



VOIES NAVIGABLES D'EUROPE  
INLAND WATERWAYS OF EUROPE

Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford, WD17 4QA

Dear Sirs

### **EU Maritime Policy Green Paper**

Voies Navigables d'Europe (VNE) (Inland Waterways of Europe) is a project supported by the European Union Interreg IIIC programme. The project brings together 10 partner organisations from 10 EU countries, under the leadership of British Waterways (UK). VNE's aim is to further the development of Europe's canals, rivers and lakes for tourism, recreation and heritage, taking account of the multi-functional use of waterways, together with the maximisation of the opportunities that they present in terms of employment and training. The project grew out of a wider informal association of waterway authorities with an interest in these topics.

We have read with interest the Commission of the European Communities' green paper on Maritime Policy. We plan to formally respond to this in due course. However in the meantime we have a number of initial observations to which we wish to draw your attention.

We are disappointed to note that the Paper does not consider the relationship between maritime and coastal issues and inland waterways. Although it recognises environmental links between rivers and seas, no consideration is given to the economic interface. Sea-going freight craft navigate on inland waterways, while recreational craft on inland waters often go to sea.

We welcome the recognition of tourism and the role of Europe's maritime heritage and identity within the Paper. However we feel these aspects could be considerably strengthened by covering the relationship between navigable inland waterways and the sea. Indeed, with regard to tourism, the regeneration of towns and rural areas and the promotion of a common identity and an improved quality of life for Europe's inhabitants, navigable inland waters have at least an important role as the sea – maybe even a greater role, given the proximity of inland waters to large urban populations.

In view of this inter-relationship, we feel therefore that any actions developed in these areas should, where appropriate, cover navigable inland waterways as well as the sea.

I hope you are able to take our views into account

Derek Cochrane

Chair

Voies Navigables d'Europe