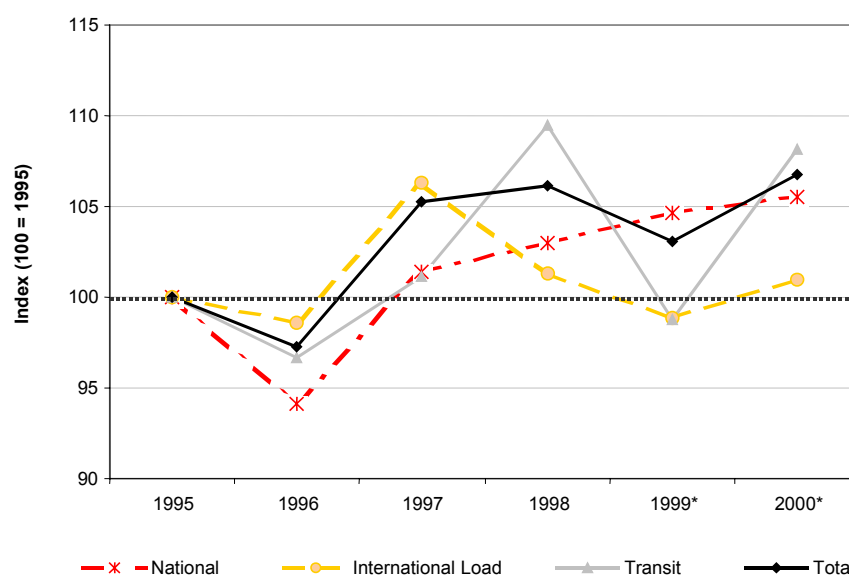


# Inland Waterways Freight Transport in 1995-2000 in the European Union

*In five years, the volume of goods transported by inland waterways has increased by 7%*

*Franz Justen*

## Highlights



\* estimated data for L-B

Figure 1: Evolution of goods transport (base 100=1995) based on tonnes transported

Freight transport by inland waterways accounts for 7% of total inland transport while inland transport by road, rail and pipelines represent respectively 75%, 13% and 5%.

In 1998, the total volume of this mode of transport in the European Union was 739 million tonnes. National, International and transit transport accounted respectively for 28%, 61% and 11%.

Germany and the Netherlands are the two main countries contributing to the importance of this activity. In 2000, they accounted for nearly 75% of goods carried in Europe (missing data are estimated).

Inland waterways are increasingly used for freight transport. Since 1995, in France, the quantity in tonnes has increased by 28%.

At national level, crude and manufactured minerals and building material account for almost half of the commodities carried by inland waterways transport.

Self-propelled barges carry 78% of commodities.

54% of goods have been transported over distances from 150 to 499km. 81% of these distances have been covered on German and Dutch territory.

## Statistics in focus

### TRANSPORT

THEME 7 – 8/2002

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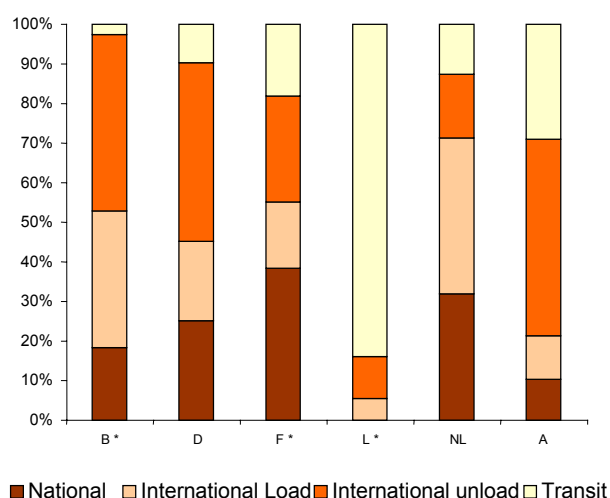
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## Inland Waterways freight transport by type of transport

Inland waterways freight transport plays a key role in the economic competitiveness of the European Union. It is therefore essential to be aware of its characteristics. In the frame of the Council Directive 80/1119/EEC, inland waterways freight transport statistics of six Member States - Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands - are available.

The figures recorded for Germany and the Netherlands reflect the key role of the Rhine axis for inland waterways freight transport. These two countries account for three-quarters of the goods carried by this mode in Europe. 20% are attributable to France and Belgium. Luxembourg and Austria carry relatively few goods in this way. They are responsible for only 3% of the goods carried by inland waterways.



