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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

on the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2018/974 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 July 2018 on statistics of goods transport by inland waterways

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Regulation (EU) 2018/974 on statistics of goods transport by inland waterways ([1]) (the Regulation) ensures comparable, reliable, harmonised, regular, and comprehensive statistical data on inland waterway goods transport within the EU. Such data provides support to ministries, associations, shipping companies, operators using inland waterways and ports for transporting goods, and policy makers. Inland waterway transport statistics help to monitor and develop regional, national and trans-European policies, support infrastructure planning and traffic control, and provide valuable information on the modal shift to clean modes of transport. They also serve as a single source of common information across the EU, compiling data on the goods transported by inland waterways for each country rather than by individual rivers.

Under Article 9 of the Regulation, the Commission, after consulting the European Statistical System Committee, must report to the European Parliament and the Council on how the Regulation is being implemented and on possible future developments. The first report was due by 31 December 2020 ([2]), with further reports to follow every five years. This is the second such report.

Section 1 of this report explains the policy context and coverage of the Regulation in the Member States and other countries. Section 2 provides follow-up on how the Regulation is implemented by the Member States and the Commission (Eurostat). This covers legal compliance, data collection methods used by Member States, the costs and burden on them, Eurostat's data validation and quality checks, methodological support provided to Member States by Eurostat, and information on data sharing.

The last part of Section 2 describes the developments for statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways. Section 3 summarises potential future developments in inland waterway goods and passenger transport statistics, and Section 4 puts forward the report's key conclusions.

1.2. POLICY CONTEXT

Inland waterway transport is an important component of Europe's transport system, featuring a network spanning over 49 684 kilometres across 20 EU Member States ([3]). Compared with other modes of transport, which often face congestion and capacity problems, transport by inland waterways provides a more reliable and energy-efficient alternative and has considerable potential for expanding its use. Along with rail, inland waterway transport has long been acknowledged as one of the most CO_2-efficient means of transporting goods. It is therefore considered crucial to the EU's initiatives including modal shift objectives to reducing carbon

[1] OJ L 179, 16.7.2018, p. 14-29. ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/974/oj.
[2] The first report was adopted on 18 December 2020 (COM(2020) 821 final).
[3] The calculation is based on data available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/iww_if_infrastr__custom_16182625/default/table?lang=en (Available in English, French and German). The total network length is based on 2023 data, except for Belgium where the most recent data available are from 2008.

emissions in the transport sector ([4]). Moreover, inland waterway transport generates lower noise emissions and provides high safety levels, a considerable advantage especially for the transport of dangerous goods. It also relieves the burden on overloaded road networks in densely populated regions ([5]).

Given these strengths, inland waterway transport could potentially play a crucial role in the EU's transport system. The European Commission recognises the considerable growth potential of inland waterway transport and is committed to enhancing its competitiveness and role within the intermodal logistics network. This commitment is reflected in the Naiades III action programme ([6]). The programme mainly focuses on shifting more cargo to Europe's rivers and canals and transitioning towards zero-emission barges by 2050. It also includes measures for encouraging the development and deployment of zero-emission and zero-waste technologies for vessels and inland ports. The Naiades III action programme is aligned with the European Green Deal ([7]) and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy ([8]), which aim to increase inland waterway transport and short sea shipping by 25% by 2030 to 50% by 2050.

European inland waterway transport statistics are essential for the development, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives and policies under the Naiades III programme and other EU environmental, transport and EU single market programmes. Such initiatives and policies require in-depth knowledge of the scale of inland waterway transport and the ways in which this mode of transport is evolving over time.

1.3. COVERAGE OF MEMBER STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES

The Regulation directly applies in its entirety to all Member States. It does not need to be turned into national legislation. However, inland waterway transport does not exist in all Member States. Therefore, the effect of the Regulation is limited to those in which this mode of transport exists.

