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The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

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EUROPESE SCHIPPERSORGANISATIE
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# Workshop Programme

13:30 Registration

14:00 **Opening by Jan DHAENE**, MEP

## Session 1 Ecological aspects of waterways

14:10 **Working with nature?**
Wim VAN GILS, Bond Beter Leefmilieu Belgium

14:25 **Integrated Water Management**
Jan BAL, Ministry of Flemish Community Belgium

14:40 **Sustainable development of waterways: EU legislation for protection**
Helmut BLÖCH, EC DG Environment

Discussion

## Session 2 The Danube, a vital corridor

15:15 **Navigability between Straubing and Vilshofen**
Hans-Dietrich WITTE, Bundesanstalt für Wasserbau Germany

15:30 **How to respect the water environment**
Ulrich EICHELMANN, WWF Austria

15:45 **A pan-European corridor**
Zoltan KAZATSAY, deputy State Secretary Hungary

Discussion

## Session 3 Linking France to the European waterway network

16:20 **Ecological protection of rivers and canals**
Benoît DELEU, Voies Navigables de France

16:35 **Nature protection and navigation**
Emile VIVIER, France Nature Environnement

16:50 **A European look at network integration**
Edgar THIELMANN, EC DG Transport and Energy

Discussion

Conclusions **Jan DHAENE**

For further information, please contact
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**Inland navigation and environment**

It is a privilige and a pleasure to have been able to participate in the organisation of this conference. Being active in politics means taking up responsibility to put unsufficiently focused topics on the agenda, and waterways transportation is one of these.

The European Commission makes every effort to stimulate the development of inland waterways to improve and diversify the transport potential in Europe. This is indeed indispensable for the economic development of our continent, and the Commission's proposals on Trans European Networks should be seen in this light. A Commission staff member ensured me "environmental aspects are taken into account while studying and elaborating the different projects, in the framework of current legislation and specific procedures".

As a member of the European Parliament my role consists of scrutinizing these assertions, and this is only possible by remaining in close contact with experts. I would therefore like to thank every one for their valuable contribution.

We need to stimulate inland navigation and conciliate it with an environment-friendly management of waterways, to be set in the global framework of a sustainable transport policy which the European Union advocates.

Jan Dhaene

Session 1

**Ecological aspects of waterways**

**Wim van Gils**
**Bond Beter Leefmilieu**

## Working with nature?

### The framework

There are many different 'uses' of water – and therefore many different 'functions' of rivers and waterways. There is not only the ecological function, but also recreation, flood protection essential drinking water supply, navigation and (to a lesser extent in Flanders) power generation.

This basic concept of the multifunctionality of waterways – together with the sustainability idea - is the very heart of the "decreet betreffende het integraal waterbeleid", the Flemish transposition of the water framework directive (2000/60/EC). For BBL – this conceptual and legal framework is the basis to talk about any water issue.

### Swimming up the decision-stream…

It was suggested that BBL would give good examples about mitigation and environmental management. We will – but there is off course more. Mitigation and environmental management are measures that come several steps to late in the process of decision-making.

When thinking about new (infrastructure) projects in and around waterways, several issues have to be dealt with:

- What are the costs and benefits for the society of this project? Infrastructure works are costly and the benefits for society are not always overwhelming – especially when one takes in account certain alternatives. (E.g.: cost-benefit analysis for the society as in PROSES).
- The cost- recovery principle for water services, including environmental and resource costs, is an important part of the WFD. This will have to be applied for navigation too.
- There is often referred to the ecological benefits of transport on water, compared to other modes of transport, but too often ecological impacts are being minimized by the same people. A strategic environmental assessment of new projects to balance the benefits versus the impacts is crucial.
- Public participation in a very early stage of the project and both these study's is essential and beneficial for all parties (e.g.: PROSES, Albert Canal).
- The non-deterioration clause of the WFD is obligatory for any water body (independent of its classification). New projects on relatively untouched rivers are in most cases very problematic – as there is an obvious impact on the ecological status. There is no such thing as a true mitigation for the effects of canalising a river.
- Apart from the non-deterioration clause, the objectives put forward in the water framework directive are challenging. Infrastructure projects may be a threat, but in some cases offer opportunities too (ex: renewing the locks on the ringvaart in Ghent, combined with fish passage; optimising existing waterways in terms of economic use, recreational use AND ecological functions in Flanders.