\* 1998 data

Figure 2: Split by transport type of total goods based on 1000 tonnes transported in 2000

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Growth rate (%)			
												(1990/2000)	(1995/2000)	(1997/2000)	
<b>1000 tonnes</b>															
B	99 438	94 382	88 915	:	:	:	106 764	:	103 740	:	:	:	:	:	:
D	231 574	229 967	229 924	218 331	235 007	237 884	227 019	233 455	236 365	229 136	242 223	4,6	1,8	3,8	
F	66 086	70 695	70 900	64 865	62 522	55 055	46 688	58 131	62 010	65 508	70 669	6,9	28,4	21,6	
L	10 846	10 707	10 895	10 223	10 149	10 484	9 705	10 271	10 604	:	:	:	:	:	
NL	286 147	273 800	261 145	262 464	296 145	286 070	289 332	318 817	316 063	311 267	313 708	9,6	9,7	-1,6	
A	:	:	:	:	7 706	8 790	9 303	9 204	10 236	9 987	10 980	:	24,9	19,3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>694 091</b>	<b>679 551</b>	<b>661 779</b>	:	:	:	<b>688 811</b>	:	<b>739 018</b>	:	:	:	:	:	
<b>Mio tkm</b>															
B	5 389	5 177	5 018	2 343	:	:	5 715	:	6 006	:	:	:	:	:	
D	54 803	55 973	57 239	57 559	61 772	63 982	61 291	62 153	64 267	62 692	66 465	21,3	3,9	6,9	
F	7 581	8 347	8 631	7 684	7 235	6 630	6 027	7 058	7 936	8 478	9 110	20,2	37,4	29,1	
L	336	338	338	323	317	338	321	356	369	:	:	:	:	:	
NL	35 661	34 755	33 530	32 058	36 011	35 457	35 513	40 986	40 683	41 428	41 271	15,7	16,4	0,7	
A	:	:	:	:	1 820	2 046	2 101	2 087	2 280	2 231	2 444	:	19,4	17,1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103 770</b>	<b>104 590</b>	<b>104 756</b>	<b>99 967</b>	:	:	<b>110 968</b>	:	<b>121 541</b>	:	:	:	:	:	

Table 1: Evolution by Member State of total goods transport

Three kinds of transport can be considered: national, international and transit transport. At European level, they represent respectively 28%, 61% and 11% of total transport by inland waterways. However, this assessment hides important disparities between the six Member States. Looking at figure 2, it appears that in Luxembourg, no commodity is transported at national level by this mode. Given its size, this fact is not surprising. On the other hand, in France, the Netherlands and Germany, a significant share of inland waterways freight transport is at national level (38%, 32% and 25% respectively for each of these countries). For Belgium and Austria this percentage equals 18% and 10%. In Austria, Belgium and Germany, this mode of transport plays essentially a key role for importation with almost half of the total transport. In the

Netherlands, 40% of this mode of transport is dedicated to exports. For transit transport, it is in Luxembourg that this activity has the greatest proportion, accounting for 84% of inland waterways transport.

Table 1 provides information on the evolution of the quantity transported since 1990. Making estimations of missing data, it appears that since 1995, a global rise of approximately 7% has been observed for total freight transport. Several explanations for the greater use of this mode of transport in Europe during these last few years can be outlined. The complete liberalisation of the EU market since January 2000 as well as the modernisation and the restructuration of the fleet contribute to the growth of the inland waterways transport mode. It presents major advantages: it is

environmentally friendly with relatively low costs and it offers a high level of safety; it is economical in non-renewable energy terms and it helps to relieve the overloaded highway network in north-west Europe. Moreover, the infrastructure of the European continent is relatively appropriate.

Even if global growth is observed, this hides disparities between countries. Table 1 points out that in the two countries, which carry the highest quantity of goods by inland waterways, the Netherlands and Germany, the quantity in tonnes of goods transported has not shown the same changes over the last ten years. The quantity increased more rapidly in the Netherlands than in

Germany. The 1990-2000 and 1995-2000 growth rates are both close to 10% in the Netherlands while these two rates are less than 5% in Germany. Moreover, from 1997 to 2000 the Netherlands was the only country where the quantity of transported goods remained constant. In France, since 1996, freight transport by inland waterways continued to increase. This rise is not only true in term of quantity carried but also in term of distance covered. Since 1995, the quantity in tonne of goods increased by more than a third of its initial value. This increase is even more noticeable when one observes the evolution in tonne-kilometres. Since 1995, there has been growth of almost 50%.