For those Member States with inland waterway goods transport, the Regulation establishes a threshold above which countries are obliged to provide data. The reporting obligation applies to all Member States where the total volume of goods transported annually by inland waterways exceeds one million tonnes. Currently, 11 Member States (Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, France, Croatia, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania and Slovakia) are obliged to supply data for all the following mandatory tables listed in Annexes I to IV:

- I1: Goods transport by type of goods (annual data);
- II1: Transport by nationality of the vessel and type of vessel (annual data);
- III1: Container transport by type of goods (annual data);
- IV1: Transport by nationality of vessels (quarterly data);

[4] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0324 (Available only in English).
[5] https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-modes/inland-waterways_en (Available in all official EU languages).
[6] https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-modes/inland-waterways/promotion-inland-waterway-transport/naiades-iii-action-plan_en (Available in all official EU languages).
[7] COM(2019) 640 final; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52019DC0640&qid=1758888521529
[8] COM(2020) 789 final; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0789&qid=1758888687830

- IV2: Container transport by nationality of vessels (quarterly data).

Among the countries obliged to supply data, Belgium, Hungary ([9]) and Luxembourg also provide data for the optional Table II2: Vessel traffic (annual data) in Annex II to the Regulation.

According to the Regulation, countries that exceed the one million tonne threshold but have no international or transit traffic are required to provide only a reduced Table V1: Goods transport (annual data), as set out in Annex V to the Regulation. Currently, this provision applies only to Sweden. However, Sweden voluntarily provides all mandatory tables, not only the reduced annual table.

Five additional Member States with inland waterway transport activity below the thresholds set by the Regulation currently provide data on a voluntary basis: Czechia, Finland, Italy, Lithuania and Poland. Czechia, Finland and Poland submit all the mandatory tables required by the Regulation. Czechia also provides annual data on vessel traffic for the optional Table II2. Italy and Lithuania, by contrast, only provide annual data on goods transport for the reduced Table V1. Outside the EU, the candidate country Serbia provides data for Table IV1: Transport by nationality of vessels (quarterly data) in Annex IV to the Regulation.

In addition to the tables in the Regulation, the Commission Expert Group on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics agreed, in February 2007, to organise voluntary data collections on the transport of dangerous goods (Table A2) and accidents (Table A3). In October 2013, the Group also decided to organise voluntary data collections on goods transport by port of loading/unloading (Table A4) and on goods transport by type of cargo (Table A5).

For the reference year 2024, voluntary data submissions were made by several countries across different tables as follows:

- Table A2 was reported by seven countries: Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia;
- Table A3 was reported by five countries: Czechia, Croatia, Hungary, Austria, and Poland;
- Table A4 was reported by eight countries: Bulgaria, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Croatia, Austria, Poland, and Romania;
- Table A5 was also reported by eight countries: Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Croatia, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, and Romania.

2. FOLLOW-UP ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGULATION

2.1. COMPLIANCE WITH LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Compliance with the data provision obligations laid down in the Regulation is very good. All Member States provided the datasets required, following the agreed methodology and within the deadlines set. Minor delays have been observed in only a few cases, but they have not had an impact on the production of statistics. The high level of compliance results in reliable and high-quality statistics on goods transport via inland waterways.

[9] No data on vessel traffic were reported by Hungary for reference years 2022, 2023 and 2024.

In terms of confidentiality, most Member States report no issues. However, some countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary) designate their data on port of loading and port of unloading as confidential. These data are relevant for a voluntary table not within the scope of the Regulation. In addition, France has marked some data as confidential as of reference year 2023. For all types of confidential data, Eurostat applies rules and measures to prevent their disclosure.

2.2. DATA COLLECTION METHODS USED BY THE MEMBER STATES

Data collection and compilation processes differ among reporting countries but follow a traditional bottom-up flow of information. Data suppliers also vary between countries, with the most frequent sources being port and lock authorities. Countries complete their data with information received from a wide range of sources, including customs offices, neighbouring countries, private operators, firms and agencies. Most reporting countries also use data obtained from their river information service (RIS) systems or other systems. In addition, all reporting countries make direct or indirect use of data collected at national level, either for policy purposes or for sharing.

Most national authorities apply validation checks using internally developed control procedures before sending the information to Eurostat. The validation rules cover many aspects of the process, including data formatting and codification. They also cover consistency within each dataset, between different datasets and variables, and on the time series.

