

EFIP contribution to the consultation process on a future ports policy

First of all, EFIP would like to congratulate the European Commission on the initiative of this intensive and broad consultation exercise of the sector in view of a future ports policy. During the six workshops that were organised, important subjects were addressed, and there were many occasions for stakeholders to enhance their dialogue.

This is certainly an unprecedented exercise which has allowed to boost dialogue between the different interested parties and look at challenges and solutions together.

When EFIP decided to get involved in the whole exercise, it was to better understand the issues of seaports and assess the consequences of a future ports policy on the inland ports.

Recently, the European Commission asked EFIP whether the future Communication on a ports policy that is expected to be published in October 2007 should also cover inland ports, together with seaports, or not.

EFIP decided to reply to all major subjects addressed in the workshops, considering the degree of relevance for inland ports or not.

Specificities of European inland ports

European inland ports are essential nodal points in urban transport for the cities and vital links located along the main waterways and smaller canals in the European transport network, enabling the connection by inland waterways, railway and road and when geographically possible also short sea shipping. They effectively enable the integration of the various modes of transport and offer value-added logistics services.

Furthermore, they are playing an increasing role as strategic links for seaports in the transport of goods to and from production sites and markets.

Although there are similarities between sea and inland ports, EFIP is of the view that the European Commission should merely consider the specificities of the inland ports if compared to seaports to ensure that their activities are not affected by measures that could be practicable for seaports but not for inland ports. While it has been recognised that there are similarities between seaports and inland ports, it has to be noted that there are also major differences that should be taken into account at the EU level. In particular, the industries located in inland ports are very often small and medium-sized companies, the geographical situation of inland ports is different and their market looks also somehow different. They are usually smaller in size and the possibilities for the development are more limited in the hinterland in terms of space. Besides, inland ports have more a regional and local function.

The Communication on a future ports policy, which should be published in October 2007, should take into account the great variety of ports in Europe.

For these reasons EFIP is of the view that it would be probably inappropriate to consider the European inland ports in the upcoming Communication on a future ports policy as it would be a wrong signal given at all levels, that sea and inland ports would have the exact same rules applied to them. In several EU Member States, it appears that currently seaports legislation also apply to some inland ports, which has rather negative side-effects.

Although it has been recognised that inland ports and seaports have an increasing common agenda when it comes to EU policy (environment, hinterland connections, port-city relation, just to name a few), EFIP would like to warn the European Commission for a simple approach which

would consist in the application of the exact same rules and treatment to seaports and inland ports. This could have very negative side-effects for European inland ports.

In particular, EFIP would like to recall what Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of transport recently said at a seminar on urban logistics that was organised by EFIP that the ideas developed in the debate on a ports policy may also apply to inland ports, although seaports and river ports cannot be dealt with at the same level. He added that each port differs by its size, type, organisation, geographical location, and that the approach "one fits all" is therefore not suitable.

This being said, this doesn't mean that the subjects covered in the consultation process are not relevant at all for inland ports.

The conditionality of being included in the forthcoming Communication on ports or not should by no means neither undermine the importance nor the recognition of European inland ports for this region of the world. Without covering "per se" the inland ports, the Commission could recognise that there are subjects which are very topical for the inland ports. The co-operation between sea and inland ports is evident and will no doubt further develop in the future as a result of the latest developments in logistics chains and the need to ensure adequate hinterland connections. Sea and inland ports will increasingly depend on each other to ensure their attractiveness. This Communication could, without covering directly the inland ports, mention the important roles of both seaports and inland ports as natural partners and their important role in logistical chains.

Having followed the consultation process and participated in the 6 workshops, EFIP would like to make the following remarks and recommendations, which will only focus on subjects that are directly relevant for the inland ports.

During the consultation process with the different workshops, it was mentioned that the Commission could look at different options it could consider when addressing a future ports policy for Europe.

1. The "do nothing" option: no initiative in the ports sector and leave market forces regulate themselves within the limits of the EC Treaty, which would be enforced along with existing secondary legislation. The outcome of possible infringement procedures and Court cases, if any, would in this case shape the legal framework for ports and port services.
2. The "soft law" option: elaboration of documents interpreting the Treaty or existing legislation in respect of their application to ports. Enforcement of Treaty and/or legislation would follow if necessary.
3. The "legislative" option: elaborate a ports specific catalogue of legislative measures.
4. Combinations of options 1, 2 and 3 above.