Unloading country \ Loading country	Loading country						TOTAL
	B	D	F	L	NL	A	
B*	18 977	10 311	3 159	38	32 419	2	64 906
D	12 679	60 859	8 337	308	81 898	589	164 670
F*	2 955	1 799	23 755	3	5 635	33	34 180
L*	83	496	45	0	386	-	1 010
NL	19 433	25 703	4 276	85	100 683	154	150 334
A	74	440	18	-	1 256	1 146	2 934
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54 201</b>	<b>99 608</b>	<b>39 590</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>222 277</b>	<b>1 924</b>	<b>418 034</b>

\* data 1998

Table 2: Intra-UE goods transport declared by relation in 2000 (1000 Tonnes)

Concerning more specifically international freight transport, it is interesting to consider which are the main countries exchanging commodities. The quantity of goods exchanged between countries depends on cultural, economical and political aspects but also on the structure of the trans-European network. In essence the trans-European inland waterways network consists of existing basins and canals, and their links. These include the Rhine axis, the north-south axis linking the Netherlands, Belgium and France, the east-west north axis linking North Germany with the Belgian and Dutch ports to the west and the Elbe and Oder rivers to the east. The east-west south axis consists mainly of the Danube. In July 1996, the EU adopted guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network. It aims at building up a network of consistent, interoperable and economically and ecologically sound inland waterways on the basis of existing waterways. This new network should enable the existing waterways to be used to an optimum extent as a cheap, safe and environmentally friendly mode of transport.

Table 2 provides indications on the quantity of goods exchanged in 2000 between the six Member States. The declaring Member State is the unloading country. It emerges that 86% of international transport by inland

waterways is carried out by the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. More precisely, 51% concerns exchanges between the Netherlands and Germany. The share of exports from the Netherlands to Germany is 39%. Approximately one quarter of international exchanges are exchanges between the Netherlands and Belgium.

It is interesting to note that Germany is the European country which imports the biggest quantity in this way (165 million tonnes of goods imported). Its principal partners are the Netherlands and Belgium. Germany exchanges with these two countries 131 million tonnes of goods that is to say 91% of its total. For exports, Germany is a main destination for all the Member states. Its share is respectively 76%, 67%, 53% and 36% for Austria, the Netherlands, France and Belgium. The Netherlands is by far the country which exports the most important quantity of goods.

It may be noted that the Netherlands compared to France and Germany is a country of small size. Nevertheless, it accounts for 36% of commodities carried by inland waterways transport (based on year 2000). Its history and infrastructure mainly explain this situation. Rotterdam and Amsterdam ports play a key role in freight transport in Europe.

## Type of goods transported by Inland Waterways

Analysing the breakdown by group of goods brings also interesting information. Figure 3 shows that at national level, crude and manufactured minerals and building material (chapter 6) account for almost half of the commodities carried. 20% are attributable to petroleum products (chapter 3). The breakdown by type of goods carried is similar in 1995 and 1998. At international level, the most carried products are also crude and manufactured minerals and building material. Yet, this is less notable since these products account for only one

quarter of the commodities carried. In 1995, their share was the same as ores and metal waste (chapter 4). Concerning petroleum products, they account for almost 20% of goods carried. As for national transport, the repartition was approximately the same in 1995 and 1998. The main difference between national and international transport lies in the higher level of ores and metal waste transported at international level (at national level, this kind of commodity accounts for just 5% of the total transport).