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**Jan Bal**
**Waterways and Maritime Affairs Administration, Ministry of Flemish Community**

## Integrated water management

*see powerpoint presentation*

**Helmut Blöch**
**European Commission, DG Environment**

## Sustainable development of waterways: EU legislation for protection

*see powerpoint presentation*

Session 2

**Danube, a vital corridor**

**H.H. Witte**
**Bundesanstalt für Wasserbau**

## Navigability between Straubing and Vilshofen

***Summary***

Dr Witte presents a scientific case study from a hydraulic transport-engineering point of view of the actual condition of the Danube as part of the Rhine Main Danube waterway.

He examines in detail the free-flowing range from Straubing (Danube km 2329,7) to Vilshofen (Danube km 2247).

Building on this assessment, he presents the main elements of the "profound investigations of the development of Straubing-Vilshofen", accomplished from 1997 to 2001 by the Bundesanstalt für Wasserbau (Federal Waterways engineering and Research Institute)

Finally, he focuses on the achievability of the free-flowing variant A decided by the German Bundestag.

Dr.-Ing. H.-H. Witte

**Ulrich Eichelmann**
**World Wildlife Fund**

## How to respect the water environment

*see powerpoint presentation*

**Zoltan Kazatsay**
**Secretary of State, Hungary**

## A pan-European corridor

### *The significance of Pan-European Corridors and the future TEN-T network in the economic development of Hungary*

The Pan-European Corridors were developed as a result of the pan-European Conferences of Ministers of Transport. The corridor concept is conducive to the creation of all the necessary components of the envisaged TEN-T network.

The Hungarian priority projects have been supported by the HLG of the EU. Among them the importance of the Danube project received an outstanding and unanimous support.

### *The current state of transport and environment in the Hungarian section of the Danube Corridor*

The modal split in the corridor in the year 2000 shows that inland navigation had a very low participation at 0.1% in the transport of passengers. In the transport of goods (measured in ton km), the participation of inland navigation is 2.6%. This indicates that inland navigation has considerable unexploited potential.

In urban areas situated near main roads, the primary source of noise pollution is road traffic. In some cases the day-time noise level exceeds its limit and so does the noise at night. On some roads in the corridor the number of severe accidents is very high due to the high proportion of heavy vehicles using those roads.

This implies that a better exploitation of the potential of inland navigation, which is a clean and efficient mode of transport, presents a promising solution, especially in the transport of goods.

### *A brief overview of the state of inland waterways in Hungary*

Waterborne foreign trade reached an all-time high in 1998 in Hungary with approximately 5 million tons of goods being sold, which is over 10% of the total volume of exports. In the same year, the volume of trade on the Upper Danube surpassed the volume of trade on the Lower Danube.

The general conditions for the further development of trade on inland waterways in Hungary are determined on the one hand by the process of European integration and, on the other hand, as regards shipping on the Danube, the market conditions on the Danube. As a result of slow adaptation, the participation of inland waterways operators under a Hungarian flag has fallen from 80% to approximately 20% since a decade ago.

***Connecting acceeding countries situated in the Danube basin to the network of rivers and canals linking the basins of rivers flowing into the Atlantic and the North Sea***

Achieving the desired development on the stretch in Hungary will require the participation of the state of Hungary and that of the Community alike. The inefficiency of inland waterway transport is the consequence of a number of unfavourable conditions. Due to the frequent draught limitations, fleet capacity may be utilised up to 60-70% only, whereas the European average is about 80-100%. With a view to improving the conditions of inland waterway transport on the Danube, Hungary submitted a proposal for a priority project for the Improvement of Navigability on the Danube registered under the code HU-3-iw.