In general, EFIP would like to suggest to exclude option 1 and option 3, which are not supported by the sector. It is of the view that the option 2 is a more appropriate approach for the Communication on ports the European Commission intends to publish for the sector. It could also consider to some extent the option 1 when no necessary action is required.

The approach the Commission would choose in general should be in line with the reality of the diversity of ports.

Besides, EFIP would rather welcome a flexible approach with adequate flexible tools and instruments. EFIP is indeed of the view that there is in general no need for new legislation, with perhaps one exception concerning environmental legislation where revision or at least re-examination should be envisaged, in order to better integrate transport development needs as well and a holistic approach of a sustainable transport chain.

Finally, the European Commission could also seek simplification of legislation where feasible and appropriate, considering the "better regulation" approach the Commission has developed recently.

With this in mind, EFIP is of the view that the European Commission may consider a Communication on ports policy that would adopt somehow a similar approach/scheme as the Communication on the NAIADES Action Programme for Inland Waterway transport.

1. Port services and port financing

Europe has today several hundreds of inland ports located along the main corridors close by the inland waterways and canals. They are diverse: specificities concerning geographical situation, size of ports, type and amount of traffic handled, structure, organisation and activities, from multifunctional inland ports to industrial ports, agro ports, container ports and sand and gravel ports.

In Europe, inland ports have an important regional and local function in the development of clusters of economic centres of industry and logistics and the development of employment opportunities in the region. They also are very important links in the European transport chains and bring added value in logistics.

EFIP takes note that during the first workshop in Antwerp, it appeared that most stakeholders would like a legal framework for State aid to ports. It is understood that as a result of a fierce competition between the seaports, state aid guidelines are an interesting instrument to be considered for seaports. It is felt that these guidelines may not be practicable if applied to inland ports as they have essentially a local and regional function and are not directly exposed to such competition. Given their specific situation, they should be excluded from such guidelines. This instrument may not be practicable (too burdensome, costly and disproportionate) for inland ports.

Tariffs: EFIP does not see any action that should be taken at the EU level concerning this specific point as far as inland ports are concerned. This should be left to the free negotiation in the market. It has to be noted that in principle inland ports' tariffs are public and easily made available.

2. Sustainable development of port capacity and environmental issues, general transport policy issues, inter-port cooperation

Inland ports have also a mobility and environmental function by facilitating and encouraging the recourse to environmentally modes of transport such as inland waterways and rail, and also short sea shipping when possible.

• Environmental issues and legislation

The question of the latest environmental legal developments is an important question to look at for inland ports. Increasingly, the development of inland ports or their functioning is being hindered by environmental constraints.

Besides, there is an increasing legal uncertainty for inland waterways and inland ports, not only for seaports. There are risks of delays for the development of projects. Although, as seen from the book "The impact of EU environmental law on ports and waterways" in 2006 written by Eric van Hooydonk with the support of the European Commission, there are apparently no case laws yet dealing with inland ports but with seaports, this can unfortunately not be excluded in the future.

One should take into account the fact that European inland ports have mobility and environmental functions insofar as they favour the recourse to more environmentally-friendly modes of transport such as inland waterways and rail, and when possible also short sea shipping.

Increasingly environmental rules are developed which have a direct impact on inland ports activities.

According to article 6 of the EC Treaty, environmental considerations have to be taken into account in all EU policies.

While EFIP understands and agrees about the need to protect the environment, it is however of the view that transport developments should also be taken into account and the importance of having a sustainable transport network to which inland ports contribute by shifting freight from roads to inland waterways and rail, two modes that have been recognised as being more environmentally friendly modes of transport. So far, such a holistic approach, which is also in line with the aims of the Lisbon Strategy developed by the European Commission, is missing at an EU level.

The European Commission could consider following actions:

- The European Commission could consider the development of guidance instruments that would cover seaports, inland waterways and inland ports concerning environmental developments,

in particular for the Birds and Habitats Directives, the Water Framework Directive, dredging and pollution issues.

Besides, at national and local levels it is felt that guidance instruments would be welcome. Indeed, several inland ports have experienced that national or local authorities are not always aware of how they should address and implement EU environmental legislation. Therefore, inland ports are not always in a position to draw conclusions as there is also unclarity at national level.

At the ESPO Conference in Algeciras, Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of transport stated that environmental guidelines for the application of environmental legislation is an alternative that could be considered. EFIP is of the view that this may be a good instrument to bring more clarity and legal certainty.