General information on data collection and compilation is published in the EU reference metadata ([10]) that Eurostat updates regularly. Specific information on national methodologies is published in national metadata files updated by countries on a yearly basis. In addition to this, Eurostat's *Reference Manual on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics ([11])* includes a chapter on national methodologies with subchapters on data sources, data compilation, validation and sharing. The chapter on national methodologies is based on a questionnaire sent to Member States. This questionnaire has been revised and was sent to countries for completion in 2025. The countries' replies will be incorporated in an upcoming revision of the reference manual.

2.3. COSTS AND BURDENS OF DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING ON THE MEMBER STATES

According to the information provided by the Member States, most reporting countries consider the workload involved in data provision to be acceptable. Several Member States report that the response burden is put on shipping agents, vessel captains, skippers, port administrations, port authorities, regional harbour masters, ports and other loading places, or other parties who are appointed as agents to collect the required information.

The administrative burden may increase where detected errors need to be manually cleared or data suppliers need to be re-contacted. There may also be an extra burden involved in the collection of data on transit transport, which sometimes requires bilateral cooperation with other

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/iww_go_esms.htm (Available only in English).
[11] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/29567/3217334/iww_reference_manual_april_2023.pdf/95785869-c98a-7f6a-a936-b243bb5ba468 (Available only in English).

Member States to obtain the data or imputation and extrapolation procedures. Overall, the cost of the data collection and reporting is not regarded as very high.

Member States that are able to quantify the cost and burden on their inland waterway data collection report significant disparities depending on the volume of inland waterway transport in the country and the data compilation systems. However, the Regulation has set up thresholds on the magnitude of transport activity to limit the reporting burden while maintaining the quality of statistics.

Reducing burden and simplification

Eurostat is working to reduce the data collection burden and maintains a communication channel with the Member States on this matter. In cooperation with the national statistical authorities, Eurostat is implementing specific measures to reduce the burden of data collection and reporting. These include:

- the development of a distance matrix to support the calculation of inland waterway transport measurements in tonne-kilometres or passenger-kilometres;
- new validation tools developed by Eurostat, which allow reporting countries to validate their data before they officially transmit them to Eurostat (pre-validation) and to receive feedback on errors for each dataset;
- consultations with the Member States, European Free Trade Area (EFTA) countries, candidate countries and potential candidates on methodological issues and new requests (e.g. on passenger transport), aiming to reduce the burden on producing inland waterway transport statistics as far as possible.

2.4. VALIDATION AND QUALITY CHECKS ON THE DATA RECEIVED

Data collection and transmission is the responsibility of the Member States, but Eurostat takes all necessary measures to ensure high-quality statistics and detect any errors or inconsistencies in the data received.

Since 2023, Eurostat has implemented a sophisticated IT data management system with two improved components: new data validation tools, and powerful Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS) software for processing, quality checking and publishing inland waterway transport data.

Data transmission and validation procedures are now highly standardised. Reporting countries transmit datasets to Eurostat via the EDAMIS ([12]) portal using a structure that is compatible with the SDMX (Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange) standard. A robust two-step validation process is then applied to the datasets received.

- Firstly, the STRUVAL (STRUctural VALidation) tool validates each dataset in terms of format, completeness of mandatory fields, and correctness of structure and codes used.

[12] Electronic Dataflow Administration and Management Information System. This is the single-entry point for data exchange used by Eurostat. https://cros.ec.europa.eu/dashboard/edamis

- Secondly, the CONVAL (CONtent VALidation) tool validates the content of each dataset on the basis of predefined rules and thresholds. CONVAL validation takes place only once a dataset successfully passes the STRUVAL validation.

Reporting countries receive a detailed validation report after each validation step which makes it easy to correct any errors. Eurostat is regularly updating the validation rules applied in order to meet evolving needs and ensure that high-quality statistics are produced.

Once data have been loaded into Eurostat's SAS production database, detailed quality checks are applied to the data. These checks concern time series consistency, inter-dataset consistency of quarterly and annual data, and the comparison of results between partner reporting countries (mirror checks).

Overall, the quality of the data transmitted are good. Nevertheless, efforts are still required to reduce the asymmetries detected by mirror checks and to improve data reporting on inland waterway transit transport.