Since the early 1960's the control of the Szap-Budapest Danube section has been gaining increasing attention. Several projects have been launched. Later in 1996, a final plan was elaborated based on the preliminary plans and assessments, and it was submitted to the Water Management Authority for approval in the same year. In the first stage of control activities focussed on the Szap-Gönyű section, and the works had been completed by 1997/1998.

As regards the Trans-European Transport Network, the Hungarian authorities continue to give adequate consideration to the objectives and priorities laid down in the Community Guidelines on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the requirements on the financing thereof.

***Inter-linking different modes of transport with a view to better exploiting of their respective advantages***

In Hungary, the geographical density of adequately equipped ports working round the clock is only one-third of that of the European average. A simple comparison of the annual loaded trip time per annual service time of Rhine vessels (60-70%) and Danube vessels (approx. 30%) can highlight the differences in terms of infrastructure.

The contribution of the state to development activities is limited to the construction of the so-called basic infrastructure. The adequate integration of a given port with the economy of the surrounding region may also increase private sector interest in investing into further developments.

***Environmental impacts of modal-split changes giving preference to inland navigation***

The most promising opportunities are ro-ro and container shipping. In line with the forecast, in international shipping, an increase of 104% is expected by 2008, 122% by 2015 and 124% by 2030.

As a consequence of the decreased use of heavy vehicle, air pollution and the severity of road accidents will diminish, and noise levels will also decrease by 2-3 db(A) in the daytime, and by 4-6 db(A) at night. Also, travel times will become increasingly shorter due to the lower level of congestion.
The number of employees shows a steady decrease in the transport of goods by ships.
A remarkable expansion in the cruise liner market has reached Hungary, and nowadays French, Dutch, German and Swiss liners from the Rhine frequently call at Budapest.

Session 3

**Linking France to the European waterway network**

**Benoît Deleu**
**Voies Navigables de France**

## Ecological protection of rivers and canals

VNF manages, maintains and develops 6,700 kilometres (4,163 miles) of France's navigable rivers and canals.

VNF is aware of its environmental responsibilities insofar as it manages a natural infrastructure. Ever since its foundation, it has been this conviction that has prompted VNF, through its environment department, to cultivate **ecologically sound activities,** as well as to embark upon a **corporate environmental plan** three years ago.

Within this context, VNF has developed an **environmental policy** that revolves around five key themes:

1. Optimising water resources
2. Understanding the natural environments that come under the publicly administered inland waterways network, with the purpose of protecting and enhancing them
3. Implementing plant technologies and endeavouring to make structures fit into their surroundings
4. Encouraging dialogue and transparency in the definition of new projects

For a number of years now, VNF has been committed to restoring the ecological functionalities of the waterways, with the purpose of finding solutions to the principal causes of damage to biodiversity. Its activities in this domain can be divided into four areas:

1. Re-establishing **unimpeded movement for fish,** to which VNF devotes approximately 1 million euros a year, particularly for the purpose of building fish passes
2. Whenever possible, using **plant engineering techniques** instead of civil engineering techniques (the proportion of worksites using such techniques, even if only partially, has risen from 7 to 28% in three years)
3. The introduction of **game or beaver passes** along the canals to prevent animals from drowning
4. The protection and restoration of natural environments such as **the rehabilitation of fish spawning grounds**, or the drafting of documents detailing objectives relating to the Natura 2000 network.

When it comes to canal and riverbank management, the cleaning-out of rivers and the removal or processing of sludge, VNF plays a major, and frequently pioneering, role.

**Canal and riverbank management**: in 2003, VNF published a technical guide to the feedback from pilot schemes that have been introduced since 1994 within its network. This guide is the only European work to deal with the ecological protection of navigable river and canal embankments.