- Furthermore, the Commission could act as a catalyst and support dissemination initiatives that would support the inland ports : exchange of experiences, best practices, etc. as far as environment management is concerned, could also be envisaged.

- Re-assessment or revision of current environmental legislation

Pursuant to article 7 of the Water framework Directive, "Member States will not be in breach of this Directive when [...] the reasons for those modifications or alterations are of overriding public interest and/or the benefits to the environment and to society of achieving the objectives set out in paragraph 1 are outweighed by the benefits of the new modifications or alterations to human health, to the maintenance of human safety or to sustainable development". It is also mentioned (§32) that there may be grounds for exemptions from the requirement to prevent further deterioration or to achieve good status under specific conditions, if the failure is the result of unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, in particular floods and droughts, or, for reasons of overriding public interest, of new modifications to the physical characteristics of a surface water body or alterations to the level of bodies of groundwater, provided that all practicable steps are taken to mitigate the adverse impact on the status of the body of water.

Pursuant to article 6 §4 of the Habitats Directive: "If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted."

EFIP is of the view that within the planned assessment of the Birds and Habitats Directives which is due to take place in 2007, it is important to consider the impact of these directives on economic activities in particular port activities and development perspectives. It is essential that this assessment be given an integrative approach rather than a pure environmental and ecological one.

Besides, it is possible for stakeholders in the navigation sector to accompany the process of implementation of the Water Framework Directive. EFIP is a member of the navigation task group that brings together several stakeholders in order to follow the implementation developments. However, EFIP has doubts to what extent the interests of the navigation sector will be considered in the end, and how useful will the involvement in the development of river basin management plans be. Also, EFIP noticed that there are still many differences between EU Member States.

Concerning recent developments with proposals of Directives on air quality and waste, EFIP is of the view that there is an urgent need for all institutions to consider more flexible approaches as far as inland ports are concerned:

- certain areas in the inland ports should not be concerned by the stringent rules addressing specific limit values;
- concerning the proposal for a waste directive, EFIP supports the approach of the European Parliament that non-hazardous sediment should not be regarded as waste.

- Consideration of environmental legislation versus sustainable development

Inland ports are part of the TEN-T networks, they have therefore been recognised as vital elements in the European transport networks. Therefore, they are vital important components of a sustainable transport chain in Europe.

EFIP would also recommend that the European Commission addresses the problem of how is it possible that environmental legislation may go to the detriment of other environmental purposes. Indeed, environmental legislation has to be brought in line with a broader perspective of a “sustainable transport system in Europe”. If developments on inland waterways and in inland ports are made impossible because of the above mentioned legislation, it is very likely that a lot of traffic will go back on the roads, hence increasing congestion and pollution, which would be to the detriment of the environment and a sustainable transport system.

- Inter-port co-operation

Concerning inter-port co-operation, EFIP would encourage the Commission to consider ways and means on how to encourage exchanges of best practices and experiences through Community programmes. In recent years, inland ports have increasingly participated in consortia together in order to seek specific solutions for their port areas, but also to exchange with partners.

During the workshops, EFIP mentioned in particular the Dicity and Interports projects both supported by the Interreg programme, but other projects could be further developed. With the Dicity project, several inland ports have developed contacts and close relationships together in a way that had never reached such a level. The Interports project also brought together sea and inland ports to collaborate more closely in the future.

Of course, EFIP considers that this support should be made while respecting the level playing field between inland ports and ensuring that there is no distortion of competition rules.

3. Port bottlenecks

- **Jobs and skills**

Jobs and skills are important factors of success not only for seaports but also for inland ports. A major question is how to create awareness to attract labour to inland ports activities in Europe in the future.

Training: The training question is essential for the inland waterway sector as identified in the NAIADES Action Programme for inland waterway transport. It is also true for inland ports. Staff and entrepreneurial shortage may become a major problem.

It is essential to create more awareness of the possibilities of inland ports in terms of job creation and perspectives.

The European Union should further support actions to promote awareness concerning opportunities for the sector (towards training, transport institutes, universities) and logisticians in particular.

The European Commission may consider programmes that would encourage and attract people to the port sector to seaports but also to inland ports. Inland ports are too often not known for their potential of development, but there are many possibilities for young people and also low skilled ones.

- **Hinterland connections and logistics**

We are confronted with a changing environment, in particular the globalisation process and the enlargement of the EU. The last three decades have seen important developments in international trading flows between Europe, North America and Asia. We are living today in a context of globalisation. The strong increase of container transport and the growing complexity of global supply chains require new strategies in port logistics.

