



**Minutes of the meeting**  
**8<sup>th</sup> Waterborne and Multimodality Transport Technical Committee Meeting**  
**07 December 2023**

**Hotel Marivaux, Brussels**

- 1) The agenda of the meeting was adopted.
- 2) Transport Community Permanent Secretariat's Deputy Director Ljuba Siljanoska welcomed all the participants in the TC meeting. Ms Siljanoska stressed the continuous ambition of the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat in waterborne transport, highlighting the progress made in implementation of the Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality. She also highlighted the initiative of drafting the New Action Plan, especially having in mind several successfully completed actions, as well as the European Commission's adoption of the "Fit for 55" legislative package, the rapid evolution of digital technology and cybersecurity concerns, as well as the crucial element of the human factor. Representatives from IMO, DG MOVE, DG NEAR, EMSA, European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO), Inland Navigation Europe (INE), and other esteemed organizations participating in-person or online were welcomed.
- 3) Ms Fotini Ioannidou, Acting Director, European Commission, DG MOVE welcomed the participants and presented the latest developments from the European Commission.

She reminded of the adoption of FuelEU Maritime, the inclusion of maritime transport under the Emissions Trading System and the adoption of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure regulation, as crucial steps to achieve the GHG reduction targets, and underlined that putting in place this framework would be challenging and require to work intensely during 2024. She also reminded about the EU contribution to the work at IMO, which resulted in an ambitious GHG reduction strategy with the aim to reach net zero emissions from international shipping by 2050.

On maritime safety, Ms Ioannidou underlined the preparation of the maritime safety package, which included 5 proposals for the review of legislation. In relation to the four Directives: on Port State Control, Flag State, Maritime Accident Investigations and Ship-source Pollution, she explained the Council and the Parliament had already agreed on their respective positions on these texts, so it was expected the Parliament, the Council and the Commission could reach an agreement in the first months of 2024.

Concerning the proposal to revise the mandate of the European Maritime Safety Agency, intended to better reflect its current and future tasks, the discussion at the Council would start under the Belgian Presidency.

In respect of inland navigation, Ms Ioannidou reminded that NAIADES III Action Plan remained, the guiding document for the delivery the Commission's strategic planning for inland waterways and noted we were arriving to the middle of its 7-year period, coinciding with the Multiannual Financial Framework mid-term review. She mentioned the flagship initiative for the revision of the River Information Services, which was needed because the current Directive dated back to 2005, a long period in terms of digitalisation. She also noted the initiative on smart and flexible EU crewing rules in inland waterway transport for which the impact assessment would start in early 2024. Finally, referred to the crucial cooperation with the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) and the Danube and Sava Commission.

To conclude Ms Ioannidou underlined the transformation of waterborne transport in the EU, kicked-off by the Green Deal, and noted progress in updated safety provisions, training and capacity building was a precondition for the success of the transformation.

She encouraged the TCT members and observers to continue the work to implement the EU acquis. She noted this work was important, taking into account enlargement was high on the agenda of the Commission.

Concerning the revision of the TCT Action Plan for Waterborne transport and Multimodality, she offered the assistance of DG MOVE and praise the good cooperation with the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat.

- 4) TCT Secretariat's Desk Officer for Waterborne Transport Mr Elson Thana reflected on the TCT's Annual Work Program for 2023 in the area of waterborne transport and multimodality and briefly presented the activities completed in the course of 2023: TC meetings, conferences, workshops, study visits and technical assistance, in particular TAIEX. Two upcoming activities in the course of 2023 were announced: Towards a Connected Future - Delivering ITS in the Western Balkans 12-13 December in Skopje and National seminar from IMO on facilitation of international maritime traffic – 20-22 December in Durres.
- 5) Mr Ivaylo Valev from International Maritime Organisation presented IMO's Technical Cooperation activities related to the work of the Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality. He elaborated on the IMO being part of the UN system, on its internal structure and the focus on the improving implementation of the IMO instruments as the Strategic Direction 1 of the IMO's Strategic Plan for next six years. Mr Valev briefly mentioned the key topics currently discussed at the various IMO bodies like pollution prevention and decarbonization, digitalization, automation, and Human element and the IMO's major projects and technical cooperation activities in support to the developing Member States in line with the topics mentioned above. A short video was presented to highlight the recent technical cooperation and capacity building initiatives aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and in particular number 17 Partnerships for the goals.
- 6) The representative of DG MOVE, Unit D2, Mr Casto Lopez Benitez presented DG MOVE's Priorities in Maritime Safety. Maritime Safety EU acquis, in particular on safety of passenger ships was introduced. Ongoing initiatives for revision of safety directives, related to:
  - port state - to further improve safety, security, and sustainability of maritime transport through regular inspections (Directive 2009/16/EC),
  - flag state - to update and align with international rules, and to clarify and strengthen the obligations of the flag (Directive 2009/21/EC),
  - accident investigation - to update and align with international rules, and to clarify and strengthen the obligations of the flag (Directive 2009/21/EC),
  - ship source pollution on the introduction of penalties for infringements (Directive 2005/35/EC) and
  - the revision of the mandate of EMSA were presented.Future initiatives
  - Implementing the revised directives,
  - monitoring the implementation of passenger ship safety directives from EMSA and
  - agree on guidance for implementation, safe use, and safe transport of new/decarbonised fuels and
  - the possibly an evaluation of fishing vessel safety.
- 7) Mr. Kristijan Lezaic from DG MOVE presented about Empowering Ports and Inland Waterways: DG MOVE D3's Strategic Focus on Inland Navigation. He reiterated the main topics of D3 unit when it comes to the ports and inland navigation and presented NAIADES III Action Plan 2021-2027.

