

Position-Paper

of the River-Sea Shipping Committee of the European Barge Union concerning the development of the European River-Sea and the Short Sea Shipping Market

Initiated by:

The River-Sea Shipping Committee of the European Barge Union

How can the European River- and Short Sea stakeholder support the aim of the new EU Strategy on Sustainable and Smart Mobility?

The European River-Sea and Short Sea Shipping stakeholder requires a combination of different measures led by:

Sustainable Greening and the use of new Smart Technology of the Digitization

and:

1. Improvement of knowledge and information about the River-Sea Shipping/ Sea Shipping and problems facing this industry
2. Development of fleets for River-Sea and Short Sea Shipping
3. Measures to improve the competitiveness of the River-Sea Shipping and Short Sea Shipping
4. Improvement and Optimization between River-Sea Ships, Short Sea Ships, Inland – and Sea Ports.
5. Increasing of efficiency and profitability of cross-border and multimodal integration.
6. Development of critical infrastructure of inland waterways.
7. Background of Position Paper.

Sustainable Greening of the fleet

To enable the transition towards zero-emissions, decarbonisation and resilience of the fleet including adaptation to climate change while guaranteeing competitiveness and safety the sector needs:

Research & Development

Access to appropriate research programs

Deployment

To speed up all measures to reach the emission reduction goals in the maritime sector, it is of highest importance by gaining technical solutions now and to create and authorize specific aid schemes and fiscal incentives e.g. the sector needs:

1. Available and affordable technology to broadly deploy innovation in the sector;
2. Flexible goal based regulatory framework avoiding long term permission processes for innovative solutions;
3. Tailor made and dedicated funding via a maritime Greening Fund combining national and EU funding schemes to cover the total costs of the investment in engines and retrofit of engines as well as vessel design improvement measures.

Climate adaptation & alternative energy sources

Power- and fuel supply should gradually be made greener and more sustainable, decreasing the share of fossil fuels up to ZERO. Strong support to reach a substantial emission reduction by quick win Solutions like biofuels or e-fuels, based on availability and market readiness of alternative fuels on a broad scale to cut its emissions in line with the policy aims of the Green.

Deal by e.g.:

1. Access to research programs for testing and deploying of alternative fuels;
2. Taxation incentives, such as by means of tax exemption for clean fuel and on shore power, Bonus and Malus systems.
3. Availability and roll out of alternative fuels on the entire system;
4. Technology neutral approach to ensure that the most suitable and promising technologies are deployed in a safe manner;
5. Goal based technical standards to give room for safe testing and application of new technologies, innovation and adaptation to such technologies in consideration of the new long lifetime of vessels and infrastructure;
6. Suitable green on-shore power supply and refueling infrastructure along the network making use of smart solutions at locks, transshipment sites, berths and ports and project sites.

Modal shift

The River-Sea and Short Sea Trade has a huge modal shift potential on the entire European network of sea ways and already today has very low CO₂ emissions compared to road. Shifting higher volumes to Sea transport will benefit the entire community and substantially contribute to realize the European Green Deal Facilitating an easier and faster shift from road to water has an immediate positive effect on GHG-emissions, even without the maritime Sector is switching to alternative fuels. The maritime sector therefore needs:

Infrastructure

A well-maintained infrastructure network is crucial for the reliability and increased share of the River-Sea and Short Sea transport sector.

- Accelerating the shift from road to Sea and increasing the share of Sea transit in line with the EGD by providing the right regulatory framework –
- Realizing reliable infrastructure by:

Allocating sufficient CEF FUNDING

for waterway Infrastructure which is the best investment in future mobility.

POLLUTER PAY PRINCIPAL

and internalization of all costs like damages to infrastructure, environment, health etc. must be applied for all modes for fair competition and would accelerate significantly the modal shift from road to sea and waterways.

ADAPTING THE TEN-T GUIDELINES

to support high-quality and climate proof infrastructure by dedicated European funds which cover research as well as investment in rehabilitation, development and construction.

Digitalization of Inland Water Transport, River-Sea and Short Sea Shipping

The digitalization of Inland Water Transport, River-Sea and Short Sea Shipping is considered critically important for the:

- Improvement of navigation and management of traffic,
- Integration with other modes, especially in multimodal hubs (ports),
- Reduction of administrative burdens by reducing the number of B2A declarations.

(NSW), (EFFTI)

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1. Improvement of knowledge and information about the River-Sea Shipping/ Short Sea Shipping and problems facing this industry

The knowledge about the strength and weakness, the benefits and risks of River-Sea Shipping and Short Sea Shipping by governments, administration, international organizations, charters, forwarding agents, ports, logistic companies etc. is not sufficient and improvement of this issue would help to increase support for the development of River-Sea Shipping and SSS by the governments and administrations.

Recommendations:

- Information about the River-Sea Shipping in Europe at governments, administration, international organizations, charters, forwarding agents, ports, logistic companies.in close Cooperation with EBU.
- Presentations about River-Sea and Short Sea Shipping in Europe on international conferences and meetings of international/national organizations and also on adequate platforms and online meetings of any kind.
- Continuation of series of publications about River-Sea Shipping and Short Sea Shipping in the media of ERSTU, EBU and others. Update of the CCNR-Report “RIVER-SEA-TRANSPORT IN EUROPE”.