**Waterway cleaning**: since 1995, the technical procedures involved in cleaning operations have formed the subject of a circular distributed nationally within VNF, which notably calls

for systematic physical-chemical analyses prior to dredging, requires feasibility studies to be conducted when extracted substances represent a source of pollution, etc.

**Management of dredging spoil**: every year, VNF finances numerous research programmes, with the aim of improving the techniques used in extracting, managing, processing and disposing of dredged material.

VNF constantly strives to improve its practices in respect of all these issues as well as a number of others, such as managing water transfers (canal water supplies or draining of pounds during periods of closure). To this end, it has introduced an environmental management system that conforms to ISO 14001 standards on five experimental sites. The ultimate goal is to progressively increase the scope of this system to incorporate VNF's principal activities.

The Seine-Nord Europe project

The Seine-Nord Europe canal - the French section of the Seine-Escaut European link, running a hundred kilometres or so (62 miles) from Janville (north of Compiègne) to the Dunkerque-Escaut canal - will cross the regions of Picardy and Nord-Pas-de-Calais. It will be instrumental in establishing closer relations between the ports of Normandy and the vast potential offered by the Île-de-France (one of Europe's foremost economic regions, which boasts ultra-efficient urban hubs and ports) and the economic centres, cities and ports of the North of France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and the central and eastern Europe nations.

**A new notion of planning and sustainable development**

The Seine-Nord Europe project constitutes a major element in restoring balance between transport modes. Running along a particularly congested North-South artery, it offers a genuine modal alternative to the ubiquitous presence of road transport. With Seine-Nord Europe, France will have the opportunity of acquiring new stakes in the Blue Banana geo-economy, which will stimulate exchanges between the regions to be linked up.

**Connecting France with the rest of Europe**

The Seine-Nord Europe large-capacity waterway project provides the missing link between France and Nord Europe. It has thus raised very high hopes among economic players who are keen to see the network standardised.

***Seine-Nord Europe vital statistics:***

- 105 km (65.24 miles) – **that's the length of the canal project**
- 8,000 – the number of jobs that could be created over five years as a result of building the canal
- 185 metres, 11.40 metres and 4,400 metric tons – these are the length, width and tonnage of the convoys that will be able to use the canal
- 2.6 thousand million euros – the estimated cost of project investment.

If a High Environmental Quality (*HQE*) assurance initiative were to be associated with this new infrastructure, the following prospects would present themselves:

### *A positive, dynamic vision of the environmental issues*

The concept of impact studies presupposes an objective to minimize the project's negative effects. It does not evoke the positive consequences, both for the environment and community life. Adopting sustainable development as the point of departure for the design and utilisation of structures leads to a change in 'stance' during the preparation of such projects. It entails adopting a position to obtain "double dividends" – in other words, seeking interesting by-products. This approach implies a broader vision of the potential issues and solutions involved, such that new answers, combining several advantages, can be found. Investment in a given structure should have positive spin-off in related areas.

### *An uncompromising method of project management*

*HQE* (high environmental quality) is a form of quality assurance that can be distinguished by its great stringency throughout the process of designing, executing and implementing a project, including detailed analysis of the specific challenges involved, the pursuit of the most effective technical solutions, and dialogue with 'interested parties' - local residents, users, environmental protectors, businesses entrusted with design and utilisation. The majority of traditional programmes have adopted initiatives of this type, but *HQE* provides the opportunity to re-examine them by encompassing the various stages in the life of the structure. Exemplary satisfaction of environmental requirements may also provide a significant criterion in terms of extra-financial assessment.

### *A lasting vision*

*HQE* is based on structure life cycle and includes operating phases, with any successive transformations to them, as well as the end of structure life. *HQE* presupposes the introduction of an authority to manage these structures, geared towards the constant improvement of performance, as much from the point of view of the quality of service provided as from that of environmental considerations. It would be necessary to tailor this initiative to suit existing structures. *HQE* should bring with it the guarantee of good environmental risk management, both in project administration and during utilisation of the structure. If this initiative were to be recognised by insurance brokers, it would have a direct effect in terms of cover for this type of risk (although the insurance sector, particularly the reinsurers, currently seems reluctant to continue covering them).