Inland ports increasingly depend on good hinterland connections to keep their attractiveness and to develop new concepts (such as hub and spoke systems).

The extension of an internal market with 490 million consumers and the ambitious aim to create in Europe the most competitive economy in the world – as described in the Lisbon Agenda –, inevitably result in a growth of the demand for transport services.

These changes have of course an impact on the way we should see transport policy today.

At a local level, several inland ports are confronted with a lack of spare capacity. There is usually a need to expand but space has become scarce. Expansion of port activities is complicated by the spatial claims of other functions, e.g. residential areas, recreation, nature, etc.

The problem of limited expansion opportunities could lead to a deterioration of the competitive position of inland ports and the commercial viability of intermodal transport services.

- Hinterland connections and infrastructure

Long waiting times for container barges in terminals in several seaports in Northern Europe since the beginning of 2004 have demonstrated that the expansion of international trading requires new strategies in ocean forwarding and port logistics, also in connection with the hinterland. It is expected that although seaports of the Northern range have achieved huge extension projects, bottlenecks are likely to remain for a few years if nothing is done. Congestion in seaports is increasing, especially for the handling and hinterland transport of containers at terminals. The availability and efficiency of hinterland connections from the seaports is becoming increasingly a decisive factor for the shipping companies in the choice of the ports in which to call on.

This being said, EFIP is glad to see that as a result of the consultation process on a future ports policy, actors are likely to co-operate more in this respect to try to seek for solutions.

TEN-T and infrastructure

EFIP is of the view the question of the infrastructure, although not an easy one, should be more addressed as it is an essential point. It considers that the realisation of the TEN-T network should be speeded up. Indeed, the completion and upgrading of the main corridors depend to a large extent on them as does the sustainable development of the transport system.

Besides, the financing issue of the infrastructure should be more considered.

EFIP welcomed the position of Commissioner Barrot at its seminar on urban logistics stating that the Commission will pay increased attention to the hinterland connections in the framework of the trans-European transport network and other funding programmes, and that it is of course not only a matter for the European Commission but also for the national authorities, as they are in first instance responsible for the spatial planning on their territory and establishing the infrastructure.

- Logistics

EFIP supports in general new technologies that allow for a better management, organisation and planification of freight flows in the logistics chain and in the port area, including European inland ports. EFIP consider that new technologies can benefit them and their clients.

This being said, EFIP would like to ensure that all systems developed currently, in particular in the different transport modes, are compatible, interoperable between them, a prerequisite to really facilitate and boost the recourse to intermodal transport.

Besides, it is not always clear who is going to pay for the costs derived from such systems.

It is also essential that the role of seaports and inland ports is recognised in the forthcoming Action Plan on logistics.

EFIP is of the view that the European Union should concentrate on:

- Ensuring the implementation of the NAIADES Action Programme for inland waterway transport at all levels

The EU should pursue its policy in favour of inland waterway transport, to ensure a smooth implementation of the NAIADES programme throughout Europe.

EFIP looks forward to the Communication that the European Commission intends to publish in the Autumn 2007 concerning the implementation status of the NAIADES Action Programme. It is essential that actions in favour of this transport mode are coordinated between the different levels, and that the national level continues to be involved in the implementation of NAIADES at country level.

- Ensuring the further development of the rail sector

The Commission should ensure that existing rules adopted in the rail sector are being implemented in the EU Member States, which is not yet the case in all of them, in particular concerning the first and second railway packages. De facto, new entrants cannot enter on the rail networks in all EU Member States.

Besides, further developments are expected in the field of interoperability and wagons.

- Problem of congestion in seaports

It is necessary to ensure that the congestion in seaports at terminals is being tackled in the right way by all interested parties. This problem should be addressed as a matter of urgency. So far, several shipping lines in the hinterland have been abandoned or are at risk. The appointments made at terminals with the barges should be more respected. Therefore all possible solutions to solve the problems should be investigated.

- Bottlenecks

The European Union could further address the question of bottlenecks at all levels, as already undertaken within the group of focal points in the bottleneck exercise for logistics. Developments in a future Action Plan for logistics as envisaged by the European Commission should bring interesting contributions in this context.

- Consider new financial tools and models

The European Commission could look for further possible new financial tools and models to the financing of infrastructure (Public Private Partnerships, etc.) to address the question of the infrastructure development in general.

- Development of the TEN-T projects

EFIP considers that the Commission should continue to focus on the development of TEN-T projects. In particular, EFIP is of the view that the Seine Nord Europe project and the Rhine-Main-Danube should develop faster.