2.5. METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY EUROSTAT TO MEMBER STATES

Eurostat provides reporting countries with continuous methodological and technical support for implementing the Regulation in an effort to maintain high-quality data and metadata.

Meetings of the Commission Expert Group on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics provide Member States, EFTA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates with an opportunity to discuss data quality, methodological issues and new projects. Implementation of the Regulation is also a standing item on the agenda at the annual meetings of the Commission Coordinating Group for Statistics on Transport.

In addition to that, Eurostat's *Reference Manual on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics*provides reporting countries with detailed guidance on implementation of the Regulation. The reference manual is updated regularly (usually on an annual basis) to include the most recent information, documentation and guidelines relevant to the collection of inland waterway transport statistics.

The *Glossary for transport statistics ([13])*, produced in close cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the International Transport Forum, has undergone a significant revision. The glossary aims to standardise definitions of transport statistics at European and international level. The revised glossary will include an updated and improved section on inland waterway transport with definitions mirroring those in the Regulation and new definitions pertaining to passenger transport by inland waterways. The revised glossary is scheduled to be published in early 2026.

2.6. DATA SHARING

Eurostat's online database

[13] https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2785/675927 (Available in English, French and German).

Eurostat publishes the data collected under the Regulation through its online database, which is freely accessible via the Eurostat website ([14]). The database contains 17 tables on inland waterway goods transport, which are updated regularly and complemented by detailed European and national metadata files.

Sharing products

Eurostat produces the following four *Statistics Explained* articles on inland waterway goods transport. These articles provide the media and the general public with an overview of the most important developments in this mode of transport and an analysis of the data collected under the Regulation.

1. *Inland waterway freight transport – quarterly and annual data ([15])*
2. *Inland waterway transport statistics by product category ([16])*
3. *Inland waterways – statistics on container transport ([17])*
4. *Inland waterway freight transport at regional level ([18])*

These articles are updated annually as soon as the data collection for a given reference year is finalised.

Other means of sharing

Data on inland waterway transport are also shared via Eurostat's news articles (e.g. *Inland waterway freight transport drops again in 2023) ([19])* and other Eurostat publications, such as *Key figures on European transport ([20])* and *Key figures on Europe ([21])*. The data are also disseminated in publications of the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (e.g. in their *Statistical pocketbook) ([22])*.

Inland waterway goods transport data are also included in the *Sustainable Development Monitoring Report ([23])* that observes progress in the EU policy objective of shifting freight from road to rail and inland waterways. The relevant indicator in that report analyses the short-term and long-term development in the ratio of rail and inland waterways to total inland freight transport in tonne-kilometres.

Eurostat also offers bespoke data extractions upon user request. All data included in bespoke extractions and publications are also published in Eurostat's online database.

[14] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/transport/information-data/inland-waterways-transport (Available in English, French and German).
[15] Inland waterway freight transport - quarterly and annual data (Available only in English).
[16] Inland waterway transport statistics by product category (Available only in English).
[17] Inland waterways - statistics on container transport (Available only in English).
[18] Inland waterway freight transport at regional level (Available only in English).
[19] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20240920-1 (Available only in English).
[20] https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2785/9777356 (Available only in English).
[21] https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2785/318624 (Available in English, French and German).
[22] https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2832/16593 (Available only in English).
[23] https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2785/98370 (Available only in English).

2.7. STATISTICS ON PASSENGER TRANSPORT BY INLAND WATERWAYS

Even though inland waterway transport is a small sector, its passenger transport segment is growing rapidly. Therefore, data on its economic activity and development is essential for market observation and policy development.

Currently, the Regulation does not require the collection of statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways. However, Article 5 of the Regulation requires the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to investigate the development of statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways, including by cross-border transport services.

Following the requirements of Article 5, in 2018 Eurostat and the Member States developed a draft methodology for compiling statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways, to be used by the Member States in pilot studies. In 2019, Eurostat co-funded seven Member States (Germany, Croatia, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Romania and Sweden) to carry out pilot studies which comprised two modules: statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways (module 1); and statistics on inland waterway accidents (module 2). In 2020, Eurostat also conducted a passenger transport statistics survey with all Member States concerned to complement the observations made in the seven pilot studies.