**Emile Vivier**
**France Nature Environnement**

## Nature protection and navigation

Inland navigation is without contest the best future freight transport for economical as well as environmental reasons. The development of waterways requires environmental integration of all the stages of the project, starting with its realisation and continuing with its management.

The Seine Nord Europe project is a good example in this regard: a HQE (high environmental quality) concept and realisation to ensure sustainable achievement.

### I – General issues

1. Inland navigation is the transport mode that least disturbs the environment
    - low energy consumption (limited fossil energy) ensures sustainability; low greenhouse gas emission (CO2) and little nuisance
    - modest external costs

**2.** Waterways are a living infrastructure (contrary to road and rail), which brings several advantages
    - attractability of water
    - improvement and diversification of the landscape (revegetated river banks)
    - contribution to biodiversity, in particular for animal world (insects, frogs, birds and fish)
    - recreation: fishing, walking on riverbank…

    but a certain number of conditions in the set-up and management need to be met before waterways can fully exercise its natural function

### II – Conditions for infrastructure and natural functioning of waterways

Seine Nord canal: mapped out in a new site through monotonous zones→ entirely artificial canal, using neither river nor stream

1. Avoid upsetting the normal operation of other natural ecosystems (rivers, streams, that run along or cross humid zones, ZNIEFF) → corridor decided after multi-criteria analysis : out of 16 criteria considered, 9 concerned environment. Therefore a layout should be selected with particular attention for environmental protection.

2. Ensure the functioning of the "canal" ecosystem, with its characteristics that closely resemble those of a lake or a slow-moving waterway.

Should therefore be taken into account:
- layout of river banks
- pollution control

- guaranteed water quality for normal life in and around canals
- ecological balance in food chain

How ?

→ elaborate preventive measures to avoid terrigenous pollution (MES), and contamination by organic matter and minerals (sewage water)

→ set out remedial measures / combat techniques to control pollution :
- revegetated inclined river banks (with appropriate trees and shrubs)
- lagooned river banks (with appropriate macrophytes)
- anti-wave wall system

or set up, from the start of the project, streamside lagoon vegetation systems protected by wave walls
In this way a zone is created on each side, both
- a bio-diversity corridor
- an auto water-conditioning zone for N and P
- a spawning and rearing zone

and inclined, revegetated, river banks, to allow the emergence of frogs and eels, and auto-avoids eutrophisation and proliferation of invading water-plants (lentils, myriophylle…)

**III – Management**

Such an ecosystem should be well managed to be preserved in the permanent good functioning state and to allow good circulation on the canal while preserving its natural attraction points.

Two action points:
1. maintenance of lateral lagoons, on the one hand to preserve their auto-cleaning capacity and to avoid they become the source of eutrophisation : this is done by the waterweed cutting in the autumn of aerial stems, harvesting and exporting them.
2. Permanent control of embankment protection in particular by combating pests such as muskrats and coypu. Besides the possibility of fencing in the riverbanks, the introduction of natural enemies of these pests could be considered : European mink and European pele cat (by introducing and protecting and afforestation of banks with trees such as ash and willow trees …).

**Conclusion**

It is to be recommended to know and respect the ecosystem of the canal in order to plan and manage it well. This is the pre-requisite for the perfect adaptation of navigation and the preservation of nature in its landscapes and biodiversity. The Seine Nord canal should be an example in this regard.

**Edgar Thielmann**
**European Commission – DG Transport and Energy**

## A European look at network integration

The Commission's White Paper on Transport of 2001 outlines issues and required decisions to assure the future of sustainable transport in the enlarged European Union, suggesting the need to shift transport from road to more environmentally friendly modes as rail, shipping and inland navigation.