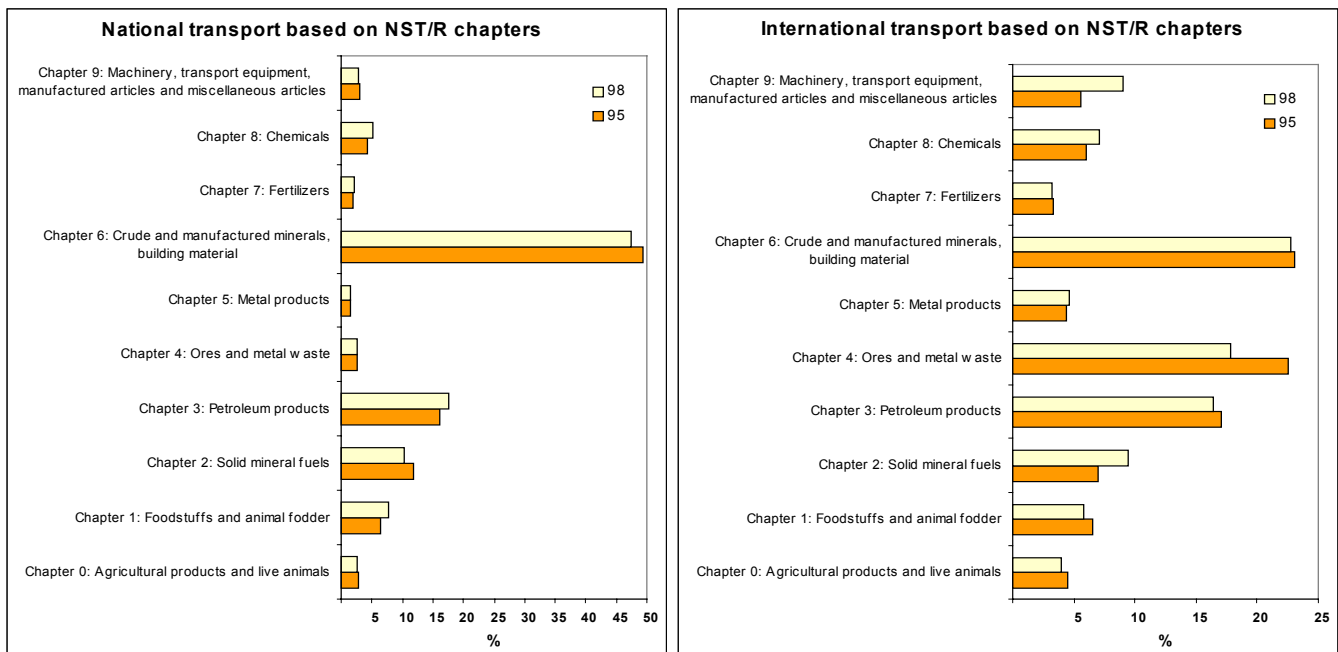


Figure 3: Share of group of goods in national and international transport by NST/R chapter based on 1000 tonnes declared

Figure 3 also outlines the fact that proportionally to the total, agricultural products and live animals (chapter 0) and foodstuffs and animal fodder (chapter 1) are rarely carried by inland waterways. Fertilizers and chemicals (respectively chapter 7 and 8) are also less often carried by this mode of transport.

each Member State respectively for national, international and transit transport. At national level, it is noticeable that Austria is distinguishable from the other European countries by mainly carrying petroleum products (chapter 3). These commodities account for 71% of goods transported. On the other hand, only 12% of the products transported at national level are crude and manufactured minerals and building materials.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 analyse groups of goods carried for

NST/R chapters		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL (%)
National												
B		263	1 150	2 146	4 120	1 571	665	6 385	951	1 457	270	9,3
D		1 545	2 734	11 931	14 420	2 645	1 379	21 589	1 604	5 132	929	31,3
F		2 176	360	1 912	3 255	285	301	14 503	46	578	341	11,6
L		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,0
NL		1 272	11 398	4 951	13 573	568	709	54 340	1 891	3 352	4 277	47,2
A		0	1	0	681	0	164	116	0	0	2	0,5
<b>TOTAL (%)</b>		<b>2,6</b>	<b>7,7</b>	<b>10,3</b>	<b>17,7</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>1,6</b>	<b>47,5</b>	<b>2,2</b>	<b>5,2</b>	<b>2,9</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3: National transport of goods (in 1000 tonnes) by NST/R Chapter declared in 1998

NST/R chapters											
International	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL (%)
B	2 762	2 792	4 027	15 178	3 123	3 006	25 700	3 531	7 851	14 020	18,1
D	4 706	10 168	17 144	23 390	34 815	9 738	27 861	5 370	11 527	6 721	33,5
F	4 931	2 607	2 739	2 275	2 165	1 647	8 051	935	974	715	6,0
L	1	0	237	261	521	26	569	76	5	0	0,4
NL	5 213	10 382	18 338	31 998	37 324	6 077	39 926	4 094	11 478	19 299	40,7
A	398	245	89	1 113	2 776	294	647	476	95	99	1,4
<b>TOTAL (%)</b>	<b>4,0</b>	<b>5,8</b>	<b>9,4</b>	<b>16,4</b>	<b>17,8</b>	<b>4,6</b>	<b>22,7</b>	<b>3,2</b>	<b>7,1</b>	<b>9,0</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4: International transport of goods (in 1000 tonnes) by NST/R Chapter declared in 1998