In February 2021, the Commission adopted a report to the European Parliament and to the Council ([24]) presenting the outcome of the pilot studies and the 2020 survey on inland waterway passenger transport statistics. The report focused on the feasibility of collecting new data, statistical data quality, related methodology, and the costs and burdens for the Member States. The report concluded that the pilot studies had thoroughly investigated the feasibility of collecting data on inland waterway passenger transport, showing that in the seven participating countries, it would be feasible to collect such data to a certain extent. However, the report also concluded that the need for data would have to be balanced with the availability of information and the burden on respondents.

The outcome of the pilot studies was presented at the meeting of the Commission Expert Group on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics in October 2021. After this meeting, Eurostat launched a consultation with the Member States aiming to adapt the proposed methodology to the observations of the pilot studies and other country comments. This consultation's outcome led to a simplification of the proposed datasets on inland waterway passenger transport to reduce the burden on respondents. A revised version of the draft methodology was discussed at a second country consultation in May 2022. This consultation concluded the discussions on the proposed methodology, which resulted in four datasets on inland waterway passenger transport being included.

- **Dataset 1:** number of passengers, excluding river cruise passengers, transported by region of embarkation, region of disembarkation and type of journey (annual dataset).
- **Dataset 2:** river cruises – number of passengers by region of embarkation (annual dataset).

[24] Report of 12.2.2021 from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the results of pilot studies carried out by Member States on statistics on passenger transport by inland waterways according to Article 5(3) of Regulation (EU) 2018/974, COM(2021) 59 final; https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0059.

- **Dataset 3:** river cruises – number of trips starting their journey in the reporting country (annual dataset).
- **Dataset 4**: number of vessels registered in a country (whether or not navigating in its inland waterway routes) by type of accommodation, vessel capacity and vessel age (dataset collected every two years).

To test the agreed methodology again, Eurostat co-funded pilot projects on data collection for inland waterway passenger transport through its 2022 call for proposals (grants). Four proposals were submitted and co-funded in 2023. The outcome of these projects was presented during the 2025 meeting of the Commission Expert Group on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics.

These project results will allow the passenger transport by inland waterways methodology to be fine-tuned as necessary. Eurostat finalised the methodology in December 2025. As a next step, it will set up a voluntary regular data collection to assess the methodology's robustness in the longer term and the Member States' efficacy to produce the desired datasets. The first voluntary data collection is planned for 2026 covering the reference year 2025.

Progress in this domain is regularly presented and discussed by DIMESA (Commission Expert Group – Directors of Sectoral and Environmental Statistics and Accounts) ([25]).

3. POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT STATISTICS

Inland waterway transport statistics play a crucial role in laying down and monitoring policy targets. This is currently achieved by providing data on volumes of goods transported, inland waterway vessel numbers and traffic, inland waterway infrastructure, as well as investment and maintenance expenditure in inland waterway transport infrastructure. Data on equipment, infrastructure and expenditure are collected on a voluntary basis and not under the Regulation but using the *Eurostat/ITF/UNECE Common Questionnaire on inland transport statistics.* The data collection provides indicators on various aspects, such as:

- the length of the navigable inland waterway network;
- the number of freight vessels by type, year of construction and load capacity;
- the level of investment and maintenance expenditure on inland waterway transport infrastructure.

In addition, Eurostat is looking for ways to help countries report current statistics. In this context, one development that has been mentioned by Member States is Eurostat's support in compiling transit data on the basis of a distance matrix at port-to-port level. The Commission is developing such a distance matrix to help reduce the burden associated with data collection. By using the distance matrix, Member States can break down the total distance from port to port into the individual distances travelled in each of the countries passed through along the journey. The further development of the distance matrix mainly depends on the precise identification of the geographical position of each port. The distance matrix will also ease Eurostat's calculation of

[25] https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?groupID=1528

modal split indicators. However, for this purpose, Member States are encouraged to provide data on goods volumes by port of loading/unloading, despite this being voluntary.

Inland waterway transport data are often compared with data for other transport modes, to assess modal split. In this context, Member States are encouraged to report inland waterway transport by type of cargo in order to boost comparability with other modes of transport, in particular maritime and road.

