

Parallel interactive session 2: Jobs and skills, Innovation and fleet

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Key statements

European Skippers Organisation

How to organise for all groups lifelong learning and how can the EU support this?

European Federation of Transport Workers

Ships and crew are ageing. How can we ensure that new vessels and people enter the market with EU support?

STC

Introduction of simulators facilitates the professional upgrade of IWT crew and allows shortening of real live experience time.

Next to establishment of a new legal framework, the IWT education and training system needs supporting tools to upgrade skills of people working in the sector.

Uptake of IWT in logistics door-to-door services demands continuation of supporting tools at EU level.

State of play

Dimitris Theologitis gave an overview of the current European actions undertaken by the European Commission regarding the topic of this session.

As regards to **jobs and skills**, it is important to attract new and young people into the profession. Inland navigation is ageing. We need fresh blood. So this makes it an issue of certification and career options. The regulator wants to facilitate access to profession in 3 ways:

- We need to enable mobility across the member states.
- We need to provide young people with a clear career path and opportunities.
- We need to allow people from others professions to enter inland navigation (e.g. sea men).

The European Commission will soon make new proposals for professional qualifications for inland navigation. These professional qualifications worked well for truck drivers previously. They had the effect of attracting more professionals and mobility into the profession. This qualification framework moves away from an experience based model towards a competence based model (there are different ways to acquire the needed competences). The instrument is ready and will be presented to the Council in a few weeks under the Dutch presidency.

When speaking about **innovation and fleet**, vessels are ageing too. The majority of fleet is aged and cannot be easily integrated in new ways of thinking and adapted the latest electronics and IT tools, so that they would be able to play their part in the logistics change. Innovation and greening needs to be supported. We are developing new ambitious standards for new engines. This will make green engines more attractive for European users and manufacturers. As for electronics, we are moving away from RIS as a safety system and move towards Smart Waterways. We are at the stage of concept papers and consultations. Similar to EICB, we would like to create innovation centres around Europe to assist ships owners, logistics providers, etc. to get practical information and make correct choices.

Of course **money** is also important. We currently have 2 funding instruments. There is the Connecting Europe Facility (26 Billion euro – half spent already) and the Juncker Fund for Strategic Investments. This can help member states to attract private funding (with a bank guarantee). Transport is an excellent domain of investment. These funding mechanisms could be used by ship owners to invest in innovation and greening their fleet.

The audience welcomed the modernisation of professional qualifications for the IWT sector. This process has been going on for 10 years and there is a need for a competence focus rather than 'disconnected knowledge'. The European committee for educational standards for inland navigation has done a lot of pre-regulatory work.

Development of competences

Q: Would it be possible 10% of any technical grant fosters training & development? That would immediately upskill a big part of the sector.

A: Obviously, the Commission's work does not end with a new directive. We need to keep up with developments in the sector. There are a lot of opportunities for training institutes in the sector: training in knowledge and skills e.g. simulators, training vessels, etc. This will also require resources.

Commission answer: It is nice to hear that there is a request for a 'human element' in the funding and that we should not only focus on technical developments. But when the European Commission gives grants, they tend to have an ever wider scope. This allows applicants to put also the Human Resources element in their project proposals. In 2017, there will be a call for proposals within the research programme Horizon 2020. We can see how the human aspect of the innovation can be more taken into account.

CCNR: lifelong learning (e.g. renewing certificates etc.) is already happening, but it could be more structured. We need to go further and give people in the sector a future perspective, and allow them to grow their potential and diversify.

Perspective of member state: If we need education, we need to find the resources for it. There are funds in the sector (Reserve Fund) that can be used for that. It could be transferred into an education fund.

Q: We should not only be renewing skills, but also growth, broadening the skills, for example social and digital skills. But in IWT sector there is not so much scope for social development because boatmen mostly work alone. Not like in bigger organisations where many management tools, communication and social training are available. It is difficult for skippers to have the same training. Working alone is a big barrier to develop more social skills etc. What can we do to develop human capital for skippers (not only technical skills)?