NST/R chapters											
Transit	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL (%)
B	593	451	260	26	345	288	264	221	286	37	3,4
D	2 774	1 398	2 649	4 616	2 199	2 056	2 588	568	232	1 936	25,5
F	279	270	169	3 756	128	1 338	3 652	128	458	1 038	13,6
L	1 756	1 078	2 421	84	1 660	847	746	241	13	62	10,8
NL	1 883	1 490	2 460	5 885	1 416	3 704	5 772	2 541	4 357	6 098	43,1
A	217	983	35	183	45	896	94	288	67	234	3,7
<b>TOTAL (%)</b>	<b>9,1</b>	<b>6,9</b>	<b>9,7</b>	<b>17,6</b>	<b>7,0</b>	<b>11,1</b>	<b>15,9</b>	<b>4,8</b>	<b>6,6</b>	<b>11,4</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5: Transit transport of goods (in 1000 tonnes) by NST/R Chapter declared in 1998

However, the quantity of products carried in thousands of tonnes in Austria remains very low compared to the other countries. At national level, the breakdown by chapter is quite similar in Belgium and Germany. In Belgium and Germany, almost a third of commodities transported are crude and manufactured minerals and building materials (chapter 6). In France and in the Netherlands, the transport of these goods is much more predominant since they account for around 60% of the commodities transported. On the other hand, chemicals, petroleum products and solid mineral fuels (respectively chapter 8, 3 and 2) account for a more important share of products transported in Belgium and Germany.

Concerning the breakdown by chapter of products for international trade (table 4), it is less easy to profile countries. Member States transport the various kinds of

product in different proportion. France has the highest share of agricultural products and live animals (chapter 0), accounting for 18 % of products transported. In Luxembourg, the transported goods are essentially crude and manufactured minerals and building materials (chapter 6) and ores and metal waste (chapter 4), accounting for almost two - thirds of the products transported.

Concerning the breakdown by chapter of products for transit trade (table 5), the share of agricultural products and live animals is much greater than is observed for national and international transport (chapter 0 accounts for 9% of transit transport, 3% of national transport and 4% of international transport). France, Germany and the Netherlands carried an important share of petroleum products (chapter 3) (respectively 33%, 22% and 17%).

## Type of vessels and covered distance

The number of vessels has noticeably fallen for several years, the result of the successive scrapping plans organised at Community level. The importance of each kind of vessel for inland waterways freight transport is given in table 6. It emerges that at European level, self-propelled barges are by far the most used boats for freight transport. In 2000, nearly 80% of commodities

were transported in this way. Pushed barges transported about 20% of goods. The commodities transported by towed barge were marginal (0.3%). However, here again, the situation is quite specific to each Member State. Luxembourg did not record the use of any towed barges.

Vessel type	B*	D	F	L*	NL	A	TOTAL
<b>Self propelled barge</b>	82 477	192 239	61 113	9 606	249 363	4 949	<b>599 747</b>
Self propelled tanker	25 571	51 218	3 233	9 210	68 988	1 002	159 222
Other self propelled barge	56 906	141 021	57 880	396	180 375	3 947	440 525
<b>Towed barge</b>	348	681	136	-	1 005	2 372	<b>4 542</b>
Towed tanker	-	16	4	-	-	17	37
Other Towed barge	348	665	132	-	1 005	2 355	4 505
<b>Pushed barge</b>	20 912	49 303	13 568	997	63 287	3 658	<b>151 725</b>
Pushed tanker	2 609	2 346	1 760	-	5 478	906	13 099
Other pushed barge	18 303	46 957	11 808	997	57 809	2 752	138 626
<b>Other goods carrying vessel</b>	3	-	-	-	53	:	<b>56</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>103 740</b>	<b>242 223</b>	<b>74 817</b>	<b>10 603</b>	<b>313 708</b>	<b>10 979</b>	<b>756 070</b>

\* data 1998

Table 6: Total transport by type of vessels (in 1000 tonnes) declared in 2000

In the other Member States, the share of self-propelled tanker varies widely. In France, this kind of vessel represents a marginal share, less than 5%, whereas in the other countries the share relatively to all the self-propelled barges is at least 25%. Towed barges are used most in Austria.

