### **Introduction**

The Smart Mobility Strategy (SSMS) based on the EU Green deal seeks to increase the share of Inland Waterway Transport (IWT) by 25 % by 2030 and by 50 % by 2050. The European Commission in its recently published Communication on the SSMS underlines the importance of Inland Waterway Transport as sustainable mode of transport to realize its future sustainability goals. Based upon the Green Deal a key objective is to deliver a 90% reduction in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Contrary to the congested roads, European waterways dispose of free capacity, offering a significant modal shift potential in line with the EU Green Deal.

On the 24th of June the European Commission published the NAIADES III Action plan: boosting future-proof European Inland Waterway Transport. As Flagship 1 it announced helping waterway managers to ensure a high level of service (Good Navigation Status) along EU inland waterway corridors by December 2031.

While calling on Member States to step up fairway rehabilitation and maintenance efforts in order to uphold and improve navigation conditions, the Commission will give more support for projects aimed at completing and upgrading the inland waterway TEN-T network and addressing bottlenecks.

### **COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT DANUBE RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLAN**

#### **Danube River Basin Management Plan RBMP. Part A – Basin-wide overview. Update 2021**

The DRBD basin-wide management objectives are:

- to describe the measures that need to be taken to reduce/eliminate existing significant pressures for each SWMI and groundwater on the basin-wide scale and
- to help to bridge the gap between measures on the national level and their agreed coordination on the basin-wide level to achieve the overall WFD environmental objective.

To make full use of the European waterways and to shift transport from congested roads on inland vessels a high-quality and climate resilient waterway network is needed. The IWT sector is depending on fit-for-purpose infrastructure to allow the absorption of higher volumes of freights and passengers on European rivers in line with the above EU policies and sustainability goals.



The IWT sector therefore welcomes the draft update of the RBMP which considers inland navigation as an important sustainable water use.

Climate change will bring new challenges for the inland navigation sector, notably in relation to water quantity. The draft update recognizes that ensuring the continued safety of inland navigation is a challenge that needs to be addressed as a climate change-related risk. Some of the effects of climate change (drought, water scarcity, extreme hydrological phenomena and other impacts) are clearly of great relevance to the inland navigation sector.

Therefore, the IWT sector aims to be properly represented in future discussions on climate change-related policies, strategies and measures, including on water quantity management (including water scarcity/drought and water allocation).

The IWT sector also appreciates the recognition that integration with other sector policies is an important issue in the Danube River Basin in order to create synergies and avoid potential conflicts.

**The IWT sector looks forward to continued engagement and further intensified exchanges, including in the context of the Joint Statement, to ensure that water resource management on the Danube supports sustainable water uses such as navigation while at the same time protecting and enhancing the water environment. It stresses the importance of full engagement with the inland navigation sector in the development and delivery of appropriate measures in the elaboration of the new RMBPs.**

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#### **EBU**

The European Barge Union (EBU) represents the inland navigation industry in Europe. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and barge operators of 9 European inland navigation countries (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Romania and Switzerland). [www.ebu-uenf.org](http://www.ebu-uenf.org)

#### **ESO**

The European Skippers Organisation is the voice of the independent Inland Waterway Transport entrepreneurs. ESO looks after the interests of the barge owners at European level with representatives from six European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, UK and Poland) [www.eso-oeb.org](http://www.eso-oeb.org)

#### **European IWT platform**

As an executive body of EBU and ESO, the European IWT platform aims at a stronger positioning of Inland Navigation in European and national transport policies by an intensified contribution to various governing bodies, working parties and standard setting committees like CESNI and ADN [www.inlandwaterwaytransport.eu](http://www.inlandwaterwaytransport.eu)