

## News & Events

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Full steam ahead for inland waterways Barge to Business event 30th November - 1st of December 2010, Brussels under PLATINA project

Barge to Business, an exciting European event about logistics and supply chain management, focussed on inland waterway transport, took place on the 30th of November and the 1st of December at Square in Brussels. "This is the first time inland navigation has showcased itself to the public in such a way," said Hilde Bollen, of Promotie Binnenvaart Vlaanderen, who led the conference organising team of European partners involved in PLATINA (the platform for the implementation of NAIADES). "Inland waterway transportation provides integrated solutions" and this conference was just such an integrated solution. We successfully showcased the fact that we are the perfect mode for all kind of products and goods, offer cutting edge technology, are cost efficient and play an effective role in integrated logistics networks and supply chains.

Barge to Business was opened by European Commission Vice President Siim Kallas who reiterated the immense possibilities inland waterway transport in Europe offers for sustainable supply chain management. He outlined his vision for a future transport network in Europe in which transport is a fully integrated and seamless system composed of safe and secure transport modes, high-quality services and infrastructure, promoting innovation and the competence of our industry and caring for its passengers, customers and employed professionals. "I am convinced that inland waterway transport can be a valuable partner in logistics and supply chains and make an environmental difference. This conference is a unique opportunity to demonstrate exactly how. I look forward to the exchange of experiences and ideas on innovative solutions, technologies and services. I hope to see more events like "Barge to Business" in the future. I strongly believe that they can contribute to raising the image and awareness of the inland shipping sector" said Kallas. Kallas also reflected on the success of the NAIADES action plan and its implementation platform PLATINA. NAIADES has been in operation for five years and will guide European inland shipping policy for the next three years. Kallas announced at the conference that his office is working on a proposal for a possible continuation programme. The unique event brought together some of the leading opinion makers in Europe - both on the supply and demand side - to lead more than 30 presentations and panel discussion showcasing all that inland waterway transport has to offer logistics and supply chain managers. Topics covered were wide ranging and visionary, including innovative logistics techniques, green fuels and vessels, population, commerce and culture, climate change, achieving sustainable logistics chains and information technology. "Emphasis was placed on the practical, with existing waterway users sharing their experiences, challenges and successes on the hot topics of logistics and green innovation. The speakers demonstrated that the keys to driving growth and decarbonisation are already available. These recommendations from the field provide indispensable input to inland navigation development policy in Europe and will ensure our success" said Karin De Schepper, General Secretary of Inland Navigation Europe, organiser of the information market pillar. Simultaneously to the information pillar of Barge to Business, a unique business to business pillar called Riverdating was organised under the auspices of Voies navigables de France. This concept offered an opportunity for one on one meetings between the supply and demand side, with the inland navigation community and logistics service providers showcasing their network to logistics and supply chain managers. Suppliers and shippers were able to take advantage of pre-arranged appointments to get and offer tailor-made solutions to individual queries. "Offering a combination of group sessions and individual meetings ensured that attendants at the event were able to learn as much as they wanted to about inland navigation and its possibilities and develop useful partnerships in favor of modal shift over the two days sessions" said Philip Mauge, Director of Development at Voies Navigables de France, organiser of the Riverdating pillar. More than 600 delegates from 22 countries attended Barge to Business. Delegates included executive managers, logistics managers, inland navigation experts, government policy makers and waterway service providers. Rivers and canals do much more than transport goods and people. They are catalysts for regional and environmental development, they are actors in green energy production, water supply and flood defence and they foster leisure and tourism. The water transport sector is part of ensuring a safe combination of all of these functions, to create optimized profits for society through waterways. All presentations and speeches are available in podcast format on [www.bargetobusiness.eu](http://www.bargetobusiness.eu). Barge to Business was an initiative of the PLATINA project. PLATINA is a project to promote inland waterway transport. The project, brings together 22 partners from 9 European countries, is funded with a 8.5 million from the Commission and has been designed as a platform for helping to implement the European inland navigation programme NAIADES. More use of inland waterway transport is an efficient way to reduce congestion and CO2 emissions and to contribute, in a sustainable way, to Europe's industrial prosperity. The PLATINA project, adopted under the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, covers a broad set of actions in five strategic fields of NAIADES: improve market conditions, modernise the fleet, develop human capital, strengthen the image of inland navigation and improve the infrastructure. For more information: [www.naiades.info](http://www.naiades.info) Barge to Business was sponsored by the European Commission, Voies Navigables de France, the Belgian EU presidency, the Dutch Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat, the French Ministère de l'Écologie, Développement durable, des Transports et du Logement and the Flemish Ministerie van Mobiliteit en Openbare Werken.