The breakdown by distances covered provides relevant information on the use of inland waterways for freight transport. Four groups of distances have been identified: less than 50km, between 50 and 150 km, between 150 and 500 km and finally the distances superior or equal to 500km (see figure 4). It appears that for inland waterways national transport in tonne-kilometres, 54% of goods were transported over distances from 150 to 499km.

One quarter of the commodities were transported over distances between 50 and 149km, 15% over distances more than 500km and 5% over distances less than 50km. National freight transport over distances more than 500km is mainly on German territory. The infrastructure and size of each country largely affects data. But, other explanations can also be outlined like customs or political aspects.

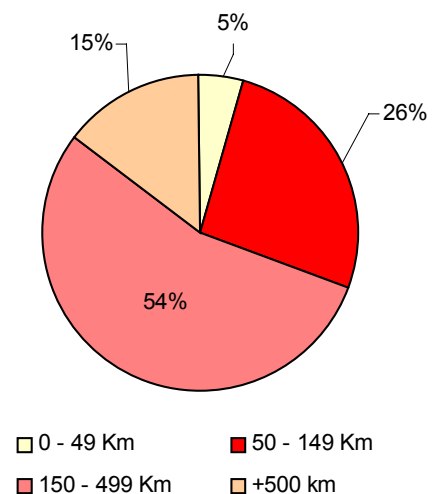


Figure 4: National transport by distance class based on transported Mio tkm in 1998

## ➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The present Statistics in Focus is the first one tackling the subject of inland waterways freight transport in the European Union. The figures presented in this publication have been extracted from the Eurostat inland transport database. It includes the statistics of the national, international and transit transport collected under Council Directive 80/1119/EEC. Data are collected for 6 Member States of the European Union: Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Austria. According to Article 2 of the Directive, Member States in which the total volume of goods transported annually by inland waterways as international or transit transport does not exceed one million tonnes shall not be obliged to supply the statistics required under the terms of this Directive.

### Data availability

Despite recent improvements in data availability and data quality, some data are still missing. Estimates have been calculated especially for Belgium and Luxembourg for the years 1999 and 2000. Consequently, Figure 1 is based on estimated data for Belgium and Luxembourg. Due to missing data for Belgium, Luxembourg and France in 2000, some totals appearing in tables 2 and 6 are estimated.

### Definitions of various kinds of inland waterways transport

**National inland waterways transport:** inland waterways transport between two places (a place of loading and a place of unloading) located in the same country irrespective of the country in which the inland waterways transport vessel is registered.

**International inland waterways transport:** inland waterways transport between two places (a place of loading and a place of unloading) located in two different countries.

**Inland waterways transit:** inland waterways transport through a country between two places (a place of loading and a place of unloading) both located in another country or in other countries provided the total journey within the country is by an inland waterways transport vessel and that there is no loading and unloading in that country.

**Self-propelled barge:** inland waterways transport freight vessel having its own means of mechanical

propulsion.

**Self-propelled tanker barge:** self-propelled barge intended for the bulk transport of liquids or gases.

**Towed barge:** inland waterways transport freight vessel designed to be towed which does not have its own means of mechanical propulsion.

**Towed tanker barge:** towed barge for the bulk transport of liquids or gases.

**Pushed barge:** inland waterways transport freight vessel which is designed to be pushed and does not have its own means of mechanical propulsion.

**Pushed tanker barge:** pushed barge for the bulk transport of liquids or gases.

### Breakdown by goods groups

The NST/R classification (Standard Goods Nomenclature for Transport Statistics / revised) consists of 24 goods groups. Because of the lack of space, it is not possible to present all 24 groups separately. The individual goods groups have thus been aggregated at NST/R chapter level. A brief description of the NST/R chapters is given in the relevant section of the commentary to enhance readability.

#### *NST/R chapters*

- NST/R 0: Agricultural products and live animals
- NST/R 1: Foodstuffs and animal fodder
- NST/R 2: Solid mineral fuels
- NST/R 3: Petroleum products
- NST/R 4: Ores and metal waste
- NST/R 5: Metal products
- NST/R 6: Crude and manufactured minerals, building material
- NST/R 7: Fertilizers
- NST/R 8: Chemicals
- NST/R 9: Machinery, transport equipment, manufactured articles and miscellaneous articles.

This publication was prepared with the assistance of Mrs Sandrine Cipponeri.

# Further information:

## ➤ Databases

New Cronos,  
Domain inland waterways

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