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Subject: Council conclusions on *Inland Waterway Transport – see its potential and promote it!*
– Council conclusions (3 December 2018)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on *Inland Waterway Transport* adopted by the Council at its 3658th meeting held on 3 December 2018.

INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT – SEE ITS POTENTIAL AND PROMOTE IT!

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING the key role of inland waterways in achieving transport policy objectives in the Union, as acknowledged in all the major policy instruments, including the following:

- White Paper: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource-efficient transport system¹;
- Commission communication on a European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility²;
- European Council conclusions on the Paris Agreement on climate change³;
- Council conclusions on the progress of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) implementation and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for transport⁴;
- Third work plans for the European coordinators on the Atlantic, Baltic-Adriatic, North Sea-Baltic, North-Sea Mediterranean, Mediterranean, Orient/EastMed, Rhine-Alpine and the Rhine-Danube corridors;
- Commission mid-term progress report on the implementation of the NAIADES II action programme for the promotion of inland waterway transport (covering the period 2014-2017);⁵ and
- Commission staff working document on Digital Inland Navigation⁶.

¹ doc. 8333/11 + ADD 1-3

² doc. 11333/16 + ADD 1 + ADD 2

³ European Council, 22.6.2017

⁴ doc. 15053/17

⁵ doc. 12350/18

⁶ doc. 12342/18

TAKING NOTE of the discussions and conclusions in river commissions, international fora and within the sector with a view to further developing and improving inland waterway transport:

- Regional ministerial declarations at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe⁷, at the Central Commission for the navigation of the Rhine⁸ and of the Danube riparian states⁹;
- Inland waterway industry declaration¹⁰.

EMPHASISING that inland waterway transport should – where geographically feasible – contribute substantially to an efficient multimodal transport system in the Union, but that its full potential is not currently being used. RECALLING in this context the potential of inland waterway transport for the hinterland connection of sea ports and the supply of important industrial centres and urban agglomerations, as well as for urban passenger transport.

ACKNOWLEDGING the significant contribution inland waterway transport could make towards diminishing the negative effects of transport, both by shifting freight transport from the road to allow for more efficient energy use and increased use of alternative fuels, in support of efforts to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement on climate change, as well as by reducing noise emissions, accidents and congestion on roads without additional land use.

RECALLING Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 which requires that rivers, canals and lakes be maintained so as to preserve good navigation status, while respecting the applicable environmental law. UNDERLINING in this context the availability of free capacity on inland waterways with relatively low infrastructure costs.

⁷ Adopted at the International Ministerial Conference on Inland Water Transport - Inland Navigation in a Global Setting (Wrocław, 18 April 2018)

⁸ Adopted at the CCNR congress to mark the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Mannheim Act (Mannheim, 17 October 2018)

⁹ Adopted at the Meeting of Ministers from Bulgaria, Germany, Croatia, Austria, Romania, Slovakia, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and the Republic of Serbia (Brussels, 3 December 2018)

¹⁰ Adopted at Danube Business Talks by EBU, ESO and PDI (Vienna, 10 October 2018)

RECALLING that with the adoption of Directive (EU) 2017/2397¹¹, Directive (EU) 2016/1629¹² and Regulation (EU) 2016/1628¹³, the legal framework has been revised in order to establish harmonised rules, adapt the provisions to technical progress, make the sector more attractive in particular for young people and promote the mobility of workers.

WELCOMING the progress for an improved European governance in inland navigation, in particular the creation and successful launch of the European Committee for drawing up common Standards in the field of Inland Navigation (CESNI), with the active participation of observer States, international organisations and river commissions, as well as the industry.

ACKNOWLEDGING the positive results of the measures taken in the framework of the NAIADES II programme due to end in 2020,

RECALLING the discussion on the proposals on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network¹⁴ and on the revision of the Connecting Europe Facility¹⁵.

¹¹ Directive (EU) 2017/2397 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017 on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directives 91/672/EEC and 96/50/EC.

¹² Directive (EU) 2016/1629 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels, amending Directive 2009/100/EC and repealing Directive 2006/87/EC.

¹³ Regulation (EU) 2016/1628 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2016 on requirements relating to gaseous and particulate pollutant emission limits and type-approval for internal combustion engines for non-road mobile machinery, amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 and (EU) No 167/2013, and amending and repealing Directive 97/68/EC.

¹⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network.

¹⁵ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014.

- (1) UNDERLINES that further action and support is needed to unlock the full potential of inland waterway transport as an efficient, safe and sustainable transport system and the development of the environmental performance of the fleet while preserving the competitive advantages of inland waterway transport.
- (2) STRESSES the need to launch a follow-up programme to NAIADES II by the end of 2020 at the latest to ensure the continuity of the measures and INVITES the Commission to develop in cooperation with Member States, river commissions and other relevant stakeholders such a programme addressing the following issues:
 - infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and upgrade; including ports;
 - an implementation strategy for fleet modernisation and technological development, in particular with regard to environmental performance, efficiency and safety;
 - human resources development, including training and qualification;
 - maintaining a level playing field and fair social conditions within and beyond the borders of the Union;
 - an implementation strategy for digitalisation (e.g. next generation of River Information Services (RIS), electronic Union certificates, service record books, logbooks and electronic transport documents);
 - measures to improve the competitiveness of the sector and market observation;
 - integration and interoperability with other modes of transport, as well as research and development in the field of automation;
 - support cooperation with international bodies and organisations and within intergovernmental activities in the field of inland navigation.

- (3) NOTES that the FP7 projects Platina and Platina II greatly facilitated the implementation of NAIADES and NAIADES II, and INVITES the Commission to further facilitate innovative coordination projects in order to safeguard the implementation of the programme.
- (4) ACKNOWLEDGES the outcome of research and development projects from both the FP7 and H2020 programmes, under which dedicated concepts were established for greening inland waterway vessels, and INDICATES the need for further research projects in this area and for a coordinated roll-out and funding strategy for the implementation of research results.
- (5) NOTES that a follow-up programme would also support the harmonised implementation and application of the existing legal framework and the further development of common rules and standards, in particular in support of further modernisation and innovation. ADVISES in this context that the expertise and experience of CESNI should be drawn on not only in the area of technical requirements for inland waterway vessels and professional qualifications, but also in the area of information technology, including RIS and other fields such as collection of data on accidents on inland waterways at European level, in order to improve the rules and standards where necessary.
- (6) UNDERLINES the importance of ensuring the availability of appropriate financial means, such as grants, to implement the current NAIADES II action programme and the future follow-up programme, without prejudice to the ongoing negotiations on the next multiannual financial framework.