The main topics for Inland Waterways are:

- EU Policy of inland waterway transport,
- NAIADES III action plan,
- Vessels: Directive (EU) 2016/1629 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels,
- Social dimension: Directive (EU) 2017/2397 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation,

- Traffic management: Revision of the River Information Services Directive (RIS, 2005/44/EC) (proposal from January 2024),
- Fitness Check of 7 market access old regulations on going and
- collaboration and support to the CCNR, DC on market observations, standardisation and solidarity lanes.

The main topics for Inland Waterways Ports are:

- Greening of ports: zero-emission ports flagship in Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and study on capacity for greening of seaports,
- Regulation (EU) 2017/352 establishing a framework for the provision of port services and common rules on the financial transparency of ports,
- Dialogue with stakeholders including in European Ports Forum expert group, and its Sustainable Ports Subgroup, e.g. with focus on exchange of best practices,
- Application and modernization of the State aid rules, in the context of the competition policy, with DG COMP
- Support to the European social dialogue between port workers and their employees,
- Support to better planning, financing and funding of port infrastructure and their connections in the trans-European network and under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF).

The European Commission has launched in 2022 the Green Inland Ports Study. The study aims to support European inland ports to become zero-emission, sustainable hubs connecting Europe. The study assesses the environmental impact of ports on their surroundings, looks at the role of digitalisation in becoming more sustainable and identifies opportunities to adopt inland waterway transport for urban mobility and short-distance transport. These elements will form the basis for the development of a quality management system that monitors the environmental and sustainable performance of the ports. This system will be tested in a minimum of ten inland ports in the EU.

Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR) for inland ports

Article 10 Targets for shore-side electricity supply in inland waterway ports Member States shall ensure that:

- at least one installation providing shore-side electricity supply to inland waterway vessels is deployed at all TEN-T core inland waterway ports by 31 December 2024.
- at least one installation providing shore-side electricity supply to inland waterway vessels is deployed at all TEN-T comprehensive inland waterway ports by 31 December 2029.

Article 14 National policy frameworks “by 31 December 2024, each Member State shall prepare and transmit to the Commission a draft national policy framework for the development of the market as regards alternative fuels in the transport sector and the deployment of the relevant infrastructure - an overview of the state of play, perspectives, and planned measures in respect of deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure in inland navigation, such as for electricity and hydrogen.”

The role of ports within the Fit for 55 initiative was outlined. Transport budget 2021-2027 is allocated mostly through CEF (€25.8 billion), and partially through other means such as EIB, Regional Development and Cohesion Fund, Innovation fund, Horizon Europe etc.

- 8) Mr. Giuseppe Russo delivered a presentation on the forthcoming projects for the Western Balkans with a focus on human elements aspects and on preparatory measures for the future participation of relevant IPA countries in the EMSA. Their studies will continue with the focus of feasibility of single maritime window and feasibility on sea traffic management.
- 9) Ms Danique De Jonge from European Sea Port Organisation presented ESPO's Synergy with the Transport Community: Partnering for a Sustainable Future. ESPO Port Investments Study is being updated prior to the EU elections in June 2024 and all TEN-T ports were invited to participate in the related survey. She informed

that maritime EU ETS kicks in from January 2024 onwards, the focus will be on ports' strategic autonomy and resilience. It was reiterated that recognition of ports as critical infrastructure should translate to adequately supporting Europe's ports to carry out their critical role – for EU economy and society. She informed all participants that the next ESPO Conference will take place on 25-26 April in Paris and invited them to attend it.

