



**EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT
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MODAL SHIFT

POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF INLAND WATERWAYS

This document is submitted for discussion under item 3, "Modal Shift" of the draft agenda of the Bucharest session of the Council of Ministers.

Ministers are invited to discuss the measures recommended and identify any action that should be taken for their implementation and also to give guidance on further work within the ECMT and in other relevant international bodies.

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A paneuropean conference on inland shipping was held in Rotterdam on the 5th and 6th of September 2001. The conference closed with the adoption of the Rotterdam Declaration. This calls on the ECMT to work for the implementation of the measures set out in the Declaration and to examine legal obstacles to the development of a harmonised and competitive paneuropean inland waterways market.

In response, ECMT organised a seminar on 30 January 2002 entitled *The Inland Waterways of Tomorrow on the European Continent*. Its aim was to define the policy approach to reinforcing the role of inland waterways among the different modes of transport and inform debate in the discussion of modal shift and sustainable development programmed for the Bucharest Council of Ministers.

The seminar concluded that Ministers should give more attention to inland navigation at a time of increasing concern with congestion on the roads and the environmental impacts resulting from road traffic growth. To this end the following policy initiatives were considered desirable.

- Facilitate the integration of inland water transport in a multi-modal transport system by:
 - providing aid for projects and initiatives aiming at promotion of inter-modal transport involving inland water transport;
 - furthering the development of a coherent network of multi-modal transshipment points with terminals connecting the waterway network with the road and rail networks;
 - encouraging the development of a stackable type of swap body, the dimensions of which are compatible with those of ISO containers.
 - ensuring the development of framework conditions for competition between railways and inland shipping that promotes complementary development of the two modes and avoids economic distortions;
 - furthering the development of a uniform method of charging the use of infrastructure for all transport modes.

- Improve the conditions for fluvio-maritime transport by:
 - resolving incompatibilities in the legal frameworks applicable to maritime and inland shipping that undermine the development of fluvio-maritime transport;
 - moving customs clearance formalities from seaports to inland ports and simplifying customs procedures for fluvio-maritime shipping, which should be treated as inland transport;
 - ensuring non-discriminatory access to the sea and the inland waterways for fluvio-maritime transport and to this end, furthering the development and the adoption at the international level of specific technical regulations for fluvio-maritime vessels;
 - furthering the development of shipping technologies increasing the geographical scope of fluvio-maritime transport on the inland waterway network;
 - avoiding the development of intermodal transport units with dimensions that are incompatible with infrastructure for inland transport;
 - extending the "sea motorways" to the inland ports.

- Overcome barriers to the development of the inland waterway transport by:
 - fostering work to establish a unified civil law system for the European waterway network;
 - providing training and information for the future of the profession in order to support development of inland shipping;
 - supporting promotional activities to convince shippers and forwarders that waterway transport is a mode with a future.

- Improve the quality of the European inland waterway network by:
 - promoting the drawing up of a unique list of bottlenecks and missing links, in co-operation between the international organisations concerned;
 - supporting investment, above all for better maintenance of the infrastructure and dredging, and modernisation to meet the requirements of modern shipping, providing sufficient headroom for the stacking of containers, since the development of existing infrastructure shows far greater returns than major new projects;
 - providing investment for missing links in order to build-up an efficient international network, subject to a positive socio-economic assessment of the benefits expected;
 - guaranteeing the completion of projects once they are underway to avoid the exposure of transport enterprises to avoidable risks of stranded investment;
 - ensuring uninterrupted access to waterways and uninterrupted operation of the related infrastructure;
 - encouraging a better integration of environmental and ecological concerns into the design of inland waterway investment projects, and improving the relations between the environmental movement and the inland water transport industry;
 - furthering the adaptation of the relevant parts of the inland waterway network to the needs of fluvio-maritime transport;
 - ensuring a treatment of inland waterway investment projects equal to those for the other modes, e.g. in the application of aid schemes.

- Facilitate the opening of the market by the elimination of currently existing restrictions on market access and the creation of a 'level playing field' by:
 - removing from national and international legislation restrictions on market access for "foreign" vessels;
 - promoting the convergence of technical, safety and environmental standards for inland navigation vessels, harmonised traffic regulations and harmonised procedures for certification of licences;
 - encouraging the international harmonisation of labour and social security conditions including rules governing crews;
 - supporting initiatives to bring the international Danube regime more into line with the international Rhine regime in order to harmonise the legal framework for inland shipping; this requires co-ordinated preparatory work, in the Rhine and Danube Commissions.

Ministers are invited to:

- *consider the measures recommended;*
- *identify any action that should be taken for their implementation, notably in the framework of follow-up to the Rotterdam Declaration;*
- *provide guidance on any areas where they consider new ECMT initiatives in regard to inland waterways would be useful.*