



EUROPEAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL

Connecting TEN-T corridors and sustainable MoS in the West Med sea basin

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SPEAKING POINTS

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Thank you for the invitation to speak at this event.

In any expectation transport and international trade are going to grow in the years to follow. The situation we face is that in nearly all modes shippers are faced with **a lack of capacity**. Infrastructural bottlenecks is the first level. Everyone travelling in the congested areas of Europe, for instance, around Barcelona or Genoa, knows how negatively the congestion on roads is affecting the reliability of transport. A relief of this situation is not expected to occur in the near future. Smart mobility including platooning and connected cars will take several years to be introduced at a high level.

The extra capacity regained by more efficient transport and connected driving will probably be absorbed by the **raising volumes**. At the same time, hauliers will have serious difficulties in finding a sufficient number of drivers to fill up **the gap of retiring drivers** (in many countries the average age of drivers is far over fifty). Although the use of automation in the supply chain can contribute to a more efficient use of capacity, I doubt that the up-take will be fast enough.

At the same time the pressure for **more sustainable transport** will also increase. A decarbonisation of long haul transport will take some more years. Big steps are made for electric light commercial vehicles and buses. For long haul transport, probably hydrogen will be a more realistic option. This means that the percentage of road transport should go down in favour of the other modalities such as short sea shipping, barging, and rail.

A lot of European projects are aiming at **a modal shift** or a better co-modality. For these policies, it is important that a reality check will be done from time to time.





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In rail transport we see that a large part of the capacity is taken by passenger transport. To support a credible shift to rail, all parties involved will have to safeguard that freight transport can have a fair share of the capacity on rail.

For inland waterways, we see that as a result of the low tides in the last two summers, capacity is seriously reduced during summer periods. So it is extremely important to go for co-modality but the conditions for this should be prepared. Goods do not vote so we have to take care for them.

For short sea shipping, future seems to be reasonably bright. SSS is an environmentally green modality. It is important to ensure the hinterland connections. We could foresee a development where deep-sea carriers might be inclined to use Mediterranean ports as the only port of call in Europe. Additionally, spoke and wheel connections would have to be set up for having an efficient network.

Shippers' experience is that normally they have to extend **lead times** compared to road transportation for a couple of days. By doing so, it is important that they can rely on the processes in ports. So congestion, controls etc. should be decreased in order to secure a reliable supply chain. In order to reach a level playing field also customs process comparable to that for trucks is still high on the wish-list. Although this is nearly achieved for regular shipping lines and ferries; for other feeding services, this is not the case.

A well-functioning system of data exchange combined with a tracking and tracing system allowing to calculate an **"estimated time of arrival"** is another important issue.

An important advantage for short sea shipping is **the corridor management**. Within the TEN-T, SSS has a "status aparte" (special status). Where for instance rail transport has to deal with a complicated cohabitation of TEN-T-managers, railway corridor-managers, and Member States the situation in SSS is rather straightforward. This enables a more efficient management of the corridors for SSS.

In IMO, in the coming months decisions should be made on **environmental measures**. This could include an obligation for slow steaming or reduction of motor for the engines. The scope of this measures is not completely clear now. It could also include SSS. In any case, we should be vigilant for maritime industry **not to take away the driver for innovation**. Compared to road transportation, SSS can already been seen as a mode having a very low CO₂ emission. In any case, we should not reduce the attractiveness of SSS. To attract shippers to use SSS, it stays important to keep its competitive advantages alive.

Concluding, SSS can address the major challenges of the present time: environment and congestion. The management of the mode is organised efficiently. To keep the attractiveness of SSS, attention should be paid to efficient terminal handling and a good network of hinterland connections. Finally, it is important to reach a level playing field with other modes with regard to customs legislation.