- 10) Mr Turi Fiorito from the European Federation of Inland Ports (EFIP) presented Nurturing Europe's Inland Ports: EFIP's Vision for a Sustainable Future. Internal organisation of EFIP, its mission and competencies were introduced. It was discussed how EFIP aligns with the goals and principles of the European Green Deal. The importance of sustainability in EFIP's vision was emphasized. Key Environmental Targets for Inland Ports were presented, outlining the specific environmental targets set for inland ports. Areas such as emissions reduction, energy efficiency, and waste management were addressed. Case study: Connecting Europe Facility, examples in inland ports was briefly introduced.
- 11) Mr Robert Mantero from TAIEX Unit, DG NEAR presented TAIEX as an important instrument for empowering Waterborne Transport in the region. The structure and aim of TAIEX, events organised in the area of waterborne transport were listed. Albania (4) and Montenegro (6) are currently the only active regional partners from the Western Balkans. When it comes to the Observing Participants, 14 events were organised in Ukraine. The online form for application for the TAIEX assistance was shared. All Regional Partners and the Observing Participants were encouraged to apply for the TAIEX in the area of waterborne transport where the assistance from the EU is needed.
- 12) PhD Pranvera Beqiraj and PhD Alma Golgota from University of Durres gave a brief overview of the project on Maritime Cybersecurity: Ensuring Secure Maritime Operations in the Digital Age for Albania. She explained about a project that a group of Lecturers from the fields of Law, Marine Engineering and IT are involved related to cyber security in maritime activities
- 13) Regional Partners presented latest developments on Implementation of the Waterborne Transport and Multimodality Action Plan.

Ms Ergis Kryekurti, Inspector from General Maritime Directorate of Albania presented the latest developments in Albania. Technical Assurances led by EMSA (including drafting of the Maritime Strategy) were introduced, as well as the legislative work conducted within IPA III. The outcomes of the TAIEX study visits on recognition of seafarers' certificates and IMDG code were introduced. "The National Database for Maritime Traffic" in Albania is playing the role of National Single Window.

Ms Snjezana Ivkovic from the Ministry of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina updated participants on actions related to infrastructure of inland waterways and briefly presented the Draft Rulebook on the maintenance of waterways on common sections of waterways between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia in the Sava River basin. Consultations for the draft are ongoing. There is no Law on Maritime or Inland Waterway Transport at the state level, due to which further implementation of the EU acquis and adoption of the Action Plan for Waterborne transport is delayed.

Ms Ana Kusovac from the Directorate for Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs of Montenegro updated participants on the status of implementation of Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality. Several laws and bylaws have been drafted under IPA II, in the area of prevention of maritime transport, sea pollution from vessels, ports and inland navigation. EMSA conducted an inspection of the maritime education, training, and certification system of Montenegro from May to June 2023. Inspection report on Compliance with the requirements of the STCW Convention, was delivered in August

2023. In accordance with identified shortcomings and recommendations Montenegro prepared Action Plan which has to be translated on English and delivered to EMSA.

The representative of Port Governance Agency of Serbia updated participants on the latest activities in the area of waterborne transport. Cargo handling statistics 2022-2023 was presented, and the types of transhipped cargo in 2023 as on 01.12.2023. Passenger traffic statistics 2022-2023 was also shown. In 2023 International Passengers Terminal on the Sava River was open in December 2023.

Mr Sinisa Ivin from the Directorate for Inland Waterways, Ministry of Construction, Transport, and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia presented current status and perspectives in the inland waterways. Upgrade of Iron Gate II lock project commenced in March 2023. With regard to project AtoNs on the Sava River, the contract was signed in April 2023, and delivery is scheduled to be completed in early 2024. To date, 33 buoys have been delivered. Tender documentation for marking vessels has been submitted to the EIB for approval. Preparing FAIRway 2 works in the Rhine – Danube corridor (2020 – 2024) project is also pending approval from EIB. Development of ports and lock on the Tisza River is in the design phase. VTS and Voice (2022-2023) VHF & Network of HMSs project is completed in November 2023. UXO Survey and Removal of sunken German fleet (2020 - ongoing) project commenced in July 2023.

