

European Commission 2010 consultation
on the Future Trans-European Transport Network Policy

Contribution of the European Federation of Inland Ports (EFIP)

Inland Ports are essential Nodal Points in a Co-modal Core Network

The European Federation of Inland Ports (EFIP) brings together more than 200 inland port authorities in 19 countries of the European Union, Moldova, Switzerland and Ukraine.

Even if inland ports are very diverse in functions they fulfil, in modal shift, in size, they all have two elements in common: i) they are all developed on the waterside and ii) they are the “gate”, the “access point” to at least one, but often two or even three environmentally friendly modes of transport (IWT, Rail and maritime transport). Moreover, being at the crossroad between different transport modes, inland ports are becoming more and more clusters of logistic services. They offer logistic service providers efficient and flexible choices and allow customers to combine the different transport modes depending on the demands of the market or the goods to transport and handle.

Taking into consideration the reality of economic and transport flows it is clear that a sustainable but efficient transport policy cannot be based on one mode. A 100% shift from road to rail, inland waterway or maritime transport is not realistic. **Integration** is the codeword to boost the potential of IWT, rail and maritime transport.

Integrating the different transport modes implies in the first place the creation and further development of **efficient interfaces**. Freight transport users, shippers need a “market place” where they can make choices, they can combine in function of the product, the destination, the client, the cost (both internal and external).

European inland ports are very well placed and ready to take up this function of “transport market place”. Inland ports should therefore play an important role in the comodal sustainable transport chain and have a crucial role in **achieving a real comodal TEN-T network**.

For these reasons, in view of the review of the TEN-T policy, the European Federation of Inland Ports asks the European commission to take up **the following considerations**:

- 1. EFIP strongly supports the rationale of the review of the TEN-T network:** modernise the network, taking into account the new EU territory by better linking East and West, take climate change into consideration and put more emphasis on nodes (inland and seaports, urban nodes). **EFIP hopes that the reviewed network will fully reflect these priorities.**

- 2. EFIP strongly believes that the whole inland waterway network and all inland ports should be included in the comprehensive TEN-T network.**

Missing inland waterways of importance should be included in the comprehensive TEN-T maps. The three main examples are:

- the maps concerning the North Italy Waterway system that are not up-to-date. The developments made during the last ten years should be integrated into the TEN-T network maps.
- the Swedish inland waterways are not on the current maps of inland waterways
- the Guadalquivir linking the Atlantic Ocean with the Inland Seaport of Sevilla. The Port of Sevilla is a Port of Strategic importance:
 - o It uses the only navigable inland waterway in Spain
 - o It creates a crucial sea-river link between the European continent and Africa.

3. Moreover a selection of Inland ports should be integrated into the EU Core Network. **The rationale of the TEN-T review (see paragraph 1) should be the backbone for bringing inland ports into the EU core network.**

In that respect, EFIP believes that **the following trimodal inland ports of strategic importance should be taken up into the core network:**

- **Inland ports situated on a TEN-T priority inland waterway but also inland ports situated on a TEN-T priority rail- projects should be taken up into the core network.**

Of course, the main inland ports laying on the priority inland waterway projects (PP 18 and 30) should be considered as main hubs and should be taken up in the core network. However, inland ports laying on the TEN-T rail priority projects can have a crucial function as entrance and exit to the rail network, linking the rail with the inland waterway. By optimising the inland waterway connections to and from the inland ports on the big rail corridors, one would enhance efficient comodality between rail and inland waterways.

- **Inland ports in the strategic hinterland of the gateway ports:** inland ports are increasingly serving as back up and feeder for the major European seaports and can be a part of the solution for the congestion in the seaports (decongestion hub). In, some cases, inland ports are developing as a hinterland extension of seaports. This is certainly the case for inland ports who are open to short sea shipping vessels. They allow for de/re-consolidation of cargo flows, helping seaports to fully exploit potential economies of scale. Besides, it is clear that an advanced cooperation between seaports and the inland ports not only offers a solution for the congestion *in* the seaports, but can also decongest the area *around* the seaport by bringing goods further into the hinterland in a more sustainable way.

The other way round, the capacity of seaports to bring the goods in a sustainable way further into the hinterland and more in particular the presence of good hinterland relations with inland ports, avoiding bottlenecks in and around the seaports, should be one of the criteria to take up a seaport in the TEN-T core network.

- **Inland ports that are situated in or next to important urban nodes, Member States capitals and other cities or agglomerations of supra-regional importance.** As “gate” to inland waterway transport and rail transport, these inland ports can contribute in finding sustainable solutions for urban freight and supply of big cities and can help in facing the challenge of the growing urbanisation.
4. EFIP considers that **trimodal inland ports of strategic importance who are in the core network can form a cluster with surrounding smaller inland ports** and function in this perspective as an important inland hub allowing for the necessary massification of goods to be transported by inland waterways. Clusters between inland ports and seaports should in that respect also be encouraged.
 5. EFIP believes that **EU financial support for multimodal connections to and from ports should receive much higher priority.** Up to now, only 0.5 % of the TEN-T budget was spent on port-related projects. If ports are to play their role as nodal point and pillar of the reviewed TEN-T networks, this should be reflected in the TEN-T budget. Moreover it should be stressed that optimising the transshipment interfaces and eliminating the bottlenecks for multimodal transport will often reveal a lot less expensive than creating completely new infrastructure links.
 6. Considering the role of inland ports as co-modal nodal points in the inland transport chain, EFIP highlights the **importance of the interoperability of intelligent transport systems and new technologies across the different transport modes.** The harmonisation of the technological systems is the key to making intermodal transport a success and are thus an important element of the TEN-T network.