2. Development of fleets for River-Sea and Short Sea Shipping

Since a couple of years the European River-Sea and Short Sea Fleet is shrinking and totally overaged and at the same time the demand of Sea Transit is increasing due to various reasons e.g.:

Climate Change, European and national Actions Programs to force waterborne Transports from road to sea, growing demand to transport, less new buildings during the last years and an increasing awareness of environmental protection and a new definition of the globalization towards a strengthening of the Intra European trade and transport volumes.

Recommendations:

- National Governments support a general European Solution to foster new buildings. RSS / SSS is an international trade and dedicated to strengthen / for the European single market now and in the future.
- Preparation of building a fleet of new generation vessels, suitable for Big European Circle, ready for a smart European intermodal traffic with road, rail and IWT in close cooperation with EC.
- Information about modernization and renovation of the existing fleet of Short Sea and River-Sea vessels with regards to the Zero-Emissions goals of the IMO and the European Green Deal.

- IWT and harmonization of the technical requirements and the technical standards for River-Sea-Ships in the international trade in coordination with the Working Group of the IWT Committee of UNECE.
- Better Frame condition for fair competition within all modes (See 3. Market for RSS and Short Sea Sea...)

3. Market for the River-Sea Shipping and Short Sea Shipping

To make river-sea shipping and short sea shipping more competitive we need:

- 1. a significant modernization of port disbursement systems with regard to greening and digitization of the ships to lower costs for Port Dues and Pilot Dues.**
- 2. The owner or Charterer need the right to determine the Port Agent /declarant himself.**
- 3. The duration in ports to be optimized, shortened. Worktime extended at least including Saturdays better 24/7.**
- 4. cost-effective, environmentally-friendly ships and more industrial structures in shipping for more efficiency.**

Measures for a save, more environmental and save way to move goods, on an economic way as reliable partner of the whole European Industry as part of a strong and safe supply chain.

Recommendations:

Port dues

Ports are often fiscally run and charge their costs according to municipal, regional or national guidelines / fees. As a rule, there is little scope for negotiation to reduce costs. Lines and so-called home traders receive compensation and in some cases particularly environmentally friendly ships. But these measures are not enough to reduce significantly the port costs in order to route more goods via ports.

Alternatives:

Analogous to the road freight traffic, the port tax change to distance / toll systems.

Compared to short sea traffic coastal-parallel road traffic in particular has a strong advantage and prevents a sustainable transfer of goods to the motor ways of sea:

On short sea routes, e.g. from Rotterdam to Le Havre, port call costs have a disproportionate share of sea freight; quite different in comparison the long sea voyages from Rotterdam to Taranto. This discrepancy cannot be compensated by remaining costs such as bunkers and operating expenses in order to be competitive with the road transport sector. As a consequence the maritime sector is losing goods or cannot take over goods from road to sea.

The solution would be a port dues system fed from a fund where everyone deposits for a key and uses it to pay for the ports. For the sea freight calculation low harbor costs arise on short sea routes and higher harbor costs on long routes and thus the ship would remain competitive with the road even on short distances.

Pilotage fees

Like port dues, pilotage dues are levied according to non-transparent criteria. Driving without

pilots and the calculation of pilotage fees are based on ship dimensions that are no longer up to date.

Alternatives:

Tariff systems need to be revised. Fees based on ship length or DWAT are no longer appropriate and should finally take into account the possibilities of digitalization, the modern 4.0 equipment of seagoing vessels, up to new forms of remote control assistance such as air traffic (tower) or rail traffic control centers. Necessary use of digitalization also in view of the lack of junior staff. Involved: National BVMI, Pilot Associations, EU-wide alignment.

Agency Fees

Ship owners are billed according to the recommend rates of the national associations and without order principles. In most cases, the shipper determine the agent and thereby preventing free competition and the highest tariffs comes to billing.

Alternatives:

The solution is simple, the ordering principle must be mandatory. In the NSW system, the declarant (Agent) only need to be determined by the ship owners. Due to traditional use of actually forbidden tariffs we increase the cost of sea freight and finally for the goods. Sea passages becomes uneconomic, too expensive.

(Involved are: EC for new resolutions/directives. National associations of port agencies should not affect the system)

Conclusion:

First of all, the conditions for shipping must be significantly improved. Port call costs, including port tax, agency fees, pilotage costs and other services, will need to be reduced and port loading and unloading times reduced to make RSS and Short Sea Shipping sustainable more economic.

A Strong campaign from the maritime sector must be organized to apply for better frame condition with respect to the growing importance of waterborne transport according the Green Deal / Fit for 55 Action Programs to fulfil their aims.

More Digitization for Portcalls, (NSW) and Datatransfers (Efti) and the most important measure: ship/crew and cargo can move freely within the EU and associated partners without costumes measures in every port incoming and outgoing, like a truck.

If the framework conditions are well designed and the demand for maritime transport increases, ship owners will invest in new buildings and put an end to the negative fleet development.