A: E-learning and distance education can be an important tool for future. It is more easily accessible. Skippers can easily access it e.g. on ship, but e-learning is also compatible with the system of 14 days on and off the ship. However, it needs to be complemented with real life teaching/competence building (social).

Comment: The system today is that you move up in your career by navigating. There needs to be more competence based developments that allows people to progress. We need to focus more on lifelong learning. Besides social skills, entrepreneurial skills are also important. How do we support skippers for their job as self-employed IWT providers?

A: Everyone should be doing lifelong learning. We also need smart human capital to deal with smart waterways. Human capital has to follow the technical developments.

Innovation of the fleet

When we are thinking of greening transport, we often think of IWT. Maybe a label for 'green transport' would help. Shippers might revert more to IWT if the public is aware that their products are sustainably transported. Along the same lines, maybe we also want to promote a label 'fair transport' (e.g. no child labour, green alternatives, transparency on how the work is done).

There are innovation centres popping up everywhere. In 2017, there will be a call for smart ports (also inland terminals). However, we now speak of digital multimodal nodes (because the port often is not central to the nodes anymore).

Skippers want to green their ships, but measurement of their external costs is very costly. Public institutions can support that, maybe with money from the Reserve Fund?

Member states have different opinion on how to improve the business case for IWT. Maybe we need a regulation to force the greening of the fleet. We need to internalise external costs in the medium term. That would improve the business case for IWT. But before we can do that, it is important to know what skippers can expect over the next 15-20 years. Once there is a clear future perspective and a stable investment climate, then we can start to prepare the future.

The European Commission is reluctant to regulate the existing fleet. It should not be done one-sidedly. We need to coordinate this with other modes of transport. Internalisation of external costs needs to be introduced at same time for the whole transport sector. Maybe we also need to move to modular emission standards. Old engines could get different criteria than new engines. Incentives to green the fleet could come from the European Investment Bank or CEF.

Voies Navigables de France is setting up a 5 year subsidy programme with 5 targets:

- ❑ Investment to improve the environmental performance of vessels.
- ❑ Support the introduction of new vessels.

- ❑ Support inland waterway transport to city needs.
- ❑ Enable inland waterway boats to serve sea ports.
- ❑ Make it easier for new skippers to enter the business (buy first ship, upscale etc.).

In France, we are looking for co-financing from regions because in the end more IWT means less road traffic for them. There is readiness to co-finance.

Access to financing for innovation and greening + funding from European budget?

We had a working group on financial instruments who sent a questionnaire to different players in the IWT industry. At present it seems to be difficult for IWT to benefit from financial aids. There are a lot of criteria to adhere to before you can get any support. To get financial support of the European Investment Bank, the projects are of a size that largely surpasses the average project skippers need. The way forward would be to consolidate and cooperate under one umbrella to get financial support. We need to be clever to work with the European instruments (e.g. societal gains, NOx, PM,...) Governments can accommodate for that.

We could foresee access to financing in 2 ways:

- ❑ Criteria should become more adapted to the IWT sector so that it becomes easier to access the financial support.
- ❑ How can we marry the heavy sledge hammer with a small nail in the wall? We could bundle requirements of sector and apply as a consortium for support. That would give IWT access to large instruments that are a priori not adapted to the sector.

Conclusions

Jobs and skills

- ❑ Human element and professional qualifications should be in heart of the discussion (e.g. 10% of all grants could be earmarked for training and upskilling people)
- ❑ Lifelong learning: we need to have a closer look and make careers more attractive. Digital skills and entrepreneurial skills are needed.

Innovation & greening

- ❑ A part of the discussion revolved around financing. 80% of owner operators don't have access to finances. That makes it difficult for them to access innovation and the big grants for innovation.
- ❑ Innovation grant criteria should be more adapted to the IWT sector (e.g. regarding environmental performance and equipment).
- ❑ To mobilise mega instruments (European Investment Bank) we need to create consortia of smaller partners so that we can access them anyway. Complete the financing needs with other funding.