On 1 October 2003 the Commission adopted a proposal for the amendment of Decision 1692/96/EC on Community guidelines for the development of the TEN T network. The proposal contains mainly a list of 29 priority projects of European interest and suggestions to improve procedures for implementation and increase necessary financing

This proposal follows an earlier proposal of 2001, and the recommendations of the report of a High Level Group chaired by Mr Karel Van Miert, presented on 30 June 2003.

A fully integrated transport network is required for real freedom of movement of goods and people. A modem, interconnected and interoperable network will enhance trade and the competitiveness of the European economy. Without implementing the necessary infrastructure and an appropriate regulatory framework for an efficient network management, the concepts of the internal market and the territorial cohesion of the Union will remain unfinished.

The past decade saw an increase in traffic congestion in urban areas and on major arteries of the trans European network, increasing the number of bottlenecks, aggravated by missing links in the infrastructure, and a lack of interoperability within specific transport modes and for intermodal transport systems. It is estimated the external costs of congestion due to road traffic alone represent aprox 0,5% of the GDP of the EU.

This is to be seen in the light of increasing transport demand in the future, driven by economic growth and ensuing increase in household incomes. The globalisation of the world economy, just in time production processes, the completion of the single market and its enlargement towards the East, all contribute to increasing trade and traffic growth.

### Inland navigation

If no measures are taken between now and 2010, heavy lorry traffic alone in the Union of 15 could increase by 50% compared to 1998. In the new Member States, road transport increased by 20% between 1990 and 1998. Overall, growth in freight transport demand still exceeds the growth in GDP, and road's share in the enlarged Union is anticipated at about 85% by 2020. The scope for freeing up capacity by extending the road network is limited. To tackle problems of congestion and pollution, demand must be shifted towards underused and environmentally friendly modes: rail, sea shipping and inland navigation.

Europe's inland waterway network has great potential for freight and passenger transport, with over 30.000 kilometres of canals and rivers linking key towns and areas of industrial concentration. Inland ports lay at the heart of Europe's trading routes, perfectly placed to offer intermodal connections to road, rail and sea lines.

Inland waterway transport is considered rather cheap and efficient, reliable, safe and environmental friendly particularly compared with road transport. Inland waterways freight

transport presently accounts for 7% only of total inland transport, with a massive un-used capacity.

The EU aims:

- To improve integration of inland waterways into the European transport system
- To create favourable conditions for the further development of the sector
- To encourage business to use the mode.

**TEN-T proposal**

In the recent proposal, the complete axis Rhine/Meuse - Main - Danube was included where some infrastructure projects are needed in almost all the countries concerned, is to be implemented from 2011 to 2019.

The main sections where works are necessary to improve navigability are:

- Rhine - Meuse with the lock of Lanay
- Vilshofen - Straubing
- Vienna – Bratislava
- Palkovicovo - Mohacs (in Hungary)
- Bottlenecks in Romania and Bulgaria
- The Seine - Scheldt river link (only recently included in the list)

Apart from the list of projects, the proposal contains a list of measures necessary for the development of alternative modes of transport.

To help inland waterways' users, a pilot project called "River information System is currently developed to provide boats with:

- Fairway information (geographical, hydrological, administrative);
- Flash traffic information (actual traffic situation and geographical surroundings);
- Planning traffic information (voyage, lock & bridge, port & terminal planning);
- Cargo and fleet management, tracking and tracing;
- Information on calamity abatement;
- Information on possible interfaces with other transport modes.

This project aims at minimising voyage incidents, injuries and fatalities in inland navigation and at preventing environmental hazards as well as polluting spills.

Up to now, Member States implemented the system on a voluntary basis based on commonly agreed standards and protocols. The Commission will propose a framework directive in the very near future.

