

Club Evening "Master Plan Inland Navigation" – 15th October 2019

NÜRNBERG - On 14 May 2019, the Federal Government presented the Inland Navigation Master Plan. On this occasion, the OstWestWirtschaftsForum Bayern invited to a top-class event in the bayernhafen Nürnberg-Roth to discuss the chances and perspectives of the master plan, especially with regard to the Danube region.

"Up to 150 trucks can be replaced with a single cargo ship. This is not only a major contribution to relieving the strain on the road network, but also an enormous increase in efficiency in logistics - economically and ecologically", said OWWF President Eberhard Sinner, former Minister of State, opening the club evening in the full conference hall of the Bavarian port of Nuremberg.

Martin Staats, President of the Federal Association of German Inland Navigation, confirms Sinner's remarks. "Inland navigation is definitely a cost-effective, environmentally friendly and reliable mode of transport," said Staats. However, the industry also faces a number of challenges. For example, the shortage of skilled workers in the shipping industry is being felt particularly hard - "fewer and fewer young people are opting for a career in the shipping industry today," he explained. "At the same time, it cannot be assumed that automation will take place in this area in the near future. Autonomous shipping is hardly possible due to the diverse and complex natural conditions alone.

I don't want to rule it out completely - but that's unrealistic at the moment," says industry representative Martin Staats.

Alexander Ochs, Managing Director of bayernhafen Nürnberg-Roth, emphasizes the core competencies of inland navigation: "Especially for the "high and heavy" category, this is the most sensible transport route by far - without transport via freighter, Siemens in Nuremberg, for example, would face great challenges in handling the business with large transformers," explains Ochs.

"An unbeatable advantage of inland navigation is that it still has capacities. Road and rail are already on the verge of congestion, and large transports can still be carried out quickly and easily by water," he adds. In addition to large machines and components, inland navigation is also attractive for bulk goods and excavated material. "We are currently growing particularly strongly in the transport of recycling materials," says Ochs.

According to Alexander Ochs, in order for inland navigation to continue to be successful in the future, a targeted settlement policy is also necessary: "The closer a location is to a port, the more sensible and attractive is transport by waterway - which is why companies that work with the corresponding goods have to be located close to the port. This makes sense for all sides".

"Inland navigation is - especially for the Danube region - an important location factor and a great opportunity. It is reliable, efficient and environmentally friendly," summarises Eberhard Sinner. "I want us as OWWF to continue to work for a strong waterway. We need a well-developed infrastructure here. It is wrong not to expand the Danube for purely political reasons. Anyone who is really in favour of environmentally friendly logistics cannot be against Danube expansion," Sinner concluded.