Mr. Krunoslav Sopček, representing the International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC), commenced his presentation by expressing the ISRBC's commitment to supporting the Regional Partners within the ISRBC membership. He extended an invitation to the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat and Regional Partners who have indicated their readiness for collaboration and assistance. Mr. Sopček emphasized ISRBC's willingness to aid Regional Partners in the transposition of the EU Acquis and to facilitate coordination with EU institutions, including Croatian institutions, to expedite the achievement of goals and plans. ISRBC has played a pivotal role in enhancing the criteria for progress since its initiation, particularly for the Republic of Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina. Providing an overview of the members associated with the Technical Committee for Waterborne Transport, Mr. Sopček reiterated ISRBC's commitment to assisting Regional Partners. He highlighted the recent meeting focused on advancing the documentation for a demining project on the right bank of the Sava River in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This project, covering approximately 30 km in two parts, aims to address critical sections. In conclusion, Mr. Sopček proposed considering the option of assistance through TAIEX or Twinning for the Regional Partners to achieve their objectives. Alternatively, Regional Partners may request direct assistance from ISRBC to further their goals.

#### 14) The Observing Participants presented the Latest development on Waterborne Transport and Multimodality.

The representatives of Georgia, Ms Lika Bitsadze, and Ms Kristina Akhaladze gave an overview of Enhancement of Black Sea connectivity in 2023. With the assistance of EU, the study on the development of ferry/feeder services on the Black Sea has been conducted in 2023. From 2023, regular ferry service has started in direction of Romania. At the stage of negotiations are ferry Ro-Ro services in direction of Turkey: Hopa-Poti, Hopa/Trabzon/Karasu-Batumi/Poti, Hopa-Batumi. Two infrastructural projects for 2023 are ongoing: (1) New Deep-Sea Port of Anaklia for which on September 20, two qualified candidates have been selected and the winner will be announced during 2024, and (2) Poti port expansion for which the negotiations have been renewed.

The Government of Georgia is actively working on enhancing international cooperation and raising awareness and popularity of Georgia as a strategical gateway and in this regard in October 2023, Tbilisi Silk Road Forum was organized which gathered over 2000 guests from 60 different countries.

Maritime Transport Agency of Georgia has initiated the national procedures regarding the implementation of the EU regulation, on reporting formalities for ships arriving in and/or departing from ports.



The Government of Georgia is currently actively working to introduce different digital solutions in the maritime and port sector. Currently the “Maritime Single Window” project has passed the stage of negotiations and moved to the active implementation process, which includes the development of the hardware and software system. The pilot version of the system will be ready for use in January 2024, and the NMSW system will be fully advanced to go live in September 2024. Digitalisation of the public services, including ports and logistics sector has become priority for the government of Georgia.

Mr Vadim Pavalachi, Deputy Director of the Naval Agency of the Republic of Moldova gave a brief analysis of the current situation in Moldova. 2 pieces of legislation and projects completed in the fourth quarter of 2023 were presented: 1. Government Decision no. 723 from 26.09.2023 for the approval of norms and standards regarding the technical examination of inland navigation vessels and the recognition of inland navigation classification societies and the Government Decision No. 862 from 08.11.2023 the Regulation on applicable standards to facilitate international maritime traffic, as well as the adopted Mobility Strategy 2030 financed by technical assistance from the EU Delegation to Moldova and the transposition of MARPOL convention, supported by EMSA in collaboration with WMU. Several other projects in the area of inland waterway are pending approval in the last quarter of 2023 AS on enhancing port and ships security, the rules for the registration of vessels, the approval of the procedures for establishing the minimum safe manning of the maritime vessels, the rules and standards of reporting in electronic format and establishing the Maritime Single Window and the procedures of port state control. On Inland Navigation the rules of navigation on Danube sector and inland waterways of Moldova (transposing CEVNI) and establishing the minimum safe manning of the inland waterway vessels.

Conclusions: During the Waterborne Transport and Multimodality Technical Committee meeting, Mr. Thana highlighted the completion of two annual reports by the Transport Community Permanent Secretariat for Regional Partners. The first report covered Action Plans and the EU Acquis Progress Report, along with the development of the Indicative TEN-T Extension for the Comprehensive and Core Network in the Western Balkans. Two additional reports were prepared for Observer Participants.

Looking ahead to 2024, there is a strategic plan to draft and gain approval for a new common Action Plan, encompassing both Regional Partners and Observer Participants. This comprehensive plan aims to address the transposition of essential legislation and the improvement of the port infrastructure following the priorities and strategies of the EU in waterborne transport.

Mr. Thana urged all participants to intensify their efforts in the coming year for the effective implementation of the Action Plan for Waterborne Transport and Multimodality. The emphasis will be on increasing the number of transposed EU Acquis in national legislation and undertaking actions related to port infrastructure.

In terms of Technical Assistance, Mr. Thana encouraged participants to engage in discussions regarding future needs. The Transport Community Permanent Secretariat is committed to providing additional technical assistance to address specific needs not covered by ongoing initiatives. This collaborative effort ensures a more comprehensive and tailored approach to addressing challenges in the field.