- Reduction of administrative burden

Finally, all actions that are undertaken in order to reduce administrative burden are welcome (customs, etc.)

The European Commission could consider the same approach as for the NAIADES Action Programme for inland waterway transport concerning the study on administrative barriers.

4. Image of ports and relation port-city/Urban integration and urban planning

- **Image and urban integration**

Today, the role of European inland ports is still underestimated, ignored or even fought against (problem of image).

However, they are essential for the economy, the environment, urban development, landscape planning, job creation, tourism, logistics and other activities.

The following remarks could be considered in future developments that will follow the adoption of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities featuring guidelines for integrated sustainable urban development and a Territorial Agenda of the EU containing guidelines for spatial development with the aim of strengthening Europe's competitiveness and making better use of the diversity of the regions.

The pressure of other functions on the industries and other activities located in the inland ports – housing and recreation, sometimes nature development – usually means increased costs or even the impossibility to expand activities.

This pressure often makes it impossible to expand or invest. This diminishes the attractiveness of inland ports as places to set up business, and business relocations could be expected in the future (or even business closures).

For instance, it has been recently underlined in a study developed by the German Federation of Inland Ports entitled: „Binnenhäfen zwischen Wachstumsmotor und Bedeutungsverlust - Hafen- und Stadtentwicklung in einem stabilen Gleichgewicht.“ [“Inland ports between engine of growth or loss of significance - Port and city development in a stable state of balance”] that there are clearly threats on the further development of the activities of inland ports coming from the pressure to build residential and office space in port locations, which decreases the amount of space available and creates potential future usage conflicts. This has to be brought in line with the trends expected

in the transport market, where forecasts show that the transport market will grow by 50 percent by 2015, that no single transport mode is in a position to take up this level of growth and that from a town-planning perspective, ports risk losing considerable amounts of land or even be phased out. Therefore it is necessary to ensure a right balance of all activities.

For inland ports the improvement of the image is crucial towards the general public and the local community.

The European Union can have a role to support the improvement of the image of the inland ports and their acceptance and consideration at local level.

During the consultation process, EFIP made the point that the urbanity of inland ports should be taken into account. Indeed, typically inland ports are urban ports. They are generally located in the vicinity of urban areas in a territory of 360° around the port area.

EFIP agrees with the fact that while respecting the subsidiarity principle and avoiding new legislation, action can be taken by the EU in the following fields with incentives that could support the development of a more positive image of ports.

Although the restoration of the public image of inland ports is first and foremost the responsibility of the port sector itself, added value can be brought at the EU level in co-operation with the regional and local levels.

Possible actions and instruments should focus in particular on the following points (see below). These ideas may be considered also in close connection with the upcoming Green Paper on urban transport that should address not only passenger transport but also freight, to which EFIP has taken position.

- Ensuring exchange of best practices

The exchange of best practices should be further encouraged by the support of EU projects of common interest:

- **BESTUFS (Best Urban Freight Solutions)**: Several inland ports participated in BESTUFS II activities (BESTUFS II being a Co-ordination Action within the 6th Framework Programme for Research and Development) which aim is to increase the awareness of urban freight transport best practice for all those actors involved in its functioning and to stimulate innovative solutions that will enhance its sustainability in the urban area. In particular, identification and dissemination of city logistic solutions should continue to be enhanced.

- **CIVITAS**: European inland ports would be very much in favour, - as announced by the European Commission in the mid-term review of the White Paper on transport policy -, to build on the experience gained in the CIVITAS Initiative, and on its thematic strategy on urban transport, and continue to promote research on urban mobility. It could focus increasingly also on urban freight transport. Why not consider a specific CIVITAS for port related activities?

- Several EFIP members were involved in EU funded programmes, for instance Interreg, Marco Polo, FP6.

All measures that would encourage the further continuation of such projects and dissemination of their results would be desirable. For instance, in the above-mentioned Dicity project supported by Interreg, co-operation has allowed the project participants to increase their cooperation, to exchange experiences, to organise round tables or site visits to gather information and adapt possible new solutions into their port areas. They will ensure further dissemination.

- In particular, EFIP may consider the development of a Guide of Good Practices in inland ports as far as urban transport is concerned. This Guide may then be distributed to local authorities where inland ports are situated. EFIP would welcome a support from the European Union.

- Financing projects and studies

At the EU level, facilitating the use of regional funds and promoting the use of programmes like Interreg and make them known to potential users would be useful.