4. Cooperation between River-Sea-Short Sea Ships, Inland- and Sea Ports

For a higher efficiency of Short Sea and River-Sea Shipping the improvement of cooperation between vessels, inland ports and sea ports is necessary. The waiting time of river-sea ships in the inland ports and sea ports must be reduced. The practice of “**Friday 5 pm / Monday 8 am**” clauses is a relic of the past and should be abolished. One of the largest cost factors is the downtimes during which the ships lay in the ports at the weekend. With quicker processing, the ships would have shorter journeys and thus lower costs, resulting in a real competitiveness towards road transport.

Recommendations:

- Analysis of the losses for river-sea shipping and Short Sea Shipping by the waiting time in inland and sea ports and of the reasons for it.
- Proposals for the reduction of waiting time for River-Sea Ships, Short Sea Shipping and all other parts of the supply chain, including negotiations with inland ports, short sea terminals, the unions and shippers to avoid terms like Monday 5 pm / Friday pm as normal working hours which leads to extra costs during Saturday/Sunday/holiday loading/discharging operations.
- Improvement of the coordination and communication between ship and port during the operation process.
- The better knowledge of the English language of the crews on river-sea ships and Terminals in inland ports is very important for a better communication and understanding of the different employees in the logistic chain and in the interfaces. For the River-Sea Shipping it will be very important that also English will be standard for the navigation on all corresponding rivers. On the River Rhine the official languages are German, Dutch and French, but also English must be an official language for the navigation and communication between ships and ports.
- **Policy initiatives in digital transport and logistics, and digital tools for inland waterway transport in the European Union and beyond;**
- **Ongoing international projects and national strategies for inland waterways and river-sea shipping;**
- **Digitization of work and transport documents, streamlining document procedures and data harmonization;**
- **Development of digital RIS technologies;**
- **Implementation of common standards, platforms and systems;**
- **Cyber Security Safety.**

5. Increasing of efficiency and profitability of cross-border and multimodal integration.

River-Sea and Short Sea Shipping needs to be competitive to be integrated in the multimodal transport chains. This is important to increase efficiency and profitability and for cross-border and multimodal integration. River Sea and Short Sea Shipping pays an important Contribution to deliver the future policy and mobility goals. Green Deal / Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

Following points can be used for the discussion about digitalization in River-Sea Shipping in the RSSC-Position Paper:

- **Social aspects of digitalization, education and training standards.**

Recommendations:

- River information services and sea navigation systems (e.g. VTS, AIS) must be interoperable. Newly developed RIS systems should not prevent e.g. sea-river ships to enter inland waterways and vice versa. While developing RIS services further, interfaces to link VTS services needs to be considered. Otherwise some regions cannot benefit from enhanced services developed on the European level.
- To ensure to keep track of RIS service developments and to align VTS accordingly. Existing VTS monitoring should be developed further into a more active traffic control and route planning.
- To set up adequate infrastructure to enhance further digitalization and to develop ITS systems further to increase efficiency and safety as well as prepare for autonomous shipping in future.
- To support data exchange and set-up of easy to use information platforms as well as one-stop-shop platform to provide navigational, operative and administrative information on inland waterways. Availability and usage of open data is a precondition and should be sought by all stakeholders. Links between RIS, eTools and other digital applications should ensure future compatibility.

The current legislation for navigation of river-sea ships on IWW has different Rules and Regulations. Besides river-sea ships must comply with ever changing maritime legislation. Also the questions of the civil liability for River-Sea Shipping and of the insurance must be analyzed more deeply to find the weak points.

Ships have to be able to arrive at and depart from ports safely. There have been significant technical developments in electronic navigation in the last 20 years. This technology must be implemented in a RIS soonest. We need a seamless network along the rivers and coasts with a 5G standard.

Conclusion: Direct and open consultations and information exchange between Maritime Industry and political stakeholder. Deeper dialogue.

6. Development of critical infrastructure of inland waterways.

The development and maintenance of the river infrastructure (water level) of Inland Waterways, where the river-sea shipping is possible is very important for the commercial side and the acceptance of this kind of transport.

Recommendations:

- Influence on the construction of the “Program for development of Inland Waterways” on national or international level.
- Information of the RSSC-Members and interested ERSTU/EBU-Members about the “Inventory of main standards and parameters of the E Waterway Network” – “Blue Book” UNECE, Third Revised Edition, European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), Inventory of Most Important Bottlenecks and Missing Links in the E Waterway Network (Resolution No. 49, revised) and Map of the European

Inland Waterway Network (Resolution No. 30).

- Monitoring of the realization of this program with the focus on the liquidations of bottlenecks for river-sea shipping.

7. Background

On the 16th of December, 2014 EBU`s Board of Directors decided to accept the membership applications of ERSTU as corresponding member and proposed the setting-up of the EBU`s River-Sea Shipping Committee. The Committee was established by and under the EBU`s Board of Directors, led by the chairman of ERSTU.

The Committee deals with all topics related to River-Sea Shipping and Short Sea Shipping that are relevant to the members of EBU and ERSTU. The topics are fixed in short and long-term programs.

Haren 13.09.2021 WP