**Maritime transport**

The combination of maritime transport and inland navigation should be considered. In the 90’s short sea shipping was the only mode able to keep pace with the fast growth of road transport. Specific efforts are made to overcome problems related to shipping, mostly of administrative nature, logistics, access to ports, etc., and a new category of priority project called "Motorways of the Sea" is prepared, built upon 4 areas:

- Motorway of the Baltic Sea

- a Motorway of the Sea of Western Europe
- a Motorway of the Sea of south-east Europe
- a Motorway of the Sea of south-west Europe (linking the above to the Black Sea).

A crucial factor for development of shipping and of the "Motorways of the Sea" is the selection and the proper functioning of ports, as well as their hinterland connections to allow freight transportation without using road or rail.

**Financing**

The cost of the 29 projects is estimated at 220 bn € and the cost for the implementation of the whole TEN-T network at 600 bn €. European countries are spending less than 1% of GDP for transport infrastructure nowadays. For the enlarged Union the total amount devoted to transport infrastructure according to the financial perspectives for the period 2000 - 2006 is almost 24 m €, out of which 4,4 for the TEN-T.

Preliminary simulations indicate that users and private sector could contribute up to 40 bn €, the rest, almost 180 bn €, to be financed by national and community budgets. The Commission will establish a proposal for the new financial perspectives after 2006.

Investment projects in the transport sector have a life span of many decades and will benefit future generations, boosting growth potential in the long term, dynamising the internal market and contributing to sustainable development in Europe. Their implementation requires multi-annual firm commitments from the countries concerned.

**Environment**

Transport development is closely linked to environmental considerations, taking into account sustainable development. Long term consequences for climate, water pollution and land use have to be examined to find the ecologically most beneficial solution.

The Commission carried out an Extended Impact Assessment for the amendment of the TEN-T Guidelines, including the evaluation of environmental, economic and social impacts by considering interrelations of projects, corridors and modes as well as traffic and economy forecast for alternatives.

Efforts to shift from road to alternatives are due, amongst others, to the need to reduce the important C02 pollution created by road transport. Rail and waterbome transport are considered as more environmentally friendly.

The Commission is giving priority to sustainable development also in transport policy. The Gothenburg European Council of June 2001 asked for future stress on the development of rail, maritime and river transport. The White Paper on transport policy for 2010 also emphasised the re-balancing between different modes of transport.

With the list of the priority projects the Commission submitted a concept striving for a better charge of transport modes. Most of the priority projects are railway projects and the concept to develop motorways of the sea is highlighted, in order to promote intermodal transport. Giving priority to modal shift, the environmental impact mainly caused by uncontrolled increasing road traffic could be avoided and minimized.

For the development and the financing of any transport Infrastructure project in the EU it is absolutely necessary to respect the requirements of environmental legislation at the Union level or at national level.

The present concept of priority projects was developed on the basis of relatively broad corridors, to leave a margin for the Member States to solve legal, technical and environmental conflicts in the planning phase.

Member States determine, examine and evaluate the environmental impact of their planning, considering protection of human beings, animals and plants, soil, water, air, climate, landscape, cultural and other special goods following the Directives of the European Union.

Member States have to implement the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment by July 2004. Art.6 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States also to assess plans (and projects) in relation to their impact on Natura 2000 sites.

Within the next years Member States will transform the Water-framework Directive. A well balanced water management, weighing up economic, social and environmental interests could have a favourable effect for the development of inland waterways and consequently for the Trans-European transport network.

**Conclusion**

The Commission has recently made a very concrete proposal by identifying priority projects for the TEN-T network, by suggesting solutions for their financing and for facilitating their implementation by removing obstacles.

The Commission looks forward to develop inland navigation and maritime transport to provide a safe, reliable, efficient and environmentally friendly alternative to road transport.

Further progress in the modernisation of the trans-European transport network is needed for a variety of reasons. The Commission hopes the European Parliament and the Council will decide very quickly on the proposals made by the Commission on 1/10/2003.