One may consider the example of the funding handbook currently being developed within the framework of the NAIADES Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport.

Such an initiative could be considered for sea and inland ports. .

In particular, it is essential to promote long term financing models, and in this the EU may bring added value while looking for alternative sources of financing (public private partnerships, etc.)

- Socio-economic impact on the regions and the cities

Inland ports are important locations for industrial and logistics companies and multimodal nodes in transport chains. They are links in production networks and, as parts of clusters, have a function in direct and indirect employment opportunities for the region.

Currently, there is no global vision of what the inland ports represent at the EU level in terms of added value and job creation. There are several national studies which are also outdated. But it would be interesting to assess the socio-economic impact of inland ports at the European level.

EFIP would be in favour of a European study that would analyse and emphasize the socio-economic impact of inland ports activities in Europe. The European Union could support such a project that would also benefit to its policy of a sustainable transport chain.

- Encourage awareness building and urban/spatial planning solutions at local level

Commissioner Barrot rightly stated recently at the above-mentioned seminar on urban logistics, that *“There can be no successful urban planning or economic policy for a port city without taking into account the port and its potential for the city”*.

The question is certainly relevant for seaports, but it is also for inland ports. The ignorance or the lack of awareness that there is a need to keep places for ports activities along the rivers and canals is a major problem. The support of urban planning solutions at local level should be further developed if one considers the added value of inland waterways and inland ports for the development of city mobility for freight and passengers through clusters or networks.

In particular, one may consider the role played by inland ports as platforms for city distribution. Due to their strategic position close to the consumption market, inland ports can also play an important warehousing and distribution function for the city. Goods may be delivered to city distribution centres by road, rail or inland waterway and further distributed to the local market with small trucks. These city distribution centres can incorporate value added logistics services, such as labelling, ticketing, regrouping, customs facilities, etc.

General awareness of their key role for city mobility, logistics, distribution should be more emphasized and reinforced, and taken into consideration in urban planning projects along waterways.

It is essential to ensure that inland ports can still develop in the future, as space has become scarce and it is essential for them to be in a position to further expand their activities. Urban planners and architects do not always consider the use of inland ports and would prefer to use these spaces for real estate, leisure or office buildings activities.

For instance, in its reaction to the NAIADES Action Programme for Inland Waterway transport, EFIP urged decision-makers to launch spatial planning and economic policies at European, regional and national levels, that would aim to preserve waterside sites and could be used for instance for logistical purposes.

- Promoting innovation

The sector of inland waterways has proved to find creative solutions for urban logistics by developing new types of vessels that are suited for distribution of consumption articles, such as palletised goods, drinks or for collection of waste and recyclable fractions. The vessels can also be adapted to local constraints, such as smaller canals or the height of bridges.

Innovations in this sector should be further stimulated and supported. Projects such as CREATING (supported with the 6th FP) which aim is to strengthen inland shipping by optimising both integration in the logistical chain and performance in terms of environment could be further supported. Best practices should be promoted and exchanges between stakeholders further intensified.

Besides, all initiatives and projects at the EU, national, regional or local levels that ensure that all possible pollutants in the port area decrease are most welcome, for instance greener vessels, new types of fuels and engines, etc.

- Promoting the development of certain activities

Waste transport by inland waterways and recycling has been identified by inland ports as a new market with a high potential for sustainable urban transport. With this in mind, EFIP created a working group on waste transport and gathered information on what is currently being done in

Europe and beyond. The main findings as well as recommendations to policy-makers will be made in a report that will be published this year.

It is essential to preserve locations along waterways and canals in city centres for logistical purposes, which are of general interest. Waste transport is one of these activities. In order to do so, co-operation between the local authority or the authority in charge of collecting and treating waste and the transport operator is necessary. It is important to note that the idea is neither to create more waste nor to create more transport, but to transport waste in a more sustainable and efficient manner than is the case today. The European Commission could certainly support such initiatives in the future.

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EFIP was founded in 1994 and is the official voice of more than 200 inland ports in 17 countries of the EU, Switzerland and Ukraine. Inland ports are contributing actively to attaining and maintaining long-term sustainable mobility and favouring a more efficient integration of various modes in the transport chain.

They offer excellent connections to the various transport modes such as inland waterway transport, rail and road, as well as short-sea shipping when geographically possible. They represent an added value in logistical chains and for their hinterland.

EFIP is happy to provide with any further information on its positions and activities via its Office in Brussels.

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