Furthermore, inland waterways have the potential to play a larger role in passenger transport, acting as an essential component of sustainable mobility. Recognising this potential, Eurostat has made considerable progress in developing a methodology for inland waterway passenger transport statistics and by supporting relevant pilot projects run by national statistical authorities. As described Section 2, Eurostat plans to refine the relevant methodology and collaborate with Member States to set up voluntary, regular data collection. This initiative aims to further evaluate the methodology's robustness.

Eurostat also plans to further develop its statistics on inland waterway accidents. In 2026, based on the findings of the 2019 pilot studies, Eurostat will launch a written consultation with the Commission Expert Group on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics on the feasibility of voluntary datasets with variables and dimensions in addition to the ones currently disseminated, such as the degree of seriousness of an accident, the type of accident, the type of vessels involved, and the number of people killed or injured.

Given that there is an increasing demand for information about the environmental aspects of inland waterway transport and vessel characteristics such as fuel type, Eurostat will discuss with the Member States the possibility to introduce relevant variables on the basis of information from administrative sources.

Regulation (EU) 2024/3018 amends Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics ([26]). It provides that national statistical institutes and other national authorities may access and use administrative data free of charge, in a timely manner and with sufficient frequency, for the production and sharing of European statistics.

In this context, Eurostat will discuss with the Member States the possibility of using administrative data from the river information services (RIS) system for statistical purposes. This system provides harmonised information services to support traffic and transport management in inland waterway navigation. Eurostat will investigate the possibility of using RIS data on vessel traffic for statistics; such data comprise information on vessel positions through the RIS vessel tracking and tracing standards.

In addition, Directive (EU) 2016/1629 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels ([27]) applies common conditions for issuing inland navigation certificates for vessels in the EU. To ensure proper application of this Directive, a dedicated database – the European Hull Database – has been created to hold data identifying inland waterway vessels, data on certain characteristics as well as vessel certificates. Eurostat will explore the possibility of retrieving

[26] OJ L, 2024/3018, 6.12.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/3018/oj.
[27] OJ L 252, 16.9.2016, p. 118–176, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2016/1629/oj.

administrative data from this database for statistical purposes, to further reduce the data collection burden on Member States.

The geographical coverage of inland waterway transport statistics could also be extended as a result of future enlargement of the EU to include new countries. Several candidate countries for membership of the European Union are currently undertaking pilot data collection initiatives for both freight and passenger transport by inland waterways. These initiatives have been funded by the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The findings of these pilot projects are expected in 2026 and 2027. Eurostat is constantly supporting the efforts and future progress of candidate countries and potential candidates on complying with the Regulation, by discussing methodological issues, data quality, data transmission and validation processes.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The experience gained and the results obtained from implementing the Regulation remain positive. Member States comply with the data provision obligations, and the resources allocated at both Eurostat and national level are sufficient to ensuring high-quality outcomes.

Eurostat takes all necessary measures to support and help Member States in implementing the Regulation and encourages candidate countries and potential candidates to obtain and compile inland waterway transport statistics. Eurostat has modernised its IT system for validating and processing inland waterway transport data, improving the quality of those data and facilitating the work of the national statistical authorities.

The Commission Expert Group on Inland Waterway Transport Statistics remains the body under which the Regulation's implementation and potential improvements to it are discussed. To prevent imposing additional burdens on the Member States, Eurostat is not currently considering the introduction of further mandatory data collections. Instead, Eurostat is planning to set up a voluntary, regular collection of data on passenger transport by inland waterways. Other future developments will include the potential retrieval of administrative data, and the finalisation of the distance matrix at port-to-port level.

Inland waterway transport statistics are disseminated via Eurostat's online database, statistical and news articles and other Commission publications. These statistics are valuable to Member States, policymakers, sectoral organisations and river commissions, since they help them design and assess policies for sustainable, clean and safe transport.

The Regulation efficiently and effectively helps to generate reliable, harmonised inland waterway transport statistics at EU and national levels, supporting the Commission in promoting competitiveness and intermodal logistics integration for